GISC 1301.001: Physical Geography
Spring 2020

A. COURSE INFORMATION

Course number/section: GISC 1301.001
Class meeting time: TR 9:30 am - 10:45 am
Class location: Center for Instruction IH 268
Course Website: http://bb9.tamucc.edu
CRN: 22757 (Cross-listed as 21335)

B. INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Dr. John S. Wood
Office location: CS 130A
Office hours: TR 3:00 – 5:30 PM
Telephone: 361-825-4185
e-mail: john.wood@tamucc.edu
Appointments: Contact via email or phone to schedule an appointment. Additional hours available by appointment.

C. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Catalog Course Description
The goal of this course is to encourage geographic thinking by examining the interactions between physical systems and human activities. Introduction to topics covered include elements of Physical Geography (studies of atmosphere, ocean and land surface environments), Geographic Information Systems (computer systems that capture, analyze, and display geographic information), and human environmental interactions. Students may not receive credit for both GEOG 1301 and GISC 1301.

D. PREREQUISITES AND COREQUISITES

There are no prerequisites or corequisites required for this course.

E. REQUIRED TEXTBOOK(S), READINGS AND SUPPLIES

For this course, you will need reliable access to a laptop or desktop to access supplemental materials that will be provided to you via Blackboard. The following textbook is required:

*Introducing Physical Geography, 6th Edition,*
Author: Alan H. Strahler, ISBN: 978-1118396209
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 for 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 considered 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.

1. Students will familiarize themselves with the basic concepts of Physical Geography  
   a. Students will acquire the vocabulary and methods associated with geospatial analyses  
   b. Students will have a working knowledge of earth-sun geometry, biogeographic processes, and plate tectonics  
   c. Students will be able to model, interpret, and have a working knowledge of earth’s atmospheric and oceanic circulation patterns and processes that influence global climate patterns  
   d. Students will be able to explain how weathering and erosion impacts earth’s systems and landforms  
2. Students will analyze sample data to assess geographic processes and patterns and draw conclusions about the data based on knowledge obtained during the course  
3. Interpret and assess models and maps to acquire additional information about Earth’s systems  
4. Learn how humans impact Earth’s physical systems and vice versa

In addition to the content knowledge the course also provides you with basic core competencies such as:

1. Critical thinking: The study of patterns and processes within the physical world requires us to think critically about potential drivers of change. In this course we will approach landscape-based studies using the scientific method.  
2. Problem solving by working collaboratively in teams: Students will have the opportunity to develop teamwork skills by answering a series of critical thinking questions during presentations and in-class projects throughout the semester.  
3. Communication skills: students will be introduced to scientific communication skills through technical writing and presentation exercises. Students will have the ability to explore concepts by creating charts, maps, graphics and presenting orally. Students will also improve communication skills by taking notes, extracting information from the internet, from class presentation and engaging in in-class discussions.  
4. Empirical and quantitative skills when working with numeral data, interpreting graphs and maps, etc.
G. INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND ACTIVITIES

Lecture content, quizzes and assignments are found on Blackboard. This course requires active participation, and students are expected to attend all classes. Further, all assignments and extra-classroom workshops are listed in the syllabus. Students are expected to keep up with assignments, due dates and out-of-classroom locations. All work is expected to be of professional quality.

H. MAJOR COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Student learning outcomes will be assessed through attendance at lectures and participation in class group activities, completion of assignments and quizzes by scheduled due dates, and completion of exams by scheduled due dates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>% of FINAL GRADE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exam 1</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam 2</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>In Class Activities</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Homework</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Project</td>
<td>10%</td>
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</tbody>
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The following grading scale will be used:
- A = 90-100%
- B = 80-89.9%
- C = 70-79.9%
- D = 60-69.9%
- F = ≤ 59.9%

I. TENTATIVE COURSE CONTENT/SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1/21 - 1/24</td>
<td>Course Overview, Introduction to Geography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1/27 – 1/29</td>
<td>Earth as a Rotating Planet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2/3 – 2/5</td>
<td>Global Energy Patterns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2/10 – 2/12</td>
<td>Our Atmosphere/Atmospheric Temperature and Climate Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2/17 – 2/19</td>
<td>Review and Exam 1</td>
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### Course Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2/24 – 2/26</td>
<td>Wind and Global Circulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>3/2 – 3/4</td>
<td>Weather Systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>3/9 – 3/11</td>
<td><strong>Spring Break! No Classes!</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>3/16 – 3/18</td>
<td>Global Climates</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>3/23 – 3/25</td>
<td>Biogeography</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>3/30 – 4/1</td>
<td><strong>Review and Exam II</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>4/6 – 4/8</td>
<td>Earth’s Tectonics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>4/13 – 4/15</td>
<td>Weathering, Erosion, and Mass Wasting</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>4/20 – 4/22</td>
<td>Hydrologic Introduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>4/27 – 4/29</td>
<td>Fluvial Systems</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5/4</td>
<td>Review</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Final Exam</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Thursday May 14, 8:00 a.m. – 10:30 am</td>
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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 expected to attend all lectures. Students that are not present during assignments will only have the opportunity for exemptions or makeups only if they present the instructor with the appropriate documents for a university-approved excuse. Otherwise, all late work will be a zero. Students will not receive in-class credit for clicker questions that they have missed from absences, or failure to maintain clicker batteries. Your will be exempted from your lowest homework assignment at the end of the semester. The documentation required for an absence to be excused must be:

- From an appropriate source who states the nature of the event that caused (or will cause) your absence.
- In writing, on official stationery, and signed.
- Presented **prior** to the absence for a scheduled event (e.g., university-sponsored activity, recognized religious holiday, military service).
- Presented **no more than one week** after the date of an unexpected absence.
Late Work and Make-up Exams
Most assignments will be submitted through Blackboard. Assignments are due by the beginning of class on the date announced. Late assignment penalty for tardy work = 10% assignment grade deduction per day late. After the third day, late assignments will not be accepted and the student will receive no grade for that assignment. You may always turn in assignments early. If you know that you will have an excused absence when an assignment is due, you must turn in that assignment before its due date.

Cell Phone Use
Electronic communication devices should be in silent mode during class. If you need to use them, please do so in a manner that does not interfere with or distract other students from the learning experience. If an emergency call has to be answered, please walk unobtrusively out of the class, finish the conversation, and return to your seat equally unobtrusively.

Laptop Use
The use of laptop computers or tablets is permissible in class and highly encouraged. The use of such devices can, when properly used, be a tool for professional growth. While not required, I encourage students to bring whatever data device they normally use to class every week. You will receive assignments electronically (Blackboard) and will also have journal articles that you will be responsible for reading and understanding. I minimize the amount of paper distributed to and from students as a part of this class. Electronic submission of presenter critiques will require a wireless–capable laptop or mobile device. Please limit your use to note-taking for this class. Improper use will necessitate a change in this policy.

Food in Class
Students’ schedules may be hectic and may not allow time between classes for meals. If consuming food and drink in the lecture classroom, please respect the facilities by cleaning up all spills immediately and removing all trash. Please also respect your fellow students!

Missed Exam
You are expected to take the exam when scheduled. Make-up exams will only be permitted under department-approved circumstances, early, and at my convenience.

Students are not required to take more than two final examinations in any one day. Any student with three or more final examinations scheduled on the same day may request to take one of the examinations on another day during the final examination period. The process is described at the bottom of the Final Exam Schedule found at http://registrar.tamucc.edu/Register%20for%20Classes/Final_Exams.html.

Participation
Students are expected to participate and do a great deal of peer-reviewing and peer-editing in class. Please be willing to help your fellow class members.

Appointments
Please avoid ‘ambushing’ the professor before or after class. You will like the outcome of just about everything better if you make an appointment or send an e-mail to my school e-mail account. I cannot maintain confidentiality in the classroom setting in front of other students. I do not do Blackboard Messaging or text messages.
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)**
  The grade of W will be assigned to any student officially dropping a course. Please consult with the instructor before you decide to drop to be sure it is the best thing to do. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, visit the Office of the University Registrar for the Course Drop Form that must be submitted. No student is eligible to receive a W without completing the official drop process by this deadline. 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.