

Geography 100 (10544)
Fall 2013
James L Sell, Ph.D.

COURSE SYLLABUS
Physical Geography
6:30-9:40pm Monday
Building 200 Room 212

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is a general introduction to physical geography, including basic concepts about the operations of air, water, land, and life-forms on the earth, as well as how they interact to create the human environment.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

Provide a systematic introduction to physical geography and an understanding of the regulatory processes that operate on the Earth's surface. We will cover the major components of the earth system: the atmosphere, hydrosphere, biosphere, and lithosphere, and discuss spatial distribution patterns. Upon successfully completing this course you will, among other things, be able to:

1. Comprehend seasonal, latitudinal, and elevational climatic variation
2. Understand the relationships between weather, climate, water, soils, vegetation, & landforms
3. Be able to use the Internet to research physical geographic topics
4. Be able to explain Plate Tectonics and how it has influenced landform formation
5. Answer these questions about your physical environment: What is where? Why is it there, not elsewhere?

INSTRUCTOR:

James L. Sell, Ph.D. University of Arizona.

Instructor's Office: 1604A

Office Phone: 760-355-6537

Email: jim.sell@imperial.edu

Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday 12-1 pm
Monday/Wednesday 10-11 am
Or by appointment

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK

Hess, Darrel 2011 *McKnight's Physical Geography: Third California Edition*. Upper Sable River, NJ: Pearson Education.

NOTE: The list price for a new hard copy of this textbook is \$117.75. The bookstore also rents print copies of this for a lower price. You can rent a digital (online) copy of this text for 180 days for about \$65 at coursesmart.com. If you do not have any interest in keeping a copy of this beyond the ending of the class, you might want to rent a digital copy.

It is also recommended that you have a good atlas. The atlas should have a "gazetteer" that is, an index of all the places shown on the maps with their latitude and longitude. *Goode's World Atlas* or the National Geographic Society atlas both have it.

CLASS STRUCTURE

This is a lecture class, which meets Mondays 6:30-9:40pm, in Room 212, Building 200. Lectures/class discussions are primary sources of information. Additional detail is supplied by the text, videos, and hand-outs. To do well you must attend class, read the assigned chapters in the physical geography text, complete in and out of class activities, and turn in all assigned work. Exams will be based on lecture/discussion material, readings, hand-outs, lab activities, and videos. Some of the readings are not directly covered in class, and some of the lecture materials are not found in the text, but BOTH sources will be on the tests. If you miss class you should check with other students for notes.

The lecture power points will be posted on **Blackboard**. Keep in mind that the power points are only an outline. More details will be presented in the lectures and **you will be tested on all materials**

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is taken at the start of each class. **IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO BE IN CLASS ON TIME.** Students arriving late or leaving class during class time disrupt the educational process and learning process: arrive on time. Students who miss more than 3 total class hours as per the college catalog can be dropped from this course.

GRADING

Student Grades will be primarily based upon the examinations, as well as written exercises for the labs. Quizzes and short written assignments may be assigned for the lecture segment. The proportion planned is as follows:

3 Regular Exams:	100 points*
Final Exam	50 points**
Climate Project	75 points
Quizzes and Assignments	c.50 points
TOTAL	275 points

* The regular exam with the lowest score will be dropped from the total; two will be retained.

** The final exam must be taken to complete the course; it cannot be dropped.

The examinations will be in “objective” format and may include multiple choice and map location questions. You may be asked to do minor calculations or interpret graphs or maps. The regular semester exams will cover the materials from the previous lectures, textbook readings or assignments. The final exam will be comprehensive.

Quizzes will be given at random through the course. They will be five points total. The purposes of the quizzes are to 1) provide an attendance check, and 2) to provide feedback about the course material. They may be given at any time during the class. The lowest quiz score will be dropped from the total.

Other assignments will be given a various times during the course and will usually relate to current events or scientific methods that have physical geography implications. These can be essays or math problems. Assignment points will vary.

Climate Project: During the course you will do a 2 part project which includes collecting, organizing, and discussing the climate information from two reporting stations (cities). In the project you will describe the physical setting and how it impacts the climate, and list a few native fauna and flora for your reporting stations. You will select a station from the approved list and begin gathering information about it.

Make-up examinations will not be given. One missed exam score will be automatically dropped as the lowest score. Those people who miss more than one exam will receive a 0 for the second missed exam.

Late Policy. Assignments turned in after 5pm on the due date will lose 10% of their total possible points. Assignments turned in one week after the due date will not be accepted.

Grades will be assigned on the basis of a percentage scale adjusted for difficulty of the material. The highest total score in the class will be scored as 100%, and the grade percentages will be derived from that highest score.

A	93-100%
B	80-92%
C	65-79%
D	50-64%
F	below 50%

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students are expected to be honest in their work for this course. In general the instructor expects you to do your own work for this class only. Formal definitions of violation follow:

1. Plagiarism. Copying work done by someone else and turning it in as your own, or failing to cite references for ideas from another source.

2. Self-Plagiarism. Copying your own work and turning it in for the present class. The instructor expects that all work turned in will be done only for this class.

3. Cheating on Examinations or Quizzes. While taking an exam, you are expected to talk to no one. Copying answers, use of crib sheets, codes, or simply replying to a student request for answers will result in punitive action. While taking an exam, you are expected to talk to no one except the instructor or teaching assistant. Even responding to a request for an eraser or a spare

pencil will cast suspicion on you. Cheating on exams or quizzes will usually result in a zero score for that test. Repeat offenses will be cause for administrative action.

DECORUM

As students in this class you are representatives of the college. Whether in the classroom or in the field, you are expected to act with a reasonable level of decorum. Failure to do so may not only lead to a failing grade, but to disciplinary action.

It is expected that **cell phones will be turned off, and there will be no text messaging or game playing during class**. Such actions, or any others that disturb other members of class are not acceptable. If you leave class to use your cell phone during class, do not return.

Students with Disabilities

Any student with a documented disability who may need educational accommodations should notify the instructor or the Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSP&S) office as soon as possible. DSP&S, Room 2117, Health Sciences Building, (760) 355-6312.

Tentative Course Outline (Subject to modification during the semester)

Week	Topic	Readings
1	Geography and Earth Science	1
2	The Earth in Motion	1
3	Labor Day	
4	Atmosphere, Hydrosphere. Lithosphere	1, 3 (pp 49-60)
5	Energy Balance and Temperature	4
Examination 1 (September 16)		
6	Atmospheric Circulation and Moisture	5, 6
7	Weather and Storm Hazards	7
8	Water and Oceans	9, 127-28
9,10	Climate and Climate Change	8
Examination 2 (October 21)		
11	Earth Crust, Rocks and Minerals	13
12	Plate Tectonics, Volcanoes, Earthquakes	14
13	Veterans Day	
Examination 3 (November 18)		
14	Ecosystems and Biomes	10, 11
15, 16	Course Wrap Up, Presentations	

Final Exam Thursday, December 2 at the regular meeting time

Climate Presentations: November 25 at the regular meeting time