GEOG 1301-Physical Geography  
Department of Computing Sciences  
Fall 2017

A. COURSE INFORMATION

Course number/section: GEOG 1301.001  
Class meeting time: MWF 10:00-10:50 AM  
Class location: OCNR-115  
Course Website: http://bb9.tamucc.edu

B. INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Frank N. McMillan  
Office location: Conrad Blucher Institute for Surveying and Science  
Office hours: By appointment  
Telephone: 361.825.5850  
e-mail: frank.mcmillan@tamucc.edu  
Appointments: All appointments are to be made by phone or email.

C. COURSE DESCRIPTION

GEOG 1301 (Physical Geography) introduces the major concepts of physical geography (earth-sun relations, climatology, atmospheric and surface energy balances, hydrographic/fluvial processes, glacial and erosive processes, plate tectonics and volcanism, landforms and geomorphology, soils, and ecosystems/terrestrial biomes) to give students a sound working knowledge in the field that will enable them to better comprehend the terrestrial landscape and its many natural systems. Employing various spatial analysis tools and information technologies, the course encourages students to think scientifically when they seek to explain interactions between physical systems and human activities, and interpret and account for the patterns and distributions of natural phenomena that they see around them.

D. PREREQUISITES AND COREQUISITES

Prerequisites  
None

Corequisites  
None

E. REQUIRED TEXTBOOK(S), READINGS AND SUPPLIES

No textbook is required. Lecture outlines are posted on Blackboard.

Optional Textbook(s) or Other References  
Miscellaneous print materials and URL’s will be provided by the instructor from time to time on Blackboard. Students are expected to regularly check their TAMUCC email. In addition,
online resources are available through the university web site: www.tamucc.edu.

**Supplies**

None required. Note taking material/media are strongly suggested.

**F. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES AND ASSESSMENT**

Assessment is a process used by instructors to help improve learning. Assessment is essential for effective learning because it provides feedback to both students and instructors. A critical step in this process is making clear the course’s student learning outcomes that describe what students are expected to learn to be successful in the course. The student learning outcomes for this course are listed below. By collecting data and sharing it with students on how well they are accomplishing these learning outcomes students can more efficiently and effectively focus their learning efforts. This information can also help instructors identify challenging areas for students and adjust their teaching approach to facilitate learning.

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. Locate and describe the world’s major physiographic regions and analyze how they have evolved over geologic time through natural processes and learn how these physical environments impact human activities and vice versa.
2. Locate and identify by name the world’s major physical/topographic features like mountains, river systems, deserts, grasslands and forests on maps of varying scales.
3. Demonstrate a basic understanding of earth-sun relations, climatology, fluvial processes, weathering/erosion and how these natural actions affect the Earth’s atmosphere, lithosphere, hydrosphere and biosphere through geologic time.
4. Give specific examples of how tectonic activity and volcanism have transformed the planet’s natural landscapes over geologic time.
5. Describe the current distribution of the world’s major landforms, climates, biomes, soils and terrestrial flora and fauna and learn how appropriate applications of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technologies enable earth scientists to better analyze and understand these and other diverse human/environmental relationships, patterns, distributions, and processes on the surface of the earth.

**G. INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND ACTIVITIES**

This is a traditional face to face lecture course. Students are encouraged to participate through enquiry and discussion at any time. Note taking is strongly suggested. Lectures may be recorded by preferred media platforms as long as doing so does not disrupt the class. Lecture outlines and other pertinent learning materials are found on Blackboard.
H. MAJOR COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

In this class, you will have three examinations worth 100 points each and a comprehensive final examination worth 100 points. Your final grade will be calculated by the percentage of the maximum 400 points you attain when all your grades are totaled. For example: 360 points plus are an A, 320-359 points are a B, 280-319 points are a C, 240-279 are a D and less than 240 points is a failing grade. All regularly scheduled exams are multiple choice. A Scantron form 882-E is required for each exam.

I. COURSE CONTENT/SCHEDULE

Week 1: August 28, 30, September 1; Introduction to Physical Geography.
Week 2: September 4 Labor Day holiday, September 6, 8; Earth-Sun Geometry.
Week 3: September 11, 13, 15; Temperature.
Week 4: September 18, 20, 22; Atmosphere and Climate.
Week 5: September 25, 27; Atmosphere and Climate. September 29; Exam #1.
Week 6: October 2, 4, 6; Ocean Circulations.
Week 7: October 9, 11, 13; Coastal Processes.
Week 8: October 16, 18, 20; Water Resources.
Week 9: October 23, 25; Fluvial Systems. October 27; Exam #2.
Week 10: October 30, November 1, 3; Plate Tectonics and Geomorphology.
Week 11: November 6, 8, 10; Plate Tectonics and Geomorphology.
Week 12: November 13, 15, 17; Weathering and Erosion.
Week 13: November 20; Exam #3. November 22, Class Project, November 24; Thanksgiving Holiday.
Week 14: November 27, 29, December 1; Biogeography.
Week 15: December 4, Biogeography, December 6, GPS, December 8; Reading Day (no class).
Week 16: December 13; Comprehensive final exam (8:00-10:30 am).
Note: Changes in this course schedule may be necessary and will be announced to the class by the Instructor. The assignments and exams shown are directly related to the Student Learning Outcomes described in Section F.

J. COURSE POLICIES

Attendance/Tardiness
Students are encouraged to attend all scheduled classes. Experience indicates that missing class often results in poor grades, and, as such, absences are strongly discouraged. Students who are late to class should not disrupt others upon entry. That said, students who are tardy are strongly encouraged to attend class for the length of time they can.

Late Work and Make-up Exams
Any make-up exams are given on the last class day. Only one make-up exam per student is allowed. A valid excuse (i.e. medical, familial or other emergency) and instructor approval are required before a make-up for a missed exam is scheduled. At the discretion of the instructor, make-up exams may be short answer, “fill in the blank” and/or essay.

Extra Credit
No extra credit is given in this course. Exams may be curved, however.

Cell Phone Use
Cell phone use during class is discouraged, but not prohibited. Audible phone conversations in the classroom are not allowed except in case of emergency. Phones are to be put away during exams.

Laptop Use
Laptops/tablets may be used at any time except during exams.

Food in Class
Permitted, but discretion advised. Other students must not be disturbed and university property must be respected.

Missed Exam
See reference above in “Late Work and Make-up Exams” section.

Participation
Students are encouraged to attend class regularly and participate through enquiry and discussion at any time.
K. COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY POLICIES

- **Academic Integrity (University)**
  University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in a failing grade.

- **Classroom/Professional Behavior**
  Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, as an academic community, requires that each individual respect the needs of others to study and learn in a peaceful atmosphere. Under Article III of the Student Code of Conduct, classroom behavior that interferes with either (a) the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of the peace and is subject to disciplinary sanction outlined in article VII of the Student Code of Conduct. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including classrooms, electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

- **Statement of Civility**
  Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi has a diverse student population that represents the population of the state. Our goal is to provide you with a high quality educational experience that is free from repression. You are responsible for following the rules of the University, city, state and federal government. We expect that you will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation or disability. Behaviors that infringe on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

- **Deadline for Dropping a Course with a Grade of W (University)**
  I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. **Please consult with your academic advisor, the Financial Aid Office, and me, before you decide to drop this course.** Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropping from the class. Please consult the Academic Calendar ([http://www.tamucc.edu/academics/calendar/](http://www.tamucc.edu/academics/calendar/)) for the last day to drop a course.

- **Grade Appeals (College of Science and Engineering)**
  As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards
as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules website at http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html, and the College of Science and Engineering Grade Appeals webpage at http://sci.tamucc.edu/students/GradeAppeal.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the chair or director of the appropriate department or school, the Office of the College of Science and Engineering Dean, or the Office of the Provost.

- **Disability Services**
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call (361) 825-5816 or visit Disability Services in Corpus Christi Hall 116.

If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

http://disabilityservices.tamucc.edu/

- **Statement of Academic Continuity**
In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane and classes could not be held on the campus of Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi; this course would continue through the use of Blackboard and/or email. In addition, the syllabus and class activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities (i.e., emails, web sites, and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of the closing of the physical campus. However, students need to make certain that the course instructor has a primary and a secondary means of contacting each student.

L. **OTHER INFORMATION**

- **Academic Advising**
The College of Science & Engineering requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. The Academic Advisor will set up a degree plan, which must be signed by the student, a faculty mentor, and the
department chair. Meetings are by appointment only; advisors do not take walk-ins. Please call or stop by the Advising Center to check availability and schedule an appointment. The College’s Academic Advising Center is located in Center for Instruction 350 or can be reached at (361) 825-3928.

GENERAL DISCLAIMER

I reserve the right to modify the information, schedule, assignments, deadlines, and course policies in this syllabus if and when necessary. I will announce such changes in a timely manner during regularly scheduled lecture periods.