Course Outline

2026-2027 Catalog

GEOG 2 - Physical Geography

Catalog Description

Transfer Status: CSU/UC

Unit(s): 3.00

Lecture: 51.00 Contact hours/102.00 Out of class hours/153.00 Total hours/3.00 Unit(s)

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Course Description: This course is a spatial study of the Earth's dynamic physical systems and processes. Topics include: Earth-sun geometry, weather, climate, water, landforms, soil, and the biosphere. Emphasis is on the interrelationships among environmental and human systems and processes and their resulting patterns and distributions. Tools of geographic inquiry are also briefly covered; they may include: maps, remote sensing, Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Global Positioning Systems (GPS). (C-ID GEOG 110).

Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the size, shape, and movements of the Earth in space and their importance to environmental patterns and processes.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of the atmospheric, geomorphological, and biotic processes that shape the Earth’s surface environments.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the global distribution of the world’s major climates, ecosystems, and physiographic (landform) features.
4. Demonstrate an understanding of basic concepts of physical geography in the analysis of real-world variations in environmental patterns.
5. Apply a working knowledge of the terminology of physical geography.
6. Demonstrate an understanding of the scientific method and practical experience using the tools and concepts of physical geography.

Course Content

Topic Titles / Suggested Time Topic

Lecture

Topics	Lec Hrs
The size, shape, and movements of the Earth in space and their importance to environmental patterns and processes	11.00
The atmospheric, geomorphological, and biotic processes that shape the Earth’s surface environments	10.00
The global distribution of the world’s major climates, ecosystems, physiographic (landform) features	10.00
The basic tools of geographic inquiry	10.00
Basic concepts of physical geography in the analysis of real-world variations in environmental patterns	10.00
Total Hours:	**51.00**

Methods of Instruction

A. Demonstrations
B. Discussion
C. Homework: Students are required to complete two hours of outside-of-class homework for each hour of lecture
D. Lecture
E. Multimedia Presentations
F. Periodical research

Methods of Evaluation

A. Exams/Tests
B. Quizzes
C. Oral Presentation
D. Homework
E. A 2,500 word written requirement will be integrated into the course through both homework assignments and essay exams.

Examples of Assignments

Reading Assignments

1. Read the chapter in your text dealing with the formation of landforms. Focus on erosion; be prepared to discuss “erosion” as this active force contributes to shaping landforms.

2. Read the article (handed out in class) focusing on tectonic plate movement. Be prepared to discuss how tectonic plate activity contributes to continental drift.

Writing Assignments

1. Write a short essay (300 words) summarizing the “global warming” debate. Provide a survey of research concerning global warming. Focus on actual research—not political opinion. Pay close attention to paleo-climate data.
2. Write a 5 page research paper on prevailing weather systems associated with western North America. In your paper, explain how these patterns are disrupted during El Nino conditions.

Out-of-Class Assignments

1. Attend our field trip to the Chico Seed Farm. This facility is part of the Mendocino National Forest and began in 1904 as the Plant Introduction Field Station. Be prepared to take notes on various aspects of the biography of the local area and be prepared to discuss your observations in class.
2. Attend our field trip to the Museum of Natural History in Chico. Describe their display on the formation of the local northern California Cascade Range. Discuss your findings in class.

Recommended Materials of Instruction

Ritter, Michael E. (2020). The Physical Environment: An Intro to Physical Geography. *Creative Commons.* https://www.thephysicalenvironment.com/.
de Blij, H. J., Muller, P. O., Burt, J. E., Mason, J. (2015). Physical Geography: The Global Environment. *Oxford University Press, 5th.* 9780190246860.

Minimum Qualifications

Geography (Masters Required)

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