

## **GGG 102-001 Physical Geography**

**Spring Semester 2020, M-W (10:30-11:45pm), Robinson Hall B113, CREDIT HOURS:**

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**Office Hours: Exploratory Hall 2204 (M-W 1:00-2:00 pm & By Appointment)**

**'Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?'**

**-- Poet Mary Oliver**

### **I. Course Description:**

Physical Geography allows us to explore the dynamic nature of (your) planet earth. This class will equip you with a deeper understanding of the science behind the physical forces that impact the earth, while providing a greater awareness of the relevance physical geography has in our everyday lives. For example, we experience weather on a daily basis - after taking this class, you will have a more complete understanding of the elements that influence the weather conditions we experience. You will also better understand how the weather affects all other aspects of the earth system (oceans, soils, plants, etc.), and how these affect human beings. Physical geography serves as a window to making the world a more meaningful place for each of us.

### **III. Mason Core: Natural Science Overview**

This course satisfies the Mason Core: Natural Science Overview requirement.

Expected Learning Outcomes include:

The general education 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. Lab courses must meet all five learning outcomes. Non-lab courses must meet learning outcomes 1 through 4.

To achieve these goals, students will:

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
  - 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).
- 5). [The lab bit - not part of this course - ed.] Participate in scientific inquiry and communicate the elements of the process, including:
- a) Making careful and systematic observations
  - b) Developing and testing a hypothesis
  - c) Analyzing evidence
  - d) Interpreting results

#### **IV. Attendance Policy:**

Regular attendance and active participation in class are essential to successful completion of this course, and will be reflected in the individual class participation portion of the course grade. *Students are allowed two (2) unexcused absences.* Each unexcused absence after the two permitted will reduce the participation grade by one point. Late arrivals will be penalized after the second late arrival. More than eight (8) unexcused absences will lead to a Withdrawal/Failure (WF) in the course. Personal situations and concerns may be addressed to me personally on a person-by-person basis.

#### **V. Teaching Methods**

Class participation is expected of all students. There will be an emphasis on lecture/discussion, demonstration, and question/answer. Part of each class will summarize key themes for the week, including themes treated in the textbook and supplementary readings. Part of each class will focus on discussion.

#### **VI. Required Textbook:**

Physical Geography

#### **VIII. Course Grading/Evaluation:**

CLASS PARTICIPATION	10%
SHORT PROJECTS ("HOMEWORK")	30%
EXAMS (TOP 2 OF 3)	60%

QUIZZES

VARIES

**Grading Scale:**

100-90%	A+, A, A-
89 - 80%	B+, B, B-
79 - 70%	C+, C, C-
69 - 60%	D+, D, D-
59 - 0%	F

**Class Participation (10%):**

Students can learn as much from each other as they do from the instructor, which means that each student also helps others learn. When you don't understand something, by asking about it in class you may help someone else understand - there are probably others who have not asked. However, your class participation grade is not just a measure of how many words you say, but also of your preparation, application of concepts, and willingness to ask clarifying questions. It is, of course, also a way for me to reward those who don't play on their phones in class....

**Short Projects ("Homework") (30%):**

Short projects to be completed in class or at home will make up an important part of the student's grade. These might range from analysis essays to short at-home projects to in-class group projects. These will be assigned throughout the semester.

**Exams (60%):**

There will be three (3) exams. Only the top two (2) grades will be counted toward the student's overall grade, worth 30% each. There will be no make-up exams. If a student is satisfied with their first two exam scores, they need not Exam #3. If you miss an exam, you had best show up for Exam #3....

Each exam will cover concepts and principles from the preceding term-section of classes. Although Exam #3 will not directly address topics from earlier term-sections (it will not be 'comprehensive'), students will be expected to show the sum of knowledge and understanding they have learned throughout the year.

**VIII. Academic Integrity (Cheating and Plagiarism):**

From the Council of Writing Program administrators (WPA): In an instructional setting, plagiarism occurs when a writer deliberately uses someone else's language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source. This definition applies to texts published in print or on-line, to manuscripts, and to the work of other student writers.

Plagiarism can be unintentional, but often is not. Either way, don't do it, as today there is a veritable cottage industry of resources for discovering plagiarism - it will likely be discovered, and I will likely have no choice but to take very serious measures.