

GGS 102: Physical Geography

Spring Semester 2019

GGS 102 fulfills Mason Core requirement in Natural Science Non lab

Instructor: Patricia Boudinot

Email: pboudino@gmu.edu

I am available between Sunday at 7 pm through Friday at 7 pm to respond to student inquiries and during this five day period, I will try my very best to respond within 24 hours.

Office Hours: Exploratory Hall Room 2201 or online.

Teaching Assistant: TBA

Email: TBA

Honor Code:

“Students members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal and/or lie in matters related to academic work.”

In this course, you are not to:

- Access sources/information during an on-line exam/quiz
- Give help or information/work to a friend/classmate

[Read the Honor Code for a list of definitions and examples](#)

Content: This is an introductory course to physical geography. It introduces the basic concepts and fundamentals of the Earth system. The course will cover earth-sun relations, weather, climate, soils, vegetation, geology, and landforms; and introduce the student to types and uses of maps. Physical characteristics of the earth system will be the focus.

Course Prerequisites: There are no formal prerequisites.

Learning Outcomes: At the end of the course, the student will be able to:

1. Understand how scientific inquiry is based on investigation of evidence from the natural world, and that scientific knowledge and understanding:
 - evolves based on new evidence
 - differs from personal and cultural beliefs

2. Recognize the scope and limits of science.
3. Evaluate scientific information (e.g., distinguish primary and secondary sources, assess credibility and validity of information).
4. Identify, evaluate, and properly cite resources appropriate to the field, such as audio/visual/online/print materials, or artifacts.
5. Build a Final Project on a natural disaster which will recognize and articulate the relationship between the natural sciences and society.

Required Textbook:

Physical Geography, Strahler, Wiley Editions

Please note that this textbook can only be found at the GMU bookstore as it is a custom textbook. This explains why the page numbers in the "reading assignments" refer to the page number appearing at the bottom of the page in the custom textbook.

The information in this custom textbook is originally from *Introducing Physical Geography*, 6th edition Strahler, Wiley Editions

I do expect every student to buy the textbook, an essential support of the class

Learning Community:

In this online course, each week opens on Tuesday.

Each week is structured as follows: readings in the textbook, video lectures and assignments.

Working online requires dedication and organization. Students must check their GMU email messages on a daily basis and communicate any questions or problems that might arise promptly.

Netiquette

In our online learning community, we must be respectful of one another. Please be aware that innocent remarks can be easily misconstrued. Sarcasm and humor can be easily taken out of context. When communicating, please be positive and diplomatic. I encourage you to learn more about [Netiquette](#).

Important dates:

First day of class: Tuesday January 22, 2019

Last day to add classes: Tuesday January 29, 2019

Last day to drop with no tuition penalty: Tuesday February 5, 2019

Performance-based Assessments

You will be evaluated by the tasks which appear below.

I expect all students to submit all the assignments on time as this is a no late submission policy distance education course: any missing assignment will be graded as zero.

Course orientation quiz

The course orientation quiz which will be offered as soon as Week 0 opens on Tuesday and it is due at 11:59 pm on Thursday in Week 2

Please review the syllabus.

The course orientation quiz will last 15 minutes, will display eight questions: each question, worth .25 point, will be multiple choice or True/False.

There will be two attempts: the highest grade of these two attempts will be saved in Blackboard.

Test

Three tests are scheduled this Semester.

Each test will be submitted in Blackboard and there is one submission or one attempt

Each test will last 55 minutes, will display thirty four questions (including two extra credit questions): each question, worth .5 points, will be multiple choice or True/False.

Each of the three tests will open on Friday at 6 am and will close the following Monday no later than 11:59 pm.

Please understand that all materials will be used to generate questions: textbook readings and other items appearing in the reading assignments, video lectures and exercises.

Exercise

5 exercises are scheduled this Semester.

Each exercise will be submitted in Blackboard and there is one submission or one attempt.

Each exercise will open on Tuesday at 6 am and will close the following Monday at 11:59 pm.

Please highly consider watching the video lectures and read the reading assignments before completing and submitting the exercise.

Discussion

Three Discussions are scheduled this Semester.

The discussion will be open on Blackboard on Tuesday at 6 a.m. and it will close the following Monday at 11:59 pm.

There are two mandatory steps to completing the Discussion

Step 1: submit your initial post .

Step 2: read your classmates' posts and reply to four of them.

Please note that in your own words you will write your initial post and your four replies: they will be accurate, will range between 50 to 60 words, and will be supported by full sentences.

I expect the students to enter the discussion on two different days or at least 24 hours apart.

Please let me give you an example: if a student enters a discussion on Sunday at 11:50 pm and finishes posting and replying one hour later so on Monday at 1 am, I will consider this as a non respect of the requirement and I will deduct 20% of the discussion grade.

Final Project

“Why do people live in the immediate proximity of a volcano?”

The description of the individual Final Project can be found in the “Syllabus and Documents “. Please read it carefully.

There are two steps to completing your Final Project.

- Step 1/ Week 8.
Step 1 is worth 2 points or 2% of the final grade
- Step 2/ Week 15: submit your entire Final Project no later than Wednesday May 08 at 11:59 pm.
The Final Project is worth 18 points or 18% of the final grade.

Please note that all the times are EST (Eastern Standard Time)

STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO PARTICIPATE IN ALL ACTIVITIES.

Grading Percentage

2%	Course orientation quiz
48%	Tests
20%	Final Project
15%	Discussions
15%	Exercises

Grade cutoffs

A **90%** – 100%

B 80% - **89.99%**

C 69% - **79.99%**

D 60% - **68.99%**

F **less than 60%**

In order to be fair to all students, the grade cutoffs above will be FULLY respected. If a student sends me an email requesting an individualized extra credit in order to increase her/his grade, either I will not reply or I will reply in order to let the student know that I do not accept.

Schedule:

Every week will open on Tuesday at 6 am

Please note that the page numbers in the "reading assignments" refer to the page number appearing at the bottom of the page in the custom textbook.

Learning Modules	Reading Assignments	Instructional Activities	Assignment Type
Week0 01/15	Course Introduction in Blackboard	View Course Orientation Video	Course orientation quiz Due on Thursday 01/31 at 11:59 pm
Week 1 01/22 Chapter 1 Geography	Textbook Textbook The geographic grid Page 16 to Page 18 Global time Page 22 to Page 25 Other readings	View Geography Scientific Method	- Introduce yourself - download Google Earth - Get familiar with Google Earth
Week 2 01/29 Geographic Tools	Textbook The shape of the Earth Pages 14 and 15 Map projection Page 18 to Page 22 Other readings	View Geographic Tools GIS Demo	Exercise 1 due no later than 02/04 at 11:59pm Course Orientation Quiz due no later than Thursday 01/31 at 11:59 pm
Week 3 02/05 The Earth's Global energy balance	Textbook The Earth's Revolution around the Sun Page 25 to Page 30 The Ozone layer Page 34 to Page 35	View Solar System Solar System 1 Energy Essentials	Exercise 2 due no later than 02/11 at 11:59 pm

	Other readings		
Week 4 02/12 Earth materials and Plate tectonics	Textbook The structure of the Earth Page 199 to Page 201 Earth materials and the cycle Rock change Page 201 to Page 211 The Wilson cycle and supercontinents Page 227 to Page 229 Other readings	View Pangea Plate Boundaries	Test 1 due no later 02/18 at 11:59 pm
Week 5 02/19 Tectonic and volcanic landforms	Textbook Tectonic landforms Page 236 to age 246 Other readings	View Earthquakes Volcanoes Bill Burton's interview	Discussion 1 The post and the four replies are expected to be entered on two different days no later than 02/25 at 11:59 pm
Week 6 02/26 Weathering and Mass Wasting	Textbook Chapter 9 Page 266 to Page 282 Other readings	View Weathering Mass wasting Landslide Earthflow Lahar	Exercise 3 due no later than 03/04 at 11:59 pm
Week 7 03/05	Textbook Chapter 10 Page 284 to Page 314 Other readings	View Water Cycle Rivers Ogallala Aquifer	Exercise 4 due no later than 03/11 at 11:59 pm

Fresh water of the continents			
Spring Break 03/12	Spring Break	Spring Break	Spring break
Week 8 03/19 Landforms made by waves and winds	Textbook Chapter 12 Page 346 to Page 380 Other readings	View Tides Waves A tidal wave Tsunami	Final Project's Step 1 due no later than 03/25 at 11:59 pm Mid-Term Survey (optional)
Week 9 03/26 Air temperature	Textbook Temperature structure of the atmosphere Page 69 to Page 70 Daily and annual cycles of air temperature Page 71 to Page 75 World patterns of air temperature Page 75 to Page 102 Other readings	View Temperature: observation Temperature: Explanation Arctic Ocean is sets record low	Test 2 due no later than 04/01 at 11:59 pm
Week 10 04/02	Textbook Chapter 4	View Water Precipitation	Discussion 2 The post and the four replies are expected to be entered on two different

Atmospheric moisture and precipitation	Page 90 to Page 122 Other readings	Tornado	days no later than 04/08 at 11:59 pm
Week 11 04/09 Winds and global circulation	Textbook Chapter 5 Page 129 to Page 155 Other readings	View Wind essentials Coriolis force Global pattern of air atmospheric pressure Local winds	Exercise 5 due no later than 04/15 at 11:59 pm
Week 12 04/16 Weather systems	Textbook Air mass and fronts Page 163 to Page 169 Mid latitude Anticyclones and Cyclones Page 169 to Page 179 Other readings	View Weather One jet stream: the Polar jet Stream Hurricane	Discussion 3 The post and the four replies are expected to be entered on two different days no later than 04/22 at 11:59 pm
Week 13 04/23	No textbook readings Other readings	View Climate	Test 3 due no later than 04/29 at 11:59 pm
Week 14 04/30	Final Project writing week		
Week 15 05/07	Final Project	Final Project	Submit your Final Project no later than Wednesday May 08 at 11:59 pm

Technology Requirements

Hardware:

You will need access to a Windows or Macintosh computer with at least 2 GB of RAM and to a fast and reliable broadband internet connection (e.g., cable, DSL). A larger screen is recommended for better visibility of course material. You will need speakers or headphones to

hear recorded content and a headset with a microphone is recommended for the best experience. For the amount of Hard Disk Space required to take a distance education course consider and allow for:

1. the storage amount needed to install any additional software and
2. space to store work that you will do for the course.

If you are considering the purchase of a new computer, please go to <http://itservices.gmu.edu/services/services-students.cfm> to see recommendations.

Software:

This course uses Blackboard as the learning management system. You will need a browser and operating system that are listed compatible or certified with the Blackboard version available on the myMason Portal. See [supported browsers and operating systems](#). Log in to [myMason](#) to access this course.

Access to a Computer Workstation with:

Web browser (See Blackboard [supported browsers and operating systems](#))

Adobe Acrobat Reader ([free download](#))

Flash Player ([free download](#))

Windows Media Player ([free download](#))

Microsoft Office Word ([purchase](#))

Note: If you are using an employer-provided computer or corporate office for class attendance, please verify with your systems administrators that you will be able to install the necessary applications and that system or corporate firewalls do not block access to any sites or media types.

Student Expectations

Academic Integrity

Students must be responsible for their own work, and students and faculty must take on the responsibility of dealing explicitly with violations. The tenet must be a foundation of our university culture. [See <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/distance>].

Honor Code

Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode>].

MasonLive/Email (GMU Email)

Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account. [See <https://thanatos.gmu.edu/masonlive/login>].

Patriot Pass

Once you sign up for your Patriot Pass, your passwords will be synchronized, and you will use your Patriot Pass username and password to log in to the following systems: Blackboard, University Libraries, MasonLive, myMason, Patriot Web, Virtual Computing Lab, and WEMS. [See <https://thanatos.gmu.edu/passwordchange/index.jsp>].

Responsible Use of Computing

Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/1301gen.html>].

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester [See <http://ods.gmu.edu>].

Students are expected to follow courteous Internet etiquette

Student Services

University Libraries

University Libraries provides resources for distance students. [See <http://library.gmu.edu/distance>].

Writing Center

The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing. [See <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>]. You can now sign up for an Online Writing Lab (OWL) session just like you sign up for a face-to-face session in the Writing Center, which means YOU set the date and time of the appointment! Learn more about the [Online Writing Lab \(OWL\)](#) (found under Online Tutoring).

Counseling and Psychological Services

The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance [See <http://caps.gmu.edu>].

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), also known as the "Buckley

Amendment," is a federal law that gives protection to student educational records and provides students with certain rights. [See <http://registrar.gmu.edu/privacy>].