

Geography 141: The Natural Environment (Spring 2016) - Draft

Instructor: Devin Lea (dlea@uoregon.edu)

Office: Condon 105

Online Office Hours: TBA

Graduate Teaching Fellows:

Christina Appleby (cappleby@uoregon.edu) Online Office Hours: TBA

Kuan-Chi Wang (kuanchi@uoregon.edu) Online Office Hours: TBA

**** NOTE ****

This is a hybrid course where all lectures and labs will be posted on Canvas, but exams will be taken **IN PERSON ON THE UO CAMPUS**. Please make sure you will be able to attend the midterm and final exams on campus. **NO EXCEPTIONS WILL BE MADE FOR EXAMS OFF CAMPUS OR AT TIMES SEPARATE THAN SCHEDULED FOR THE MIDTERM AND FINAL.**

Required Materials:

- 1) *Physical Geography, 4th Edition* by de Blij, Muller, Burt, and Mason
- 2) Google Earth desktop application, version 6 or higher (this is free software you can download, and this software is also installed on Academic Workstation computers in the libraries)
- 3) Other material will be made available on canvas.uoregon.edu

Computer skills required for course: This course will largely be administered through Canvas. In Canvas, you will need to know how to send a message, attach files and documents, and check that your email address is current. Please take time at the beginning of the course to familiarize yourself with Canvas and Google Earth if you are not already familiar.

Course Objectives:

1. Using readings, lectures, and laboratories to develop an understanding and appreciation of natural processes that occur every day or over every year. The basics of meteorology (study of the atmosphere and weather), climatology (longer-term trends in weather and its variation over the earth), biogeography (distribution of life on earth) and geomorphology (processes that shape the surface of the earth).
2. Students will understand the important properties of maps and students will use maps and digital mapping tools to explore spatial patterns on earth.
3. Topics in meteorology will range from why weather changes daily to the causes of global patterns of climate. Students will be able to interpret patterns, and explain causes, of maps of various weather elements (temperature, air pressure, humidity, wind).
4. In climatology, students will study the causes of seasonal patterns of temperature and rainfall in different locations on earth. Students will be able to link the causes of these seasonal patterns to patterns in atmospheric circulation, and the role of various other factors such as elevation and location within continents. Last, students will be able to roughly locate climatic data (presented as a graph) to actual locations on earth.
5. In biogeography, students will be able to explain why climates produce major biome types on earth, including the causes of the changes in vegetation in Oregon.
6. In geomorphology, students will understand the pathways of water from precipitation to ocean and atmosphere, and how rivers sculpt the surface of the earth. Students will be able to identify mass-wasting and glacial features from topographic maps, and be able to create and explain the patterns in longitudinal profiles of rivers.

Weekly timeline:

Saturday at 4pm: Weekly module containing lectures, lab, and quiz opens

Friday at 5pm: Lab and quiz close

Time-Management Suggestions for this Online Course:

Sunday to Tuesday – View the weekly lecture(s) and complete participation components

Monday to Wednesday – Read the assigned chapter(s)

Tuesday to Thursday – Complete the weekly lab

Contact a GTF by Wednesday to clarify any lab questions you have

Tuesday to Friday – Take the quizzes

My online office hours will be TBA. These are the times I will read and respond to your emails. If you want to meet me in person, please email to schedule a meeting time.

GTFs also have online office hours and will respond to lab-based questions via email during their listed online office hour times. NOTE: If you wait until Thursday to bring the weekly work and run into difficulties, myself or GTFs ARE NOT obligated to help your “distress call”. Please make sure you stay on top of your work and ask any questions in a timely manner.

Assignments and Grading:

Your class grade will be based on your two exams (40% of the total grade), quizzes (25% of total grade), lab assignments (25% of the total grade), and “in-class” participation (10% of the total). Grades are rounded to integers.

Grades are not curved, but the grading scale reflects the breadth and depth of material covered. Lower grade boundaries are:

A+:>98; A:92; A-:88; B+:84; B:80; B-:76; C+:72; C:68; C-:64; D+:60; D:56; D-:52

NOTE: You must receive a passing grade in the lab section of the course in order to pass the class.

Exams (40% of total grade): There will be two exams, each worth 20% of your final grade. No makeup tests are given. Students who miss a test without a documented excuse will receive a score of ZERO for that test. Except in the case of true emergencies, you must contact me prior to the exam if you are going to miss the test; otherwise you will receive a grade of zero.

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The midterm will be Thursday, April 28th starting at 5pm in Straub Hall 145

The final exam time and date are TBA

Exams are approximately 75% based on multiple choice questions, and the remainder are fill-in-the-blank or short essay questions.

Please note that the lab assignment on week 10 is due during exam week.

Quizzes (20% of total grade): There are 10 quizzes in the quarter, 1 each week. Quiz questions will come from lecture and readings for that week’s material.

Late submissions: No late submissions for the quizzes are accepted.

You may log in to Canvas and answer questions up to three times. You must finish each attempt within 60 minutes. You will be shown the correct answers after each attempt. Each attempt will have some variation in the questions, being drawn randomly from a question pool. Your highest-scoring attempt will be used for your grade.

Note that **ALL** quiz scores will be included in your final grade.

Labs (20% of total grade): There are 10 labs in the quarter, 1 each week. You can open and modify the lab without submitting and Canvas will save your work, but you only get 1 submission. **NOTE:** If your average grade for the labs (after dropping the lowest lab grade) is not a passing grade (>60%), you will not pass the course.

Late submissions: You have four additional days to submit a late lab. Each day after the due date results in a reduction of 20% of the grade.

“In-class” participation (10% of the total grade): You will answer questions related to the lectures upon their conclusion. These questions are participation-based and are meant to help reiterate key class concepts.

Academic Honesty:

Cheating, such as copying material from other students on tests or lab assignments will result in failing the test at a minimum and may require involvement from the Dean of Students. While we encourage you to talk about the lecture material and lab material outside of class, copying other's work is not allowed and electronic submission of the lab material makes detecting such cases less difficult. In serious cases, you will flunk the class or be expelled from the university.

Disability Services Notice:

I want to ensure a quality learning experience to all students. If you need specific accommodations to obtain the most you can out of this class, please let me know by (1) either contacting me yourself or having campus learning services contact me about your particular needs, and (2) providing the appropriate documentation from campus learning services. I will make every effort to accommodate your needs, but you must notify me by the first week of class if you need special arrangements.

Note:

I consider this syllabus a contract between myself and the students in this course. In writing this syllabus, I have obligated myself to follow the policies and procedures contained herein. By registering for this class, you are responsible for understanding and following these policies as well. I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus. You will receive written notification if major changes to the course occur.

Tentative Schedule (Subject to change)

Week	Date	Topic (Lab Topic)	Units
1		Introduction; Geography Essentials and Planet Earth; Mapping Earth's surface and Earth-sun relationships; (Map skills)	1-4
2		Radiation and heat balance; the Greenhouse Effect; Composition and temperature of the Atmosphere; (Earth-Sun relationships)	5-7
3		Atmospheric pressure; winds; Coriolis force and geostrophic winds; Ocean currents; (Temperature)	8-10
4		Atmospheric moisture and weather (Humidity and Adiabatic Processes)	11-12
5		Climate classification; Midterm Exam ; (Global climates)	14
6		Climates, natural and human impacts on climate (Global biomes & climate change)	15-19
7		The Biosphere and weathering (Topographic maps and air photos)	20,25
8		Mass wasting; karst and arid environments (Landforms & Mass Wasting)	35-37
9		Rivers and hydrology	38-39
10		Glaciers	43-45
		Final Exam TBA	