

UST 289 Physical Geography Fall 2009

Cleveland State University
Levin College of Urban Affairs
Department of Urban Studies
Instructor: Ruth Ruud

Physical Geography (15 weeks)
Fall Semester, 2009
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Course Description: This course is an introductory examination of the development of the physical environment in which we live. The course will cover drawing from a number of scientific fields, among them being meteorology, geomorphology and agronomy.

Course Objective: The objective of the course is to assist the student in understanding how the physical environment has developed and its impact on our metropolitan areas both suburban and urban. This course will also assist the student to understand how geographical knowledge can aid in understanding and solving problems of the city. An emphasis is placed on helping the student to relate science to their everyday lives and what can be done to protect our fragile environment.

Knowledge

- Understand the steps used in the scientific method.
- Recognize how scientific inquiry can be used to understand the development of the natural world that the student lives in.
- Understand how advancement in measurement and observation tools have led to advances in data collection that have enhanced knowledge of how our physical environment has developed over time.
- Understand the design of experimentation, data gathering, and observation.
- Develop an appreciation of the difference of results using analysis, logic and deduction from the scientific method versus other more subjective means.

Skills – quantitative literacy

- Use technology to solve mathematical problems as well as to prepare graphs and charts.
- Understand how to interpret graphs, tables and schematics and to draw inferences from them.
- Represent differences of annual data over time in a symbolic, visual, or verbal manner that has clarity of result.
- Understand of natural science phenomena by data collection and analysis using prescribed formulae.
- Recognize, understand and present the limitations of mathematical modeling used in the natural sciences.

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- **Note: 15% of student grade is based on an evaluation of quantitative literacy**

Skills – writing

- Develop an ability to find the “real issue” in development of an argument.
- Understand how to apply material learned in the course to the natural world that the student lives in.
- Understand the process of developing an appropriate thesis statement for a paper and being able to apply it.
- Understand how to paraphrase material and to apply it in the context of a paper.
- Develop the ability to appropriately use a citation format.

General Education Statement: This course is approved as a general education course meeting the requirements for the natural science breath of knowledge. Skill areas for this class include writing and quantitative literacy.

Course Method: This class is an internet class. Students are expected to complete all assignments as noted. Discussion will occur via discussion boards. Students often have difficulty staying on schedule with their assignments in internet classes. In order to help you maintain the schedule material turned in after the last date of acceptance will ONLY be accepted at the discretion of the instructor and with a point penalty. Students are responsible for contacting the instructor as soon as problems arise that might hinder your ability to submit your work on time. There is one scheduled meeting that will occur as noted on the course on-line schedule should you need to meet with the instructor. This meeting is NOT mandatory. Rather it is scheduled to give students a set time that they know the instructor will be available to meet with them to introduce the class.

Grading Policy: Grades are based on the results of application exercises, quizzes, a short paper and participation on discussion boards. There will be six quizzes given (dates as noted in the syllabus). Six short answer exercises are also required. Six Earthweek discussion board postings are required. One short paper will also be assigned. The grade points will be distributed as follows;

Quizzes (6)	20%
Short Exercises (6)	30%
Short Paper	20%
Earthweek posting	15%
Quantitative Literacy(3)	15%

Students are required to post as noted. Assignments are due as noted. Late assignments are subject to a 5% grade penalty per week they are late. Final acceptance dates are noted in the syllabus and on the Blackboard calendar.

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The grade scale is as follows: 95- 100 A 94-90 A- 89-87 B+ 86-83 B 82-80 B- 79-75 C+ 74-70 C 60- 69 D

Text: Strahler, Alan, Merali Zeeya, 2008, Visualizing Physical Geography, New York, NY. John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Class Schedule and Readings

Week 1: Aug 23 to Aug 29th

Chapter 1 The Earth As a Rotating Planet

Week 2: August 30th to September 5th

Chapter 2: The Earth's Global Energy Balance

- September 5: : Earthweek 1 is due

Week 3: September 6th to September 12th

Chapter 3: Air Temperature

- September 12: Quantitative 1 is due

Quiz 1 is due

Week 4: Sept 13th to September 19th

Chapter 4: Atmospheric Moisture and Precipitation

- September 19: Exercise 1 is due

- September 19: Earthweek 2 is due

Week 5: Sept 20th to Sept 26th

Chapter 5: Winds and the Global Circulation

- September 26: Quantitative 2 is due

Week 6: Sept 27th to Oct. 3rd

Chapter 6: Weather Systems

- October 3rd: Quiz 2 is due

- October 3rd: Earthweek 3 is due

- October 3rd : Exercise 2 is due

Week 7: Oct 5 to Oct 11th

Chapter 7: Global Climates

- October 11: Earthweek 4 is due

Week 8: Oct 11th to 17th

Chapters 16 and 17: Biogeography Processes and Global Biogeography

- October 17: Exercise 3 is due

- October 17: Quiz 3 is due

Week 9: Oct 18th to Oct. 24th

Chapters 10 and 11: Weathering and Mass Wasting and Fresh Water of the Continents

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- October 24: Short Paper is due

Week 10: Oct 25th to Oct. 31st

Chapter 12: Landforms Made by Running Water

-October 31st : Quiz 4 is due

-October 31st : Quantitative 3 is due

Week 11: Nov 1 to Nov 7th

Chapter 13: Landforms Made by Waves and Wind

- November 7th: Exercise 4 is due

- November 7th: Earthweek 5 is due

Week 12: Nov 8th to Nov 14th

Chapter 14 and 15: Glacial Landforms and the Ice Age and Global Soils

- November 14th: Quiz 5 is due

Week 13: Nov 15th to Nov 21st

Chapter 16 : Biogeographic Processes

- November 21st: Earthweek 6 is due

- November 21st: Exercise 5 is due

Week 14: Nov 22nd to Nov 28th

Chapter 17: Global Biogeography

- November 28: Quiz 6 is due

Week 15: Nov 29th to Dec 5th

- December 5: Exercise 6 is due

Additional Information

Submissions: Submission should be done via the Blackboard dropbox for the application exercises and short paper. Please, save your files in .rtf format (rich text format) before attaching and submitting them. To save a file in .rtf format, use "save as", when the drop box appears, name your file and then in the box below the file name use the drop down arrow to see the different file formats that you can use. Scroll and select the one that reads "rich text format" .rtf. This is especially important if you are using the most updated version of Word. Your word files that save as .doc. files cannot be read by previous versions of Word. Saving them out as .rtf files will make your instructors lives easier.

Sources of information are required for your submissions. Citations must be in proper academic format.

Note that the university does not permit the usage of wikipedia as a source of information. **Five points will be deducted if you use Wikipedia**

Quizzes: There are six quizzes. Due dates are as noted in the syllabus for each one. The quizzes will cover the material that is from the book. I will post a review sheet that will contain the terms you need to know for the questions. The questions will be true and false and multiple choice. There are between 10 to 15 questions on each quiz. Quizzes are timed. You will only have one opportunity

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to take each quiz. I strongly suggest that you take the time to fill out your review sheet before taking the quiz.

Application Exercises: The application exercises consist of a three to four questions. Each question can be answered in a few paragraphs. These questions are designed to help you apply the material from the book to real life.. These are to be submitted to the instructor by the due date. Due dates are as noted in the syllabus and in the assignment area. There will be one to two activities given that can be done with simple materials and will relate to how science relates to everyday life. Sources must be stated with all answers. Citations must be in proper academic format.

Short Paper: There is one short paper (6 to 8 pages). Due date is as noted in the syllabus. You may choose from the topics that are posted. Other topics must be approved by the instructor two weeks before the paper is due. You are to include a bibliography in your short paper that states all your sources.

Quantitative Exercise: The Quantitative Exercise utilizes math and science concepts to improve your quantitative skill development as part of the General Education requirements. The questions require you analyze data primarily through graphing and interpreting the findings. There will be three assignments given over the course of the semester. The total of the assignments will count as 15% of your grade. You may use the Excel Program for your graphs or do them on graph paper.

There will be two help sessions for the graphing: Thursday September 10th Noon to 1:30PM and Saturday September 12th 1:00 to 3:00 PM in the Computer Lab UR40 in lower level Urban Affairs Building

EarthWeek Discussion Board: The student is required to access the weekly map that is posted on Blackboard in the Earthweek file or at EarthWeek.com or is published in the Cleveland Plain Dealer each Saturday. Comments, questions, and observations are to be posted at least 6 times during the semester by all students. Please note, credit is NOT given for postings that are repetitions of what is stated on Earthweek. Your comments should expand on the material or note what you found most interesting about it. You are to state your sources. A sample Earthweek is on the Course Content page.

General Discussion Board: This board will be used for postings by the student with comments, questions, and observations regarding the chapter(s) assigned for reading. The instructor may put postings on this board for student discussion but I encourage students to take the lead here. This discussion board should help answer questions that you might have or address concerns that might arise during the semester.

Blackboard: There is also a Blackboard troubleshooting/instruction guide on the website in pdf. format.

Communication with the Instructor:

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Please check email as frequent emails are sent from the instructor to students through Blackboard and CSU email. Also check the announcements and course content page on Blackboard for course updates

Please note:

In an effort to facilitate meaningful and productive discussions and interactions to meet those ends, we would like to set some expectations and guidelines.

Please take a moment and visit "The Core Rules of Netiquette"

<http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html> Even if you think you are a "pro" at distance learning, you never know when one of your online habits may accidentally be offending. So please visit the netiquette website.

A special note on plagiarism: All submitted work is to be to academic standards with appropriate citations. Material that is copied word for word and submitted without appropriate citations will be graded as an F in either the exercises or the short paper. If you are unsure about how to paraphrase material or how to cite correctly, please contact the instructor before you submit your work. Copy and paste answers while easy are not a good way to learn to write. I would much rather have you restate the material than to copy and paste the answer. If you do use copy and paste, you must enclose the material in quotes and cite your source appropriately.

Submitted work is subject to review at turnitin.com at the discretion of the instructor.

University Policies

Students should refer to the Undergraduate Bulletin for procedures regarding add/drop and withdrawals.

Physically challenged/Special Needs

Students with special needs (physical handicaps, learning disabilities, English as a second language) should identify themselves so that the appropriate arrangements can be made. The Office of Disability Services provides additional assistance for those students who have special needs. Further information about services provided can be found online at

<http://www.csuohio.edu/offices/disability/>

Students can contact the office at 687-2015.

Writing Assistance All submitted work is to be written according to academic standards with appropriate citations. The student should contact the instructor **before** submitting work if unsure about how to paraphrase material or how to cite correctly, The Writing Center at Cleveland State is available to assist the student with writing issues. Information on the writing center is found at

<http://www.csuohio.edu/academic/writingcenter/>

Note: The instructor reserves the right to adjust and modify the syllabus as needed throughout the semester. It is strongly suggested that the student log on Blackboard often and review all announcements to keep current on all announcements and changes.

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