



Basic Course Information

Semester:	Fall 25	Instructor Name:	Austen Thelen, Ph D
Course Title & #:	Physical Geography: GEOG 100	Email:	austen.thelen@imperial.edu
CRN #:	11115	Webpage (optional):	
Classroom:	Canvas	Office #:	203 F
Class Dates:	August 11 – October 3, 2025	Office Hours:	Wednesdays 10:00 am-2:00 pm (Zoom)
Class Days:	Asynchronous (always available)	Office Phone #:	760-355-6537
Class Times:	Asynchronous (always available)	Emergency Contact:	Elvia M. Camillo, Staff Secretary Behavioral & Social Science Department Imperial Valley College 380E. Aten Rd. Imperial, CA 92251 (760) 355-6144
Units:	3	Class Format/Modality:	Asynchronous Online

Course Description

An introduction to the physical characteristics of the earth. Topics include: climate, land forms, natural vegetation, and the water and mineral resources of the earth. (CSU,UC)

Course Prerequisite(s) and/or Corequisite(s)

There are no prerequisites, nor corequisites for GEOG 100.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon satisfactory completion of the course, students will be able to: 1. Demonstrate your understanding of geographic patterns of a specific locale by analyzing the flora, fauna, and weather patterns in relation to its physical setting. (ILO1, ILO2, ILO3, ILO4, ILO5) 2. Analyze current spatial geographic events using the Five Themes of Geography. (ILO1, IOL2, IOL4) 3. Explain Plate Tectonics and how it has influenced landform formation. (ILO1, ILO2, ILO4, ILO5)

Course Objectives

Upon satisfactory completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Explain seasonal, latitudinal, and elevation-based climatic variation.
2. Understand the relationships between weather, climate, water, soils, vegetation, and landforms.
3. Visually recognize physical landforms and understand their importance to settlement patterns and land use.
4. Be able to explain plate tectonics and how it has influenced landform formation.
5. Discuss the erosional and depositional forces at play in landform modification.
6. Understand and apply the “five themes of geography.”



Textbooks & Other Resources or Links

1. Hess, Darrel (2013) McKnight's Physical Geography Third California Edition. Pearson ISBN 1269144375 (Or Equivalent)

Course Requirements and Instructional Methods

In this course, we will utilize several methods of instruction, including lectures, the textbook, multi-media presentations, lab assignments (Google Earth), current events research and discussion, along with discussions in each module.

Lectures: Each module contains a lecture presentation in the form of a .pdf document. Additionally, optional video explanations are also available for each lecture.

Textbook: All assigned readings from this course come from McKnight's Physical Geography Third California Edition, the required text. Students should read the assigned material before lectures related to the topics covered in the various reading assignments. Students must complete reading quizzes, covering the assigned readings, before each quiz's posted due date.

Discussions: Each module has a discussion board. Students must participate in each discussion in the form of one original post, and one response post per module. Original posts must contain at least 50 words, and response posts must contain 25 words to receive full credit. Discussion posts are due at each module's due date. Late posts may be considered for partial credit.

Current Event Assignment: Each student must select one news article, or several news articles covering one event, that he or she finds relevant to one of the topics covered during the course of this semester.

Google Earth Assignments: Students will complete three assignments using the program Google Earth, which is available for download free of charge.

Out of Class Assignments: The Department of Education policy states that one (1) credit hour is the amount of student work that reasonably approximates not less than one hour of class time and two (2) hours of out-of-class time per week over the span of a semester. WASC has adopted a similar requirement.

Course Grading Based on Course Objectives

Reading Quizzes: 12 quizzes worth 10 points each – 120 points total

Discussions: 12 discussion boards worth 10 points each - 120 points total

Short Answer Question Sets: 12 sets worth 10 points each - 120 points total

Geography of a Country Report: 45 points

Current Event Assignment: 45 points

Midterm Exam: 75 points

Final Exam: 75 points

A: 540 – 600 points

Updated 11/2024



B: 480 – 539 points
C: 420 – 479 points
D: 360 – 419 points
F: 359 points and fewer

Academic Honesty (Artificial Intelligence -AI)

IVC values critical thinking and communication skills and considers academic integrity essential to learning. Using AI tools as a replacement for your own thinking, writing, or quantitative reasoning goes against both our mission and academic honesty policy and will be considered academic dishonesty, or plagiarism unless you have been instructed to do so by your instructor. In case of any uncertainty regarding the ethical use of AI tools, students are encouraged to reach out to their instructors for clarification.

Accessibility Statement

Imperial Valley College is committed to providing an accessible learning experience for all students, regardless of course modality. Every effort has been made to ensure that this course complies with all state and federal accessibility regulations, including Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations. However, if you encounter any content that is not accessible, please contact your instructor or the area dean for assistance. If you have specific accommodations through **DSPS**, contact them for additional assistance.

We are here to support you and ensure that you have equal access to all course materials.

Course Policies

Communication Policies:

I believe that communication between students and their professor, and among students, is a critical element of learning success. One of the great advantages of taking online classes is that we can engage in communication at times that are convenient for us. I want to be very clear about our course communication policies.

Primary form of contact = Canvas Inbox

When contacting me, your first action should be to send me an email. I will respond to your email within 24 hours. If you don't see a response, you need to assume that the email did not go through, and you should send it again. Please observe the following two policies when sending me email:

1. Use the Canvas Inbox.
2. If you need to send an email, other than with the Canva Inbox, the subject line needs to include your name, along with the name of this class. Professors get a lot of emails, and I need to be able to prioritize my students. It is very important to let me know who you are and that you are taking this class, so I know the context of your email.



Other Forms of Contact = Telephone

My office telephone number is 760.355.6537. Again, feel free to call any time. This is my office phone, so if I am there, I will answer. You can reach me during office hours, but I tend to be in and out all day.

Online Drop Policy:

As you may expect, attendance in an online class is a little bit different than in a live section. However, this class observes all the IVC attendance policies related to enrollment and financial aid. Please refer to the IVC General Catalog to review those policies.

First Day Drops:

Because we do not have a firm meeting schedule in online classes, I consider you having attended the first day of class by accessing Canvas shell within the first 48 hours of the semester. If you do not access the site, or contact me by this time, then unfortunately you might be dropped from the course.

General Drop Policy:

Other than “First Day Drops,” please know that I do not plan to drop anyone from the course. However, due to IVC policy and strategy designed to mitigate activity from fraudulent students, please note that you may be dropped from the class after three weeks of inactivity. Generally, disenrollment from this course is the responsibility of each student. I will assume that you intend to complete the course if you do not drop on your own. As far as the last day of attendance is concerned (financial aid implications), I will count the day you participated in a discussion or submitted an assignment. Again, please keep in mind that IVC is dealing with a fictitious enrollment scam, targeting financial aid. Therefore, if you are disenrolled from the class in error, at any time, please contact me as soon as possible.

Late Work Policy:

Per the course syllabus, a student’s grade is derived from points earned via the following assessments: Exams, Assignments, Reading Quizzes, and Discussion Posts.

Exams: Exams (midterm and final) **MUST** be taken within their respective availability timeframes to receive credit. Please review the syllabus course road map (last page) for these times.

Assignments and Reading Quizzes:

All assignments and reading quizzes may be completed up until the last day of class to be counted for points in the course.

Discussion Forum Posts:

Activity on the course’s discussion forums must be completed by the end of the semester to be considered for credit.



Financial Aid

Your Grades Matter! In order to continue to receive financial aid, you must meet the Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) requirement. Making SAP means that you are maintaining a 2.0 GPA, you have successfully completed 67% of your coursework, and you will graduate on time. If you do not maintain SAP, you may lose your financial aid. If you have questions, please contact financial aid at finaid@imperial.edu.

IVC Student Resources

IVC wants you to be successful in all aspects of your education. For help, resources, services, and an explanation of policies, visit <http://www.imperial.edu/studentresources> or click the heart icon in Canvas.

Anticipated Class Schedule/Calendar

Date or Week	Activity, Assignment, and/or Topic	Pages/ Due Dates/Tests
Week 1 Aug 11-15	Syllabus & Introduction	Acquire course materials, become familiar with Canvas and the course.
	Module 1: What is geography? Earth Sun Relationship – Seasons and Seasonality – Geographic Grid Maps and Map Projections	Read Chapters 1&2 Module 1 due Aug 15
	Module 2: The Atmosphere, Insolation and Temperature Pressure and Wind	Read Chapters 4&5 Module 2 due Aug 15
Week 2 Aug 16-22	Module 3: Moisture in the Atmosphere – Hydrology – Adiabatic Processes	Read Chapter 6 Module 3 due Aug 22
	Module 4: Storms and Atmospheric Disturbances	Read Chapter 7 Module 4 due Aug 22
Week 3 Aug 23-29	Module 5: Global Climates and Climate Change	Read Chapter 8 Module 5 due Aug 29
	Module 6: The Hydrosphere	Read Chapter 9 Module 6 due Aug 29
Week 4 Aug 30-Sep 5	Midterm Exam	Midterm Exam due Sep 5
Week 5 Sep 6-12	Module 7: The Biosphere and Biogeography	Read Chapter 10 Module 7 due Sep 12
	Module 8: Geomorphology and Plate Tectonics	Read Chapters 13&14 Module 8 due Sep 12
Week 6 Sep 13-19	Module 9: Erosion and Fluvial Dynamics	Read Chapters 15 and 16 Module 9 due Sep 19
	Module 10: Arid Lands	Read Chapter 18 Module 10 due Sep 19
Week 7 Sep 20-26	Module 11: Glaciers and Glaciation	Read Chapter 19 Module 11 due Sep 26



Date or Week	Activity, Assignment, and/or Topic	Pages/ Due Dates/Tests
	Module 12: Coastal Processes	Read Chapter 20 Module 12 due Sep 26
Week 8 Sep 27-Oct 3	Final Exam	Exam due at 11:59 pm on Oct 3

*****Subject to change without prior notice*****