Geography 101 Spring 2018

GEOGRAPHY 101: THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT
http://www4.uwsp.edu/geo/faculty/lemke/geog101

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Office: Science B345

WHY STUDY PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY?

A visit to Google Earth readily shows the diversity of earth’s landscapes. The southeastern United States appears greener than the southwestern United States. Northern Africa is covered with vast deserts while central Africa is not. Nepal has spectacular mountains but central Wisconsin does not (Fig. 1). Physical geography is the study of the geographic patterns to the earth’s physical environment. The physical environment includes all aspects of the atmosphere, biosphere, hydrosphere and lithosphere.

The environment affects our daily lives, from what we wear, to how we get around, to the type of jobs we may have, and how our homes may be built. It affects the quality of the air we breathe and the water we drink. It affects what we can grow in our gardens, and thus the food we eat. Governmental bodies at all levels make policies and decisions that are affected by, and affect, our physical environment. Understanding the basic workings of the environment is critical to evaluating the impacts of these policy decisions.

Because the characteristics and quality of the earth’s physical environment – its atmosphere, biosphere (Fig 2), hydrosphere, and lithosphere – change from place to place, and because these characteristics affect our every-day lives, it is important to know what the physical environment is like in different places and why. In our global society, it is important to understand why people living in other places lead lives that may be quite different from our own.

The goal of this class is to explore geographic patterns to earth’s physical environment and to discuss the processes responsible for these geographic patterns. Key questions in the discipline of geography include: What are places like and why are they like that? Where are things located and why are they there? We will address these questions with regard to Earth’s atmosphere, hydrosphere, biosphere and lithosphere.

Figure 1. Global Topography

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the semester, you should be able to:

1) describe geographic patterns to the earth’s physical environment, including global patterns of climate, ecosystems, soils, and landforms.
2) explain basic environmental processes operating in the atmosphere, biosphere, hydrosphere and lithosphere that produce geographic patterns.
3) give examples of connections between the atmosphere, biosphere, hydrosphere and lithosphere.
4) apply some of the technical skills required for the study of physical geography such as reading, interpreting, and creating maps; reading and interpreting air photos; reading, interpreting, and creating graphs and charts; collecting and interpreting data; and math.
5) use the skills and knowledge gained throughout the semester to predict the characteristics of places (Fig 3) and to solve problems or analyze situations related to physical geographic processes. It is not enough to know something; you also need to know when and how to use that information. You need to be able to apply what you know.

COURSE MATERIALS

Books
- D. Hess McKnight’s Physical Geography: A Landscape Appreciation (12th ed). Rental text.

Class Web Site:
http://www4.uwsp.edu/geo/faculty/lemke/geog101/
The web site contains the course calendar, assigned readings, lecture outlines, diagrams, links, review questions, practice tests, and study suggestions. You will need to access the course web site on a regular basis. Although the class web site contains lecture outlines and other aids, do not assume that having access to the lecture outlines means you do not need to come to class or that you do not need to take notes during class. You need to come to class and you need to take notes. The outlines are not a substitute for your own notes; they are to aid you in taking your own notes.
CLASS POLICIES

Attendance
You are expected to attend lecture 11:00-12:15 Tuesday and Thursday in Science D320. Lecture material provides the basis for our lab work. If you miss lecture, you can expect to have problems with the lab exercises.

You are required to attend lab Monday and Wednesday in Science D320 from 12:00-1:50. Some material required for lab may not be available outside of the scheduled lab time and if you miss lab, you may not be able to make-up that work. You are expected to finish lab assignments during the lab period. You may not leave lab early unless you have finished your assignment or have received permission to leave early.

You are responsible for all material covered in class (lecture and lab). If you miss a class, even for a legitimate reason (e.g. a university sponsored event in which you are participating), you are still responsible for the material. You should get notes from a fellow student for any classes you miss. If you participate in a university sponsored event that requires you to miss class, please have the supervising instructor provide an excuse prior to the day you will be absent.

Preparation
You are expected to prepare for class. As a general rule, you should spend approximately two hours outside of class preparing for every hour spent in class. Since this is a five-credit class, that translates to ten hours of preparation outside of class every week. Preparation for class entails reading the textbook, working on assignments or lab exercises, reviewing and working through lecture notes, and any other study activities that will help you learn the material.

Readings are listed on the course calendar on the course web site. You should do assigned readings before coming to class. Use the lecture outlines to help guide you through the readings; use your textbook to fill in information or details missing from the lecture outlines.

Participation
Please participate in class! Contribute comments and ask questions before, during, or after class (lecture and lab). Volunteer answers to questions I ask during class. If you’re lost, say so. Use my office hours to ask questions. Use email to ask questions. The more you participate, the more you will learn. So participate in class!

Tests
Exams and quizzes should be taken at the scheduled times. Make-up exams or quizzes are allowed only for extreme cause and with a verified excuse. Calculators may be used during tests; however, cell phones, PDAs, blackberries, tablets, or other electronic devices with calculator functions are not allowed; these devices must be turned off and put away during tests.

Cell Phones and Electronic Devices
Cell phones, Blackberries, PDAs, MP3s and other electronic devices should be turned off (or set to vibrate) during class (lecture and lab). Talking on cell phones, text-messaging, checking for messages, emailing, and listening to music during class is not allowed. It is rude and distracting to other students in the class and to the instructor. Laptops and tablets are allowed with prior permission from the instructor. All cell phones and other electronic devices except for calculators must be turned off and put away during tests.

Student rights and responsibilities
UWSP has specific guidelines regarding student rights and responsibilities, academic standards and disciplinary procedures, accommodation of religious beliefs, and conduct on university land. These guidelines are explained in the document “Community Rights and Responsibilities” available at: http://www.uwsp.edu/dos/Documents/CommunityRights.pdf

EVALUATION & GRADING

The course grade is based on 3 unit exams, 5 lab quizzes, and lab exercises, all of which are worth 100 points total:

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exam I</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam II</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam III</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lab Quizzes 1-5</td>
<td>7 each; 35 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lab Exercises</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100 points</strong></td>
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Tests
- Always bring a #2 pencil and an eraser.
- Always bring a calculator. You are not allowed to share calculators with neighbors during tests.
- All cell phones, iPods, tablets and other electronic devices must be turned off and put away.
- All tests consist of multiple choice and true/false questions that will require you to solve problems, apply what you know, and to think about what you have learned.
- All tests will be collected at the end of the test period. You will have the opportunity to review your tests, but you may not keep them.
Exams 1 and 2 take place during a lab period and exam 3 takes place finals week. There are 75 questions per exam, which you have two hours to complete. All material from lecture, lab, the textbook and assignments is fair game for exam questions.

Lab quizzes take place during the first hour of lab. There are 25 questions on each quiz and these are based only on material covered in lab exercises. The questions will require you to solve problems similar to ones in the lab exercises.

Lab Exercises & Assignments

Lab exercises require you to work through examples and applications of concepts and ideas discussed in lecture. Students may work together on lab exercises and may request as much help from me as required. Exercises are due at the end of lab class unless otherwise stated. Given the number of students in the class and the number of lab assignments, lab exercises are graded as either complete or incomplete: you either get full credit for completing the exercise, or no credit if you do not complete the exercise. Answer keys to all exercises will be available in class and will also be available on the Internet after the lab is completed. You are responsible for checking your own answers, correcting your mistakes, and asking for help when needed.

Letter Grades

Final letter grades are based on the following cutoffs:

- A: 92-100
- B+: 88-89
- B: 82-87
- A-: 90-91
- B-: 80-81
- C+: 78-79
- C: 72-77
- D+: 68-69
- D: 60-67
- F: below 60 points

Contact Instructor

Office Hours: Science B345
Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday 2:00-3:00 and by appointment. Office hours are times set aside for you! Please use them! If you have a conflict with my office hours but need help, please let me know and I’ll arrange a time that works for both of us.

Email: klemke@uwsp.edu
Please feel free to email me questions, particularly if you have conflicts with my office hours. I usually check my mail twice a day – first thing in the morning, and before I go home at the end of the day. I try to respond to all emails within 24 hours (except on weekends). Please use your university email account for all email to me regarding this course.

Calculating Your Grade

Your course grade is worth 100 points. Use the worksheet below to keep track of your points in the class.

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<th>Weight</th>
<th>Points earned</th>
<th>Out of</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lab Quiz 1</td>
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<td>7 Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lab Quiz 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Labs</td>
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<td>14 Points</td>
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Final grade = sum of all your points = ___________

Example: Suppose you get 85.4% on the first exam:

Exam 1: \( \frac{85.4 \times 0.17 = 14.5}{17 \text{ Points}} \)

For the lab portion of your grade, sum the total number of labs and assignments you successfully completed. Divide this sum by the total number of activities assigned to determine “Your grade (%).”