

California Geography

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Course Description

This course will study California's broad and diverse geographic patterns as well as issues related to human settlement and population growth. You will understand the physical processes and prominent landscapes that make California unique among the world. This state also has a rich and diverse cultural overlay, which we will examine from a thematic and historical approach. To enhance this thematic approach, numerous issues will be developed by students and discussed throughout the semester.

Course Goals

By the end of this semester, the student should be able to recognize major physical components, characteristics and concepts regarding California. Specifically your success depends on learning these concepts: major regions and prominent characteristics, geologic development, atmospheric controls and climate regions, hydrological cycle and human control, energy issues, biogeography, human settlement history and patterns, natural resources and hazards, agriculture and its issues, urbanization and planning and other issues discussed throughout the class.

Course Student Learning Objectives

Course Student Learning Objectives (CSLO's) are key topics that are even more specific than goals and general concepts. They have specific outcomes or "answers" that are measurable. That is, you will probably be tested on these topics (and more) with questions on a test. Here is the list for this course:

Course Student Learning Outcomes - GEOG 0003 - Geography of California

CSLO 1 - Identify California's major landforms and distribution.

CSLO 2 - Assess California's varied water projects, their distribution, their ownership, the history, challenges and solutions based on land-use such as urban or agricultural.

CSLO 3 - Locate California's climatic regions and analyze fundamental characteristics, such as temperature and rainfall, and their causes.

CSLO 4 - Examine California's agricultural regions, top crop production, their farming or ranching practices, and economic and environmental challenges.

CSLO 5 - Describe immigration to California based on an era, such as gold mining days or subsequent farming days, which ethnic group, where they moved, what they primarily did and challenges they faced.

CLSO 6 - Evaluate current or proposed urban growth plans through the State and their impacts to the environment.

To help you become literate in these key concepts, the instructor may provide extended discussions, learning aids and study guides.

Texts and Suggested Reading

- *A Dangerous Place, California's Unsettling Fate*, Marc Reisner
- *Ishi: Last of His Tribe*, Theodora Kroeber
- California Packet, S. Booth
- California Map
- 3 large and 12 small scantron forms (green only)

Attendance, Expectations and Classroom Decorum

I expect you to come to class always, just like a job. There will be a roll sheet passed around at most class sessions, which you are asked to sign. This is not a self-guided course, and you cannot grasp the full scope of this subject on your own. Additionally, many of the test questions will come from lectures, videos and discussions.

- If you do not attend more than the number of times allowed by the college catalog, you risk being dropped from the class roster!
- If you are going to be absent or late, you do not need to let me know beforehand. A roll sheet will be passed to account for absences.
- *Under no circumstances are electronic devices allowed to be turned on in class!* Please use common courtesy with new technology.
- Do not talk or disturb others with private conversation during class. If you are perpetually late, absent, or discourteous, I will talk to you after class and drop you from this class if needed.

Academic Honesty

Do not cheat, plagiarize, or furnish false information to the college as defined by the Sierra College academic regulations. If you are guilty of dishonesty, you will receive a failing grade. Sierra College may further discipline you through reprimand, probation, social probation, suspension or expulsion. I have failed students for cheating, so do your own work.

Grading

A = 90 - %100	Midterm Exam 1 = 100 points
B = 80 - % 89	Midterm Exam 2 = 100 points
C = 70 - % 79	Midterm Exam 3 = 100 points
D = 60 - % 69	Report / Portfolio = 75 points
F = < %60	Assn. / Quiz / Part. = 125 points

Missing Tests - Taking a mid-term exam is a big deal and there are no make-up exams! For exceptions of any kind, you must tell me in advance. For extraordinary cases, such as a dire medical illness, incarceration, an alien abduction or an event beyond your control, you must contact me *before* the next class meeting. You must also provide proof of this situation. For chapter and map quizzes, there are no make-up tests at all. The class is designed to sum all your best scores and throw out your missed or low score quizzes.

Credit / No Credit - You may take this course on a credit / no credit basis or a letter grade. A letter grade will be assigned unless you request a CR/NCR option.

Adds & Withdrawals - There will be *no late adds*. You must pay your fees within the first two weeks of the semester in order to be enrolled in this class. Withdrawals or a "W" cannot and will not be granted to any student who is enrolled in the class after the "W" deadline (beginning of Nov. (fall) and middle of April (spring)). It is your responsibility to initiate this process! Students who do not request a "W" before the deadline and do not complete course work (including Exam 3) will receive a failing grade.

Incomplete - an incomplete "I" grade is rarely granted except under extraordinary circumstances with verified proof, such as a written medical notice.

Methods of Instruction

This class is taught using lectures, discussions and in-class assignments. Some assignments may be assigned outside of class and you may be expected to participate in a local field trip (TBA). In order to improve the overall learning experience, I may ask students to provide feedback regarding class material. Participation is very important in the learning process. I also appreciate voluntary feedback from you regarding "what works and what doesn't work" in the classroom.

Concluding Words

The effort put forth by you will not only show in your grade, but also make you an informed citizen and enlighten you about our rich and diverse world. Geography is about everything that surrounds us... you can't miss *seeing, hearing, touching* and even *tasting* it. Stories in the newspaper, magazines and in the news abound with geographic issues every day, and this class will help you understand these issues and stories much better. Likewise, I guarantee you an excellent grade in this class if you read each chapter at least twice, learn key concepts in the course outline, come to class each day, participate in class, take detailed notes, and listen carefully. You will do well if you make this course material meaningful to your life.