

Geography 101
Survey of Physical Geography
Spring 2009

(Meeting Time & Place: TTH 3:30 PM - 4:45 PM in Music Building 173)

Professor: Dr. Wei Luo e-mail: wluo@niu.edu
Office: 120 Davis Hall phone: 753-6828

Office Hours: T Th 11:00 am – 12:00 noon or by appointment. The best way to reach me is by e-mail.

Text: Arbogast, A. F., *Discovering Physical Geography*. Wiley & Sons (customized for NIU). This is also used in GEOG 102.

Web site: <http://webcourses.niu.edu>

The BlackBoard course website is an empowering learning tool for you. You will need to use this web site frequently to complete warm-up exercises, download lecture notes, take practicing quiz, obtain announcement, check your grades, communicate with your classmates and me, and much more. ***Be sure to access the site often.***

You will need to use your NIU z account to access this website. If you haven't used this before, please visit the above website and click on the **Student Help** button. You can also call **753-8100** or email **helpdesk@niu.edu** for assistance.

Brief Description

This course is an introduction to natural environmental systems. Lectures will emphasize the interrelationships of hydrology, soils, landforms, vegetation, and geologic materials. In addition, the impact of humans on natural environmental systems will be discussed.

If you are interested in any of the topics we cover this semester I strongly encourage you to consider taking another Geography course that deals with that topic. Feel free to visit with me any time regarding other Geography classes, becoming a Geography major or minor, or enrolling in the Environmental Studies minor. A flow chart emphasizing the full curriculum in Physical Geography is posted on the course website.

Laboratory (GEOG 102 Students Only)

A separate 1-credit laboratory course GEOG 102 can be taken at the same time with this course. GEOG 102 will provide a hands-on introduction to basic techniques used to study elements of natural environmental systems. Thus taking GEOG 102 may enhance your understanding of the materials in GEOG 101 (this course). Check with your advisor regarding your department and college graduation requirements. GEOG 102 will meet the first week of the semester.

Course Goals and Objectives

It is hoped that you will leave this course with a basic understanding and appreciation for the Earth's natural environmental systems, the interactions among different components, and the processes involved; will want to know more about the subject matter presented; and will have had fun learning along the way.

After successful completion of this course, you should be able to

- Describe different natural processes operating on Earth;
- Describe the interactions among these processes and explain how they shape the natural environment we see today;
- Explain the impact of human activities on natural environmental systems.

Grading and Exams

In-class assessments through Classroom Performance System (CPS or clicker) (10%)

Numerous studies have shown that the CPS or clicker technology enhances students learning, encourages active participation in class, and makes the learning a fun experience. That is exactly the reason I decided to try this new technology. If you have not purchased the clicker, please do so in the bookstore and **register it through BlackBoard**. (DO NOT go to eInstruction website to do so as the clicker box said.) Detailed instructions on how to register and answers to other frequently asked questions can be found at http://www.its.niu.edu/its/clickers/cps_student_faq.shtml. Since this is a new technology, we will proceed slowly as we all are learning and getting used to it. We will not count your clicker grades during the first 2 weeks. After that, various forms of assessment will be conducted through CPS, e.g., in-class quizzes and surveys, which will account for 5% of your grade. Your attendance, which will be automatically recorded by CPS, will account for 5% of your grade. **There will be NO make-ups for these in-class assessments.**

Exams (90%)

There will be 4 exams and 1 optional cumulative final. Only the **4 highest scores** (out of all 5 exams) will count toward your grade (**each for 20%**). If you are satisfied with your grade after the 4th exam, you may choose not to take the final. Some selected in-class quizzes will be made available in BlackBoard (after they are given) to help you practice for the next exam. These on-line practice quizzes will NOT be counted again toward your course grade. All exams will be close book and **any cheating behavior will result in a grade of F** (see Plagiarism Statement under “Other”). Exam and quiz questions will be primarily multiple choices but may also contain matching and true-false questions. Some practicing quiz questions may reappear on the exam. **The exam dates are 2/3, 2/26, 4/2, 4/30, and 5/8 (optional), which are fixed unless otherwise noticed** (see a more detailed tentative schedule on page 4). **Please mark your calendar and do not miss an exam.**

There will be NO make-up exams after the scheduled exams are given. Should you have an emergency or schedule conflict, you must contact me BEFORE the exam date as soon as possible so that alternative arrangement can be made. Otherwise students who miss an exam without first contacting me will get zero for that exam. No exceptions.

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Yes, I deliberately repeat this so that everybody understands this policy from day one. It is simply not fair to the students who prepared and took the exam on time to allow other students to have extra time to prepare and/or discuss what was on the exam with others in the class.

Course grade

An overall score for the course will be computed based on 90% of the 4 best exams, 5% of the warm-up exercises and 5% of in-class assessments. The overall score is converted to letter grade based on the following scale:

Grade	% of maximum possible overall score
A	>90%
B	80%-89%
C	70%-79%
D	60%-69%
F	< 60%

The lower limit for each grade range will not move up. If your overall score is very close to the break point, your grade *may* be elevated to the next higher grade *only if* there is a natural breaking/clustering in the score distribution at the instructor's discretion. So you should set your goal well above the lower limit of the grade you wish to obtain.

Course Guidelines and a few Miscellaneous Tips

1. Announcements in lecture take precedence over all handouts and web materials.
2. Class will begin and end as scheduled. As a courtesy to your fellow classmates please arrive on time and **avoid packing up before class is scheduled to end.**
3. As courtesy to other students, please do not talk or in any other way distract other students while the instructor is lecturing.
4. All **cell phones**, pagers, and similar items **MUST** be turned **off** or set on vibrate before entering the classroom. First violation will get a warning. Further violations will be asked to leave and may result in grade reduction.
5. You are responsible for attending all lectures. *Exam questions will be developed primarily from lecture material.* Coming to class and taking good notes will be extremely helpful and they are a critical part of the learning process. Discussing notes, ideas... with fellow students is an excellent and fun way to learn.
6. Be prepared for classes, keep up with reading, and review material timely.
7. Ask questions. Ask in lecture, in lab, during office hours, if you see me walking across campus... I am here to help you. If you are having difficulties with any portion of the class, I strongly encouraged you to visit with me as soon as possible so we can correct the situation. **Do not wait until the end of the semester to bring problems to my attention.**
8. Tutoring for many General Education courses is available though Educational Services and Programs at NIU. Information is available at: <http://www.esp.niu.edu/>
9. Learn to manage your time during your academic experience. Sometime this semester or during your college career you will have multiple exams/projects due the same day or on successive days. Many of you have busy educational, social, and employment schedules. Get a calendar book and plan accordingly in advance of due dates.
10. In order to protect your privacy, grade information will be exclusively listed on the course Blackboard website. No scores will be posted in public or given over the phone or email.
11. If there is a university closing on the day of a scheduled exam, the exam will occur at the next scheduled class meeting.
12. You are encouraged to stop in and visit. If it is not "office hours", please realize that I have other commitments and may not always be available or that other students may be visiting. Please email or call ahead to set up an appointment if it is not office hours.
13. Have fun. It is my goal that you enjoy this class as well as learn something about physical geography while you are here this semester.
14. If you have a documented disability and wish to discuss academic accommodations, please contact me privately as soon as possible so that we can make suitable arrangements (see Receiving Assistance below).

Other

Receiving Assistance: If you have any questions concerning course materials or procedures, please contact me promptly. If you have a disability or any other special circumstance that may have some impact on your course work and for which you may require accommodations, please contact me early in the semester so that arrangements can be made with the Center for Access-Ability Resources (CAAR).

Plagiarism Statement: "The attempt of any student to present as his or her own work that which he or she has not produced is regarded by the faculty and administration as a serious offense. Students are considered to have cheated if they copy the work of another during an examination or turn in a paper or an assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else. Students are guilty of plagiarism, intentional or not, if they copy material from books, magazines, or other sources or if they paraphrase ideas from such sources without acknowledging them. Students guilty of, or assisting others in, either cheating or plagiarism on an assignment, quiz, or examination may receive a grade of F for the course involved and may be suspended or dismissed from the university." *Northern Illinois University Undergraduate Catalog.*

GEOG 101 Tentative Schedule of General Lecture Topics

Note: The time allowed for each general topic may change. **The exam dates will not change.**
Readings are listed by chapter.

Week	Date	Topic	Reading
1	1/13	Overview and Introduction to Physical Geography	Ch. 1
	1/15	Introduction to Physical Geography	"
2	1/20	The Geographers' Tools	Ch. 2
	1/22	<i>Continued</i>	"
3	1/27	Earth-Sun Geometry and The season	Ch. 3
	1/29	<i>Continued</i>	"
4	2/3	EXAM 1	EXAM 1
	2/5	Earth's Internal Structure, Rock Cycle, and Geologic Time	Ch. 12
5	2/10	<i>Continued</i>	"
	2/12	Tectonic Processes and Landforms	Ch. 13
6	2/17	<i>Continued</i>	"
	2/19	Atmospheric Moisture and Precipitation	Ch. 7
7	2/24	Groundwater and Karst Landscape	Ch. 15
	2/26	EXAM 2	EXAM 2
8	3/3	Fluvial Systems and Landforms	Ch. 16
	3/5	<i>Continued</i>	"
	3/10,12	<i>Spring Break (3/7-15)</i>	
9	3/17	<i>Continued</i>	"
	3/19	Coastal Processes and Landforms	Ch. 19
10	3/24	<i>Continued</i>	"
	3/26	Glacial Geomorphology: Processes and Landforms	Ch. 17
11	3/31	<i>Continued</i>	"
	4/2	EXAM 3	EXAM 3
12	4/7	Eolian Systems	Ch. 18
	4/9	Weathering and Mass Movement	Ch. 14
13	4/14	<i>Continued</i>	"
	4/16	The Global Distribution & Character of Soils	Ch. 11
14	4/21	<i>Continued</i>	"
	4/23	Plant Geography	Ch. 10
15	4/28	<i>Continued</i>	"
	4/30	EXAM 4	EXAM 4
16	5/7	FINAL EXAM, cumulative & optional 4-5:50 p.m. (Thursday, May 7, 2009)	FINAL (cumulative & optional)