

Physical Geography
Summer Session A 2013

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Virtual Office Hours: By appointment or Skype. I am available every day for student inquiries. I will respond to student inquiries within 24 hours.

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: Elemental Geosystems, 7th Edition, Christopherson, Prentice Hall
I do expect every student to buy the textbook, an essential support of the class

Useful websites

NOAA: www.noaa.gov

USGS: www.usgs.gov

NPS: www.nps.gov

NASA: www.nasa.gov

NGA: www.nga.com

AAG: www.aag.org

Chesapeake restoration: www.chesapeakerestore.org

For library resource Video Tutorials

Go to : library.gmu.edu/education/students/tutorials.html

Learning Community:

In this online course:

- each week begins on Monday.

- each week is divided into 3 sessions; Monday, Wednesday and Friday

- each week/ session 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:

Last day to add classes: Thursday, May 23, 2013

Last day to drop with no tuition penalty: Thursday, May 23, 2013

Performance-based Assessments

You will be evaluated by the tasks which appear below.

Test

2 tests are scheduled this Summer Session A.

Each test will last one hour, will display one question at a time, will be multiple choice or True/False and will not allow backtracking.

Please understand that all materials will be used to generate questions : textbook readings , animations, videos and multimedia modules.

Exercise

5 exercises are scheduled this Summer Session A

Discussion

Two Discussions are scheduled this Summer Session A.

The discussion will be open on Blackboard on Friday at 6 a.m. up to the following Sunday at midnight. You must submit your initial post no later than Friday at midnight. Read your classmates' posts and reply to two of them on Sunday up to midnight. Your initial post and your two replies will be accurate and will range between 50 to 60 words.

Final Project

You will build a Final Project.

I have selected The "Volcano" theme. I will assign a volcano to each student. The description of the Final Project can be found in the "Syllabus and Documents ". Please read it carefully.

There are five steps to completing the Final Project

- Week 1/Session 3: each student will assigned to a volcano via email
- Week 2/Session 5: submit your bibliography: 5 sources not including the two sources included in the guidelines (5 points)
- Week3/Session 8: submit your google earth video (5 points)

- Week 4/Session 10: submit your draft (5 points)

- No later than June 20: submit your final project (85 points)

The final project is due on no later than Thursday June 20th , at midnight: please plan ahead as a non submitted final project by this date and time will be graded as a zero.

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

STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO PARTICIPATE IN ALL ACTIVITIES.

Grading Percentage

50%	Tests
20%	Final Project
10%	Discussions
20%	Mandatory Exercises

Grade cutoffs

A+ 98% - 100%, A 93% - 97%, A- 90% - 92%

B+ 86% - 89%, B 83% - 85%, B- 80% - 82%

C+ 76% - 79%, C 71% - 75%, C- 69% - 70%

D 60% - 68%

F less than 60%

Schedule

Learning Modules	Reading Assignments	Instructional Activities	Tech Tools for Students	Assignment Type
Week0/Session 0 05/13	Course Introduction in Blackboard	View Course Orientation Video	Blackboard	
Week1/Session1 05/20 Chapter 1 Essentials of Geography	Textbook Page 2 Figure 1.2, Page 5 Focus study Page 6 Location and Time on Earth, Page 15 to Page 18 Prime Meridian and Standard Time Page 19 to Page 21	View Geography Scientific Method	Blackboard	- Introduce yourself and upload a photograph or an avatar -Mark your calendar and plan ahead -Course-Orientation quiz
Week 1/Session2 05/22 Chapter 1 Essentials	Textbook A spherical Planet Page 13 Maps, Scales and Projections Pages 21 to Page	View Geographic Tools GIS Demo	Blackboard Google Earth	Get familiar with Google Earth Exercise 1

of Geography	25 Remote sensing and GIS Page 25 to Page 30 Article GIS Japan			
Week3/Session3 05/24 Chapter 2 Solar energy, seasons and the atmosphere	Textbook Solar System Page 38 Solar activity and solar wind Page 39 Incoming energy at the top of the Atmosphere Page 42 to Page 44 Atmospheric composition, temperature and function Page 49 to Page 55 Please meet Curiosity	View Solar System Energy Essentials	Blackboard	Exercise 2
Week2/Session4 05/27 Chapter 8 The dynamic Planet	Textbook Earth's structure and internal energy Page 258 to 262 Geological cycle Page 262 to 268	View Pangea Plate Boundaries	Blackboard	Test 1
Week2/Session5 05/29 Chapter 9	Textbook Crustal Formation Page 286 to Page 289	View Earthquakes Volcanoes	Blackboard	Final Project bibliography

Tectonic, earthquakes and volcanoes	Crustal deformation Page 289 to Page 296 Mountain building Page 296 to Page 299			
Week2/Session6 05/31 Chapter 11 River systems and landforms	Textbook Basic fluvial concepts Page 351 to 352 Fluvial processes and landforms Page 356 to Page 363	View Watershed Amazing places	Blackboard	Discussion 1
Week3/Session7 06/03 Chapter 13 The Oceans, Coastal Systems, and wind processes	Textbook Global oceans and seas Page 376 to 378 Coastal system components Page 378 to Page 381 Coastal system actions Page 381 to 386	View Oceans and Seas Tsunami	Blackboard	Exercise 3

Week3/Session8 06/05 Chapter 3 Atmospheric energy and global temperatures	Textbook Albedo Impacts, a Limit on Future Arctic Shipping? Page 71 Solar Energy Applications Pages 82 and 83 Air Temperature and Human Body Pages 98 and 99	View Temperatures: 1. observation 2. explanation	Blackboard	Final Project video
Week3/Session9 06/07 Chapter 4 Atmospheric and oceanic circulation	Textbook Wind essentials Page 106 to 110 Driving forces within the atmosphere Page 110 to Page 114 Oceanic currents Page 126 to Page 132	View Wind Essentials Local winds	Blackboard	Discussion 2
Week4/Session10 06/10 Chapter 5 Atmospheric water and weather	Textbook Water's unique properties Page 140 to Page 144 Humidity Page 144 to Page 147	View Water Weather Essentials Hurricane	Blackboard Google Earth	Test 2 Final Project draft

	Atmospheric stability Page 147 to Page 150			
Week4/Session11 06/12 Chapter 7 Climate systems and climate changes	Textbook Classifying earth's climates Page 216 to Page 221 Climate change measurements Page 242 to Page 248	View Weather Climate Essentials Mesothermal climates	Blackboard	Exercise 4
Week4/Session12 06/14 Chapter 14 Geography of soils	Textbook Soils characteristics Page 446 to Page 450 Soil formation factors Page 451 to Page 454 The 12 general soil orders Page 455 Worldwide distribution of the Soil Taxonomy's 12 soil orders Pages456-457	View Soils Essentials	Blackboard Blackboard Google Earth	Optional Exercise
Week5/Session13 06/17	Textbook Terrestrial ecosystem concepts Page	View Habitat Fragmentation	Blackboard	Exercise 5

Chapter 16	504 to Page 506			
Terrestrial Biomes	Earth's major terrestrial biomes Page 506 to Page522			
Week5/Session14	Textbook	View	Blackboard	Final Project Due no later than Thursday June 20 at midnight
06/20	None	None	Google Earth	
Final Project				

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>].