Physical Geography and Mapping GISC
1301.001 Department of Computing Sciences

Fall 2020

A. COURSE INFORMATION

Course number/section: GISC 1301.001
Class meeting time: TR 11.00 am – 12.15 pm
Class location: online
Course Website: http://bb9.tamucc.edu

B. INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Jason Louis
Office location: NRC 3400
Office hours: by appointment
e-mail: jason.louis@tamucc.edu
Appointments: email for appointment

C. COURSE DESCRIPTION

The goal of this course is to encourage you to think geographically, 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, analysis, and display of geographic information), and human environmental interactions.

This course counts toward the life and physical sciences foundational component area of the University Core Curriculum.

D. PREREQUISITES AND COREQUISITES

Prerequisites
None

Corequisites
None

E. REQUIRED TEXTBOOK(S), READINGS AND SUPPLIES

Required Textbook(s)
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 recommended, but not 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 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.

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 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 Skills - to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information
2. Communication Skills - to include effective development, interpretation, and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication
3. Empirical and Quantitative Skills - to include the manipulation and analysis of numerical data or observable facts resulting in informed conclusions
4. Teamwork - to include the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal
5. Personal Responsibility - to include the ability to connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making
6. Social Responsibility: to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities
G. INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND ACTIVITIES

Online lectures and content found on Blackboard.

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 by scheduled due dates, and completion of exams by scheduled due dates.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>% of FINAL GRADE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exam 1</td>
<td>12.5</td>
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<td>Exam 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>In Class Activities</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>Homework Assignments</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td>Class Project</td>
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GRADE RUBRIC

A $\geq$90
B $\geq$80 and <90
C $\geq$70 and <80
D $\geq$60 and <70
F <60

I. TENTATIVE COURSE CONTENT/SCHEDULE

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Course Overview, Introduction to Geography</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Earth as a Rotating Planet</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Global Energy Patterns</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Our Atmosphere</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Atmospheric Temperature and Climate Change</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Wind and Global Circulation</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Weather Systems</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Global Climates</td>
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### J. COURSE POLICIES

**COVID-19**
Face Coverings—Face coverings (cloth face covering, surgical mask, etc.) must be properly worn in all non-private spaces including classrooms, teaching laboratories, common spaces such as lobbies and hallways, public study spaces, libraries, academic resource and support offices, and outdoor spaces where 6 feet of physical distancing is difficult to reliably maintain. Extra masks will be made available if needed.

**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 if they present the instructor with the appropriate documents that are considered a university-approved excused absence. Otherwise, **all late work will be a zero**. You will be exempted from your lowest homework assignment at the end of the semester.

**Late Work and Make-up Exams**
All assignments must be completed on time. **No late submissions will be accepted.** Students are also **expected** to take the final exam during the university scheduled time (foreign travel is not an acceptable reason to be absent from exams). An exception can be made as per university policy, if a student has three or more exams in one day; they have the option to move one.

**Extra Credit**
No extra credit options are available for this course. No exceptions.

**Email**
Consider email as official correspondence warranting professional language. Professional emails include elements such as a short descriptive subject line, salutation, complete inquiry in the body of the message, your full name, and course and section number. Unprofessional emails will result in a non-response and request for proper correspondence.

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<td>9</td>
<td>Biogeography</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Earth’s Tectonics</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Weathering, Erosion, and Mass Wasting</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Hydrologic Introduction</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Fluvial Systems</td>
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<td><strong>Finals</strong></td>
<td><strong>Final Exam</strong></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.
Lecture Slides
Lecture slides are meant to be supplemental for visual learners in the course, and to help students learn how to visualize data, models, and processes. Slides will be made available to you on Blackboard, so you do not need to rush to write down the slides word-for-word unless you feel that doing so helps you. However, it is highly recommended you make additional notes concerning material the instructor shares in class that may not be depicted in the slides that you may still be responsible for knowing on quizzes and exams.

Communication about Life Events
It is your (the student’s) responsibility to keep up with the course instruction, assignments, and examinations. Should a life event interrupt your ability to meet these responsibilities, you must inform the instructor about this as soon as possible and within a reasonable amount of time so that a course of action can be determined. Communicating with the instructor about these life events in an unreasonable time frame is not acceptable and will not change the outcome of missed work nor will it be a valid reason to receive an ‘Incomplete’ designation for the course.

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 dropped 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.C0.03, 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 required 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.C0.03, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules website at [http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.c0.03_student_grade_appeals.pdf](http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.c0.03_student_grade_appeals.pdf). 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/](http://disabilityservices.tamucc.edu/)

- **Civil Rights Complaints**
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi is committed to fostering a culture of caring and respect that is free from discrimination, relationship violence and sexual misconduct, and ensuring that all affected students have access to services. For information on reporting Civil Rights complaints, options and support resources (including pregnancy support accommodations) or university policies and procedures, please contact the University Title IX Coordinator, Sam Ramirez (Samuel.ramirez@tamucc.edu) or Deputy Title IX Coordinator, Rosie Ruiz (Rosie.Ruiz@tamucc.edu) x5826, or visit website at Title IX/Sexual Assault/Pregnancy.

**Limits to Confidentiality.** Essays, journals, and other materials submitted for this class are generally considered confidential pursuant to the University's student record policies. However, students should be aware that University employees, including instructors, are not able to maintain confidentiality when it conflicts with their responsibility to report alleged or suspected civil rights discrimination that is observed by or made known to an employee in the course and scope of their employment. As the instructor, I must report allegations of civil rights discrimination, including sexual assault, relationship violence, stalking, or sexual harassment to the Title IX Coordinator if you share it with me.

These reports will trigger contact with you from the Civil Rights/Title IX Compliance office who will inform you of your options and resources regarding the incident that you have shared. If you would like to talk about these incidents in a confidential setting, you are encouraged to make an appointment with counselors in the University Counseling Center.

- **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.