

TOWSON UNIVERSITY
Department of Geography and Environmental Planning
Geography 101

Course Outline

Instructor: Dr. John Morgan

I. Course Description

GEOG 101 Physical Geography (3 credit hours). Introductory spatial analysis of fundamental terrestrial natural phenomena, including their impact on humanity. Emphasis on Earth planetary motions, weather and climate, landforms, soils and vegetation.

II. Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course students will be able to:

- A. Identify the four environment spheres and explain how they are interrelated and interdependent.
- B. Explain, diagram, and analyze Earth-sun relationships, particularly the role of the sun and orbital motions of the Earth in regulating the seasons.
- C. Measure locations on the Earth's surface with latitude and longitude.
- D. Describe the composition and structure of the atmosphere.
- E. Explain the processes that control the temperature of the atmosphere.
- F. Diagram the circulation of the atmosphere and the oceans.
- G. Explain the properties of the hydrologic cycle and atmospheric moisture.
- H. Explain the differences between weather and climate.
- I. Identify the Earth's tectonic and gradational processes.
- J. Differentiate and compare landforms by geomorphologic processes.
- K. Explain the interaction of human beings and the environment both in terms of the negative impacts humans may have on the environment and the way changes in the natural environment impact humans.
- L. Describe the concepts, methods, and materials used by geographers for geographical research.
- M. Develop "mental maps" of major world regions.

Note: This course fulfills a Subcategory II.A.1 (Scientific Inquiry) General Education requirement.

III. Course Content

- A. Brief history and description of geography
- B. The earth in space
 1. Size and shape of the earth
 2. Earth movements and earth-sun relationships
 3. Locational and directional systems
 4. Time
- C. Maps of the earth
- D. The atmosphere

1. Composition and structure of the atmosphere
 2. Solar energy and temperature
 3. Pressure and wind
 4. Moisture
 5. Air masses, fronts, and storms
 6. Climatic regions and natural vegetation
- E. The lithosphere
1. Structure of the earth
 2. Composition of the lithosphere
 3. Internal (tectonic) forces
 - a. Plate tectonics and continental drift
 - b. Volcanism
 - c. Diastrophism
 4. External (gradational) forces
 - a. Weathering and soils
 - b. Mass wasting
 - c. Erosion
 5. Introduction to landforms
 - a. Landform classification
 - b. Landform producing forces

IV. Course Requirements and Evaluation

- A. Assigned readings from textbooks, faculty reserve materials, and class handouts
- B. Tests and final examination
 Three objective type tests are scheduled and will be given during the semester (the third test will be given during the final examination period). Each test will include questions from the assigned readings and the class notes, as well as questions involving the identification of selected "geographic place names" from maps of major world regions. Students must take both of the tests. Make-up tests will be given only in the event of an emergency. A notification from the Student Affairs office will be required in order to take a make-up test. At the discretion of the instructor, a make-up test may be of the essay and/or objective type.
- C. Quizzes
 Quizzes based on the assigned reading in the textbook may be given during the semester. Information regarding the quizzes will be announced in class
- D. Class attendance
 Class attendance is required because the textbook does not contain all of the material that is discussed in the lectures and the laboratory sessions. A "class list" will be circulated, for your signature, at each class. It is your responsibility to sign the class list, and to keep track of your absences. The maximum number of absences without penalty is four (4). Any absence in excess of the two permitted absences will result in the student's course grade being lowered by one letter grade for each additional absence. Class absences will be excused for documented reasons. According to the University's Attendance and Absence Policy, excused absences include "illness or injury when the student is unable to attend class, religious observance where the nature of the observance prevents the student from attending class, participating in University activities at the request of University authorities, and compelling verifiable circumstances beyond the control of the student." Students who are absent from class are responsible for any missed work, assignments, and tests.

Students with documented excused absences will be allowed to make up missed work, assignments, and tests.

E. Extra credit assignment

An extra credit assignment may be assigned during the semester. Information regarding the extra credit assignment will be announced in class.

F. Course grade

Your grade for the course will be determined from your performance on the three tests and the quizzes (if given). Each test will represent one-third of your course grade (assuming that no quizzes are given). If quizzes are given, each test will represent 30 percent of your course grade and the quizzes will collectively represent 10 percent of your course grade. Anyone found to be cheating on a test will be given a grade of 0 for the test. The incident will also be reported to the Office of Judicial Affairs as per the University's "Student Academic Integrity Policy." Letter grades will be determined according to the following schedule: A = 93 - 100%; A- = 90 - 92%; B+ = 87 - 89%; B = 83 - 86%; B- = 80 - 82%; C+ = 77 - 79%; C = 73 - 76%; C- = 70 - 72%; D+ = 67 - 69%; D = 60 - 66%; and F = 0 - 59%. The instructor will take class attendance into consideration when assigning letter grades to those students who have "borderline" course grades. The instructor also reserves the right to give "extra credit" to students who consistently contribute meaningful commentary and analysis to class discussion.

G. Students with a disability

Please see me during my office hours if you need accommodation due to a disability. Bring a copy of your statement from Disability Support Services authorizing your accommodation to the meeting.

H. University policy regarding repeated courses

University policy states that a student may not repeat a course more than once without specific prior permission from the Academic Standards Committee. If you have taken this course twice before and have not received written permission from the Academic Standards Committee to take the course a third time, you should not be registered for the course. Please consult the Registrar's Office about the procedure for petitioning the Academic Standards Committee.

I. Classroom policies

The following are several classroom policies for this course: 1) arrive on-time for class; 2) you are welcome to bring a beverage to class provided that you dispose of your bottle or cup when class is over; 3) if you need to talk with a classmate do so before or after class; 4) put your cell phone on vibrate mode and turn off your pager, iPod, or other electronic device before class starts; and 5) do not engage in text messaging, Twittering, or similar activities during class.

V. Office Hours

M, 1:00 – 4:00 pm; TR, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm. Other times by appointment. My office is Linthicum Hall Room 030. My office telephone number is 410-704-2964, the office fax is 410-704-4702, my email address is jmorgan@towson.edu, and the URL of my personal Web page is <http://pages.towson.edu/morgan>. Students who have any questions regarding the lectures, reading assignments, laboratory projects, and applications project, or who have any other questions or problems related to the course, are encouraged to see me during my office hours, or to call or email me for an appointment.

VI. Textbooks

The following textbooks are required for the course:

Christopherson, R. W. 2009. Elemental Geosystems (6th edition). Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Rand McNally & Company. 2009. Goode's World Atlas (22nd edition). Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

It is recommended that you bring your textbooks to each class because they will be used as a source of illustrations during the lectures.

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