

GGSI02-Physical Geography
SYLLABUS

Course Information

Course Number: GGS102 DL3
Course Title: Physical Geography
Term: Fall 2024
Class Meetings: ONLINE Asynchronous
Location: ONLINE

Professor Contact Information

Professor: Piash Debnath, M.S.
Email: pdebnat2@gmu.edu
Office Hours: By Appointment/Zoom
Teaching Assistant: **Nana Ama Obeng Nti**
Email: nobengnt@gmu.edu

Office Hours: Zoom meeting or phone conversation by appointment via email

Contact Policy: I will respond to all communications within 24 hours during the week and 48 hours over the weekend.

Course Description:

Physical geography is the spatial study of the natural materials and processes that interact on Earth. In physical geography, Earth is studied from a systems science perspective which emphasizes the interactions between the atmosphere, hydrosphere, lithosphere, and biosphere. In this course, students will become familiar with climate, weather, landforms, earth processes, and ecosystems through an examination of their spatial distributions and patterns.

Course Prerequisites: None

Mason Core: Natural Science

Mason Core natural sciences courses engage students in scientific exploration; foster their curiosity; enhance their enthusiasm for science; and enable them to apply scientific knowledge and reasoning to personal, professional and public decision-making. This course meets learning outcomes 1 through 4 for Natural Science.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Understand how scientific inquiry is based on investigation of evidence from the natural world, and that scientific knowledge and understanding a) evolves based on new evidence, and b) differs from personal and cultural beliefs.
2. Recognize the scope and limits of science.
3. Recognize and articulate the relationship between the natural sciences and society and the application of science to societal challenges (e.g., health, conservation, sustainability, energy, natural disasters, etc.).
4. Evaluate scientific information (e.g., distinguish primary and secondary sources, assess credibility and validity of information).

General information and Policies:

1. This course is an asynchronous online course; there are no set course meetings, as all course materials are available for students to access online.

Required Textbooks

Title: [McKnight's Physical Geography 13th Edition](#)

Hess, D., & Tasa, D. (2022). *McKnight's physical geography: A landscape appreciation* (13th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall. ISBN: 9780135827147

Course Grading

Assignment	Points
Introductory Quiz	20
Chapter Quizzes (16 @ 15 points each)	240
Essays: 2 @ 80 points each <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Global Warming (80)• Wind Energy (80)	160
Exercises: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Topographic Map Exercise (60)• Exercise related to Atmosphere (40)• Exercise related to Insolation and Temperature (40)	140
Discussions 3 @ 30 points each	90
Current Event Reports 3 @ 50 points each	150
Assessments 4 @ 50 points each: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exam 1 (proctored respondus)*• Exam 2 (proctored respondus)*• Exam 3 (proctored respondus)*• Exam 4 (take home)	200
Total	1000

Course Policies

Attendance Policy

Each student is expected to be active in the course each week. You are required to log into the course site at least three times a week. You may be removed from the course if at least one assignment has not been submitted by the mid September.

Discussion Policy

Following the due dates and responding promptly is an essential part of your participation in online collaborative activities. Your classmates depend on you to complete these activities. It will take a concerted effort on the part of each student to move discussions and group work forward in a timely manner. Therefore, please make sure to follow the due dates indicated in the Course Summary section of the Syllabus to complete these activities.

Communication Policy

You are required to treat your instructor and classmates with respect. We all have different opinions on issues that may spark emotion. Whatever your opinions are, you **MUST** respect others' opinions and treat each other professionally and politely in the online course. Comment on opinions, not on the person. This policy applies to all discussion posts and emails for the course. Please follow the communication netiquette in the Welcome/Getting Started module.

Plagiarism Policy

Please review the information in the Plagiarism Policy and Student Rights and Responsibilities section below to understand what plagiarism is.

Detected plagiarism on an assignment will warrant a zero on the assignment. If a second offense occurs, the student will be referred to the dean of students for possible dismissal from the class.

Late Work Policy

No assignments will be accepted for grading after the specified deadlines unless the instructor has been contacted prior to the deadline and special arrangements have been worked out.

All assignments are due on time. If you have an emergency or illness, contact me immediately. If you are out for an extended period of time, I need documentation of the emergency or illness in order to grant you an extension. Otherwise, late work is strictly not accepted.

Assignment Submission

You are expected to retain an electronic copy of all work submitted. If transmission of the work fails, you are expected to "resend" the document under our directions. Assignments will be submitted in Canvas either through Discussion Board forum postings, via the Assignment feature, or via the Turnitin feature. You are expected to verify your own Canvas responses by returning to the appropriate place in Canvas after the work has been posted.

Grading Turnaround Time:

All completed assignments will be graded no later than seven days after the due date, and sooner when possible.

To successfully complete this course, students must demonstrate their understanding of the course materials by completing the following assignments:

Chapter Quizzes

These are graded quizzes related to each chapter's content. Each quiz will have multiple-choice and/or fill-in-the-blank questions.

Proctored Assessments

There are four assessments in this course and the first three are proctored and must be taken in a proctored environment. The fourth assessment is take-home 4-hour open notes assessment. Each assessment will be related to the chapter content for the weekly modules beforehand. Each assessment is generated randomly from banks of questions. In this way no two assessments will be alike. Each assessment will consist of three to four chapters. There will be a time limit of two (2) hours placed on the completion of the assessments.

Discussions

There are three graded discussions that require students to read a linked article on a subject related to what is being studied and discussing how it relates to them, or what their opinion might be on the subject.

Essays

Students will be required to do research and write a documented essay on the pros and cons of global warming and wind energy. The essays must be approximately 500 words. A bibliography and citations for facts, quotes, etc. are required. Students should conclude the essays with their opinion(s).

Current Events

The purpose of the current event assignments is to apply some of the knowledge students have learned from this course to present day environment. There are three current event assignment submissions. For the current event assignment, find an article in a newspaper, weekly magazine, or website that relates to a topic students have been studying, or will study, in this course. The article should be typical newspaper article length and cover the topic in sufficient depth that students can relate to it and explain it. Provide the following when posting this assignment:

- Source and date of article in an [APA-formatted reference](#)

- One paragraph (100-125 words) in your words to explain the topic relationship to physical geography concepts (include the chapter/topic)
- One paragraph (100-125 words) in your own words to summarize the article and discuss why it is important.

Map Exercise

This assignment is based on a 7.5 minute quadrangle topographic map. The map can be ordered over the Internet. Please utilize text, links, and any other resources to complete the assignment. The External Links also has instructions and links to obtain this map at no charge, but with some reservations.

Insolation and Temperature Exercise

You will be given resources to review on the greenhouse effect and answer questions.

Atmosphere Exercise

This exercise consists of four brief essay questions related to acid rain or the ozone layer.

Important Dates:

Last day to drop with a tuition refund	Sept 9th
Unrestricted withdrawal last day	Oct 1st
Selective withdrawal last day	Oct 28th
End of Exam period	Dec 18th

Plagiarism

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Make sure to complete your own work. When doing citations please use **APA**. Please refer to the school's plagiarism codes.

American with Disabilities Act

If you think or know that you need an accommodation based on a disability, you are encouraged to contact a counselor for Disability Services in the Counseling Center to discuss possible accommodations. All information is kept confidential and may increase your chances of success in the class.

Date Every Week starts Monday morning 6am to Sunday 11:59pm	Topics	Assignment and Tasks All Weekly Assignments due Sunday 11:59pm
Week 1 Aug 26th-Sept 1st	Syllabus Week	Orientation Quiz & Introductions
Week 2 Sept 2nd-8th	Introduction to Earth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Chapter 1 • Complete Chapter 1 Quiz • Discussion Forum #1
Week 3 Sept 9 th -15th	Portraying Earth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Chapter 2 • Complete Chapter 2 Quiz • Topographic Map Exercise (instructions)
Week 4 Sept 16 th -22 nd	Introduction to the Atmosphere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Chapter 3 • Complete Chapter 3 Quiz • <i>The Ozone Layer Exercise in Module 2 or Acid Rain Exercise in Module 3</i>
Week 5 Sept 23 rd -29th	Isolation and Temperature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Chapter 4 • Complete Chapter 4 Quiz • <i>Greenhouse Effect Exercise or Earth's Energy Budget Exercise</i> • Global Warming Essay (instructions) • Discussion Forum #2
Week 6 Sept 30th -Oct 6th	Atmospheric Pressure and Wind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Chapter 5 • Complete Chapter 5 Quiz • Wind Energy Essay (instructions) • Exam 1 - Respondus Exam
Week 7 Oct 7 th - 13th	Atmospheric Moisture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Chapter 6 • Complete Chapter 6 Quiz • <i>The Ozone Layer Exercise in Module 2 or Acid Rain Exercise in Module 3</i>
Week 8 Oct 14 th -20 th	Atmospheric Disturbances Climate & Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Chapter 7 • Complete Chapter 7 Quiz • Discussion Forum #3 • Read Chapter 8 • Complete Chapter 8 Quiz

Week 9 Oct 21 st – 27 th	The Hydrosphere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Chapter 9 • Complete Chapter 9 Quiz • Exam 2 - Respondus Exam
Week 10 Oct 28 th – Nov 3 rd	Intro to Landform Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Chapter 13 • Complete Chapter 13 Quiz • Current Event #1
Week 11 Nov 4 th - 10 th	The Internal Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Chapter 14 • Complete Chapter 14 Quiz
Week 12 Nov 11 th - 17 th	Weathering and Mass Wasting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Chapter 15 • Complete Chapter 15 Quiz • Exam 3 - Respondus Exam
Week 13 Nov 18 th - 24 th	Fluvial Processes Karst and Hydrothermal Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Chapter 16 • Complete Chapter 16 Quiz • Read Chapter 17 • Complete Chapter 17 Quiz • Current Event #2
Week 14 Nov 25 th - Dec 1 st	The Topography of Arid Lands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Chapter 18 • Complete Chapter 18 Quiz • Current Event #3
Week 15 & 16 Dec 2 nd – 8 th	Glacial Modification of Terrain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Chapter 19 • Complete Chapter 19 Quiz • Exam 4 - Take Home Exam

*Dates and assignments are subject to change. Please check Blackboard for up to date readings and assignments