Course Information Form (CIF)

Course Code: GEO 101
Course Title: Physical Geography

Department: Arts, Media, and Social Sciences
PCS Code: 1.1 - Baccalaureate/Transfer
CIP Code: 45.0701
Repeatability: 0

Effective Date: Summer 2026

Credit Hours

Catalog Notation: 3-0-3
Credit Hour Distribution:

Lecture: 3	Lab: 0	Clinical: 0	**Total: 3**

General Course Information

Catalog Description

Emphasizes elements of the physical environment, including atmospheric, climatic, hydrologic and geologic processes; the spatial variations of these processes; and the inter-relationship between these processes and the human environment.

General Course Objectives

- To identify basic geographic concepts involving the geographic grid system and physical systems of planet Earth.
- To locate and describe physical processes of the atmosphere, lithosphere, hydrosphere, and biosphere.
- To assess the impact of the physical environment on human populations, through both advantages and limitations, and the impact of humans on their environments.

Minimum Placement Levels

English	Reading	Math
None	None	None

Prerequisites

None

Methods of Evaluation

Students will be evaluated by 3 objective tests, map quizzes and exercises, and class discussions. Exams constitute 40% of grade; maps 30%; discussions 30% of grade.

Instructional Materials and Additional Supplies

The Physical Environment: An Introduction to Physical Geography, Ritter, Michael.
https://www.thephysicalenvironment.com/

Course Content

General Learning Outcomes (GLOs)

- Critical Thinking and Information Literacy: Students will demonstrate the ability to evaluate perspectives, evidence, and implications, and to locate, assess, and use information effectively.

Course Segments and Student Learning Outcomes

Course Segment	Learning Outcomes	Lecture Hours	Lab Hours	Clinical Hours
Core Concepts	1. Define the literal meaning of geography and identify areas of study and careers of geographers. 2. Apply the five themes of geography.	2	0	0
Fundamentals of Measuring and Mapping Earth	1. Name and describe the various ways in which humans represent the Earth, such as the geographic grid, map scale, and global positioning systems (GPS).	2	0	0
Earth's Systems	1. Describe how the sun's energy drives many of Earth's systems, including seasonality and ocean currents. 2. Locate latitudes which carry significance in seasonality, as well as Earth's major ocean currents.	5	0	0
Atmosphere: weather and climate	1. Distinguish among the formation processes of precipitation and larger weather phenomena. 2. Report the impacts of tropical storms, blizzards, and drought on human populations. 3. Locate major components of the globe's atmospheric structure, such as wind belts and convection cells.	5	0	0
Lithosphere: tectonics and landforms	1. Make sense of how ancient tectonic and current tectonic activity shapes the land. 2. Report the impacts of earthquakes, volcanoes, and tsunamis on human populations. 3. Locate the global distribution of fossil fuels and other minerals and the resulting economic opportunities for human populations.	5	0	0
Hydrosphere: rivers, glaciers, and oceans	1. Identify river system development and the role of rivers as human transportation networks. 2. Locate the areas of the Earth affected by recent glacial episodes, and their role in shaping the land and creating agricultural opportunities for humans.	5	0	0
Biosphere: soils and biomes of the world	1. Compare lifestyles and cultures, such as land use and housing, across human populations inhabiting different biomes. 2. Recognize the link between soils and agricultural productivity. 3. Describe the factors which contribute to the global distribution of biomes such as deserts and boreal forests.	5	0	0
Mapping Exercises	1. Integrate maps and mapping technology into course topics by finding spatial patterns and describing spatial distributions of physical and human features; produce thematic maps of these features and/or events.	16	0	0

Total Contact Hours

Lecture Hours	Lab Hours	Clinical Hours
45	0	0