

George Mason University
Department of Geography and Geoinformation Sciences
GGS 102: Physical Geography – Fall 2017

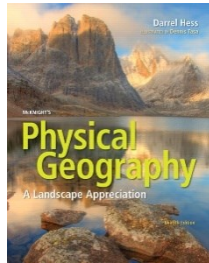
Class time: 10:30 – 11:45 am (Mondays & Wednesdays)

Location: Exploratory Hall, Room 2310

Instructor: Aaron P. Mulhollen
Exploratory Hall, Room 1102
amulholl@masonlive.gmu.edu

Office hours: Exploratory Hall, Room 1102
Mondays, 9:00 – 10:00 am
Wednesdays 12:00 – 1:00 pm

Req'd Text: *McKnight's Physical Geography: A Landscape Appreciation, 12th Edition.*, Hess, D., Tasa, D.G., Pearson, 2017.
ISBN: 978-0134195421
Textbook website: <https://tinyurl.com/McKnightsPhysicalGeography>



You should read the chapters before each class period. It will be much more beneficial to you for lecture and class discussion.

ODS Notice: If you have a documented learning disability or other condition that may affect academic performance: 1). please let me know; and 2) be sure this documentation is on file with the Office of Disability Services (SUB I, Rm. 2500; 703-993-2474; <http://ods.gmu.edu>) so that they can make a determination about proper accommodations. As a matter of university policy, I cannot provide accommodations without documentation from the ODS.

Description: Physical geography is a natural science that studies the Earth's natural elements and processes. The course will examine the physical systems of the earth and the interrelated processes in landscape formation. As an introductory course, you will also be exposed to new vocabulary essential to understanding course material. Topics include the global distribution and character of atmosphere, climate, soils, flora and fauna, hydrology, landforms and elements of mapping. Key geographic concepts will be covered throughout the semester. Class discussion will be an integral part of this course.

Objectives: This course is part of the Mason Core, which incorporates specific learning outcomes as part of the liberal arts education received by every George Mason student. The following objectives, while specific for this course, support **Mason Core** learning outcomes for the **Exploration Courses in the Natural Sciences**:

1. Investigate natural systems through evidence from the natural world.
2. Integrate physical geography concepts and spatial theories into our understanding of global environmental systems.
3. Introduce basic cartographic concepts.
4. Evaluate scientific information through class exercises and assignments.

Blackboard: Information for the course and class announcements will be disseminated via the course website on Blackboard.

GMU Email: GMU email is the only type of email communication that will be recognized for this course.

Grading: Grades for this course are based on individual performance versus a consistent standard. There is no curve – so if everyone earns an ‘A’, everyone will receive an ‘A’. Grades will be based upon performance in the following areas:

Exams 1-3:	51%	150 points (50 points each)
Assignments 1-6:	41%	120 points (20 points each)
<u>Attendance:</u>	<u>8%</u>	<u>25 points</u>
Total:	100%	295 points

Grades will be determined according to the following scale:

90 – 100%	A
80 – 89.99%	B
70 – 79.99%	C
60 – 69.99%	D
below 60%	F

Exams: There will be three exams for this course. Exams will cover current sections of the course, as noted in the course schedule. More specific descriptions will be given prior to each exam. Make-up exams will not be given without prior arrangement with the instructor, documented illness, or university-approved excused absences.

Assignments: During the semester, there will be six assignments specific to the current activities in class. Specific instructions will be given in class, and if necessary, posted on Blackboard.

Assignment Schedule

No.	Assignment Theme	Given	Due
1	Mapping	Wed, Aug 30	Mon, Sept 11
2	Atmosphere	Mon, Sept 18	Mon, Oct 2
3	Hydrosphere/Biosphere	Wed, Oct 11	Mon, Oct 23
4	Soils/Volcanism	Wed, Oct 25	Mon, Nov 6
5	Erosion/Mass Wasting/Fluvial Processes	Wed, Nov 8	Mon, Nov 20
6	Arid, Glacial, and Coastal Terrains	Mon, Nov 27	Mon, Dec 6

Attendance: Attendance is required for all scheduled class periods. Daily sign-in sheets will be recorded. The rationale for the attendance policy for this course is twofold. First, as with most things in life, showing up is 90% of performance and results. I believe that being in class is an integral part of the learning process. Second, you will have the opportunity to evaluate me as an instructor at the end of the semester. The university, department, and I truly value your opinions, criticisms, and suggestions, so it is important that you have the opportunity to formulate valid critiques.

An added enhancement to this policy is the opportunity to earn one point per non-exam day of attendance, for a total of 25 points.

Honor Code: The George Mason University Honor Code is in effect for this course:

“To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the University Community have set forth this:

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

Pursuant to university policy, any suspected activity that violates the Honor Code will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity.

Important Dates: Last day to add classes/Last day to drop with no tuition penalty: September 5th
 Last day to drop with a 33% tuition penalty: September 19th
 Final drop deadline (67% tuition penalty): September 29th
 Final Exam: Wednesday, December 13th at 10:30 am

Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topic	Required Reading	Notes
1	M (Aug 28)	Course Intro		
	W (Aug 30)	Introduction to the Earth	Chapter 1	
2	M (Sept 4)	*** LABOR DAY (no class) ***		
	W (Sept 6)	Mapping & Emerging Geographic Information Technologies	Chapter 2	*NO CLASS - Work on your own
Atmosphere				
3	M (Sept 11)	Introduction to the Atmosphere	Chapter 3	Assignment 1 Due (Mon. 9/11)
	W (Sept 13)	Solar Insulation & Temperature	Chapter 4	
4	M (Sept 18)	Atmospheric Movement	Chapter 5	
	W (Sept 20)	Atmospheric Moisture	Chapter 6	
5	M (Sept 25)	Atmospheric Disturbances	Chapter 7	
	W (Sept 27)			
6	M (Oct 2)	Climate & Global Climate Change	Chapter 8	Assignment 2 Due (Mon. 10/2)
	W (Oct 4)			
7	T (Oct 10)	Exam 1		*Mon. classes are on Tuesday
Hydrosphere & Biosphere				
7	W (Oct 11)	The Hydrosphere	Chapter 9	
8	M (Oct 16)	The Biosphere	Chapters 10 & 11	
Lithosphere				
8	W (Oct 18)	Soils	Chapter 12	
9	M (Oct 23)	Landform Study	Chapters 13	Assignment 3 Due (Mon. 10/23)
	W (Oct 25)	Earth's Internal Processes	Chapter 14	
10	M (Oct 30)	Earthquakes & Volcanoes	Chapter 14	
	W (Nov 1)	Exam 2		
11	M (Nov 6)	Erosion & Mass Wasting	Chapter 15	Assignment 4 Due (Mon. 11/6)
	W (Nov 8)	Fluvial Processes	Chapter 16	
12	M (Nov 13)			
13	W (Nov 15)	Karst Topography	Chapter 17	
	M (Nov 20)	Arid Lands	Chapter 18	Assignment 5 Due (Mon. 11/20)
14	W (Nov 22)	*** THANKSGIVING BREAK (no class) ***		
	M (Nov 27)	Glacial Terrains	Chapter 19	
W (Nov 29)				
15	M (Dec 4)	Coastal Processes	Chapter 20	Assignment 6 Due (Wed. 12/6)
	W (Dec 6)			
Finals	W (Dec 13)	Final Exam		

***Notes:**

¹This is a flexible course outline. The instructor reserves the right to make changes when necessary.

²The current "official" copy of the syllabus/course outline will be kept on Blackboard. Students will be notified of any changes