

Physical Geography (GEOG 1 online)

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<http://geography.sierracollege.edu/booth/notes.html>

(Also see *Syllabus* in *Canvas* for - Highlights & Weekly Routine)

Course Outline Reading Assignment

Topic	Chapters
Basic Concepts	Chapter 1
Portraying Earth	Chapter 2
Atmosphere	Chapter 3
Insolation & Temperature	Chapter 4
Pressure & Wind	Chapter 5
Climate Classification	Chapter 8
Landforms	Chapter 13
Internal Processes	Chapter 14
Weathering & Mass Wasting	Chapter 15
Fluvial Processes	Chapter 16
Arid Lands	Chapter 18

Course Description

This course will study the Earth's dynamic processes, weather & climate, and landforms. You will understand how storms are formed, how mountains are formed, how they erode, why California is so dry and much more about the lithosphere, atmosphere, hydrosphere and biosphere. By the end of this class, you should be able to interpret your environment.

Course Goals

By the end of this semester, the student should be able to recognize major physical components, characteristics and concepts of the Earth. Specifically your success depends on learning these general concepts: the seasons, the characteristics and dynamics of the atmosphere, including heating, pressure and winds, the hydrological cycle, formation of storms, major climates and causes, landform processes (plate tectonics, mountain building, volcanism), gradation and fluvial processes, glaciation, and other erosional processes.

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.

CSLO 1 - Evaluate effects of gradient upon stream velocity characteristics, which in turn affect a stream's ability to either erode or deposit its load. Likewise evaluate lower reaches stream landform features, but in this case relating velocity to meandering stream characteristics, such as point bars and cut banks. Apply to delta landforms as well.

CSLO 2 - Compare and contrast differing tectonic plate motions and boundaries to common landforms that result (E.g. violent composite volcanoes at convergent plate boundaries with oceanic- continental plates).

CSLO 3 - Distinguish earth's movements as they relate to causes of seasons, changes in daylight, and global insolation budget.

CSLO 4 - Predict primary climatic controls of a place on earth based on several broad categories (e.g. latitude, ocean proximity, wind and ocean currents, etc).

CSLO 5 - Describe common map projections pros and cons as they relate to: direction, distance and shape or size. For example, students should know that the famous Mercator projection is best used for compass direction but not used to show size or shape of Greenland, which is greatly increased in size (in some cases double what it should be).

CSLO 6 - Illustrate layers of the earth, including material, approximate depth, and rigidity. For example, the inner core is completely solid and made of iron, while the mantle is 1800 miles thick and plastic-like nearing the crust.

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

Texts and Suggested Reading

- *Physical Geography: A Landscape Appreciation*, McKnight / Hess
(sold at Sierra College bookstore or elsewhere; used editions are fine.)
- *Physical Geography Course Pack*, S. Booth
(sold only in Sierra College bookstore)
- Three (3) large GREEN *Scantron* forms (FORM NO. 882-E) with 50 questions

Attendance, Expectations and Classroom Decorum

Unlike the normal class on campus, this is a self-guided course, and you must be disciplined to first read the textbook, then listen to the audio podcasts (the lectures), take notes in the class packet, and watch supplemental videos. After you have completed the "listening" part, next is participation via using Canvas Discussions and assessment taking Canvas Quizzes. Finally, you three (3) major exams are held on campus. Usually they occur in thirds throughout the semester, meaning on week 5, then week 10, then the final week of class.

- **Essential:** Treat this class like any other class by **creating a responsible routine**.
- Each week is a routine consisting of reading, listening, participation & assessment from online quizzes
- **Exams** are roughly every 5 weeks on campus
- **Referring to the Schedule** will help map out your routine

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.

Grading

A = 90 to 100%	Exam 1 = 200 points
B = 80 to 89%	Exam 2 = 200 points
C = 70 to 79%	Exam 3 = 200 points
D = 60 to 69%	Quizzes, Assignments & Exercises = 300 pts
F = below 60%	Online Discussions = 50 pts
	Supplemental Work = 50 pts

The total points equal 1000. Sixty (60) percent are exams. Pay attention here -- those 3 exams held on campus are the bulk of your grade! Roughly 1/3rd of the points are for quizzes & assignments. To help you study & participate, you'll have chapter discussions based of the exam study guides. You will also be assessed on supplemental work, like watching videos or finding other fun study resources.

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 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 situations. For chapter quizzes, **there are no make-up tests either as you must meet the online deadline** -- just like the mid-term exams.

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.

Motivation, Study Habits and Testing

Probably the most important aspect for you to master in this class is finding a reason to be here.

It can't just be any reason to be here, however; it must be an intrinsic reason to be here. What does "intrinsic" mean? It doesn't mean you signed up for this class because it "looked good on the schedule, and besides, a friend told me it's the easiest science class to take." An intrinsic reason means you find an internal, passionate reason to make this class meaningful to your life. "I care passionately about the environment and the Earth; I love being outside and in nature; I want to know what all this talk about global warming means; when I travel, I find the world is a really cool place and I want to know more about it" -- all these statements are intrinsic reasons to be in this class.

- First, no miracles happen in this online class. You certainly won't succeed in this course if you just check-in occasionally. In fact, you will get behind.
- Read the textbook *before* listening to the audio podcasts; take notes in the packet; read the textbook again after class; think about the lecture material outside of class; watch the videos, and look for other outside sources to explain the material.

But many students study hard for the exams and still struggle.

So what can you do to improve your test scores? Here are some test taking skills:

- The most obvious way to succeed on a test is to test yourself ahead of time. You might try doing this with a friend and classmate after you read the textbook. It's proven that people who study together do much better on tests.
- When reading a multiple choice question, think about the answer before you read the selection; then go straight for the answer. Don't let the distracting answers mess you up. If you know the answers, it's there.
- For true and false questions, just read the statement to see if it make senses in its entirety, and if it does make complete sense, then mark true. If there is anything wrong with it, then mark false. It's that simple.
- Take your time because "haste makes waste." The majority of people fail on their first exam much worse than they ever imagined because they carelessly read the exam questions. Often they kick themselves afterwards because they made the dumbest mistakes.

- Remember, "the devil is in the details," and you must know the details when coming into a test. Keep in mind these questions are designed to sort out the average from the above-average student. Quite often the exam questions are not going to be as easy as they appear. Usually there is one answer that's ludicrous, one answer that is probably wrong, and then at least two answers that are very close. If you know the right answer beforehand, then the correct answer will become self-evident.

Concluding Words

The effort put forth by you will not only show in your grade, but will also make you an informed citizen enlightened 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. This class will help you understand these stories and issues much better.

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