The University of Texas at San Antonio
Department of Political Science and Geography

Physical Geography

GRG 2613-04, Course #25436
Mon/Wed/Fri 11:00-11:50
Room: MH 2.01.32

******The most current version of this document will be available on Blackboard******

Lecturer
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Office: MS 4.03.32 — Email: sharonwadams@utexas.edu
Office Hours: MWF 10:00-11:00 and by appointment

The academic discipline of geography has a long tradition of investigating the relationship between people and the natural environment. In this course, you will learn how geographers study the physical processes of the natural environment. We will study the earth's major landforms and climatic patterns, and the processes giving rise to these patterns. We will examine the function of various systems in the atmosphere, biosphere, hydrosphere, and lithosphere, and the ways in which these produce weather, climate, soils, and landforms specific to a given to place.

This course is designed to introduce you to the basic concepts of physical geography, to assist you in recognizing the interconnectedness of natural processes and human lives on this planet, and to raise your awareness of the world around you. This is an introductory level course, and there are no prerequisites. This course fills the "Level 2: Science" component of the UTSA Core Curriculum (please verify this with your academic advisor.)

Students will have the opportunity to:

- Recognize and understand the fundamental natural processes of the world.
- Identify various meteorological events as well as the natural processes instrumental in their formation.
- Identify various landforms as well as the natural processes instrumental in their formation.
- Explain spatial patterns in earth's physical environment and relationships with the atmosphere, biosphere, hydrosphere, and lithosphere.
- Evaluate the relevance of the study of physical geography to their own lives.

Student Learning Objectives

Critical thinking skills (creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, analysis, evaluation, synthesis): Students are expected to read textbook assignments and Blackboard supplements prior to class; to analyze, synthesize, and contextualize this material in class discussions, tests, and take home assignments, including relating course material to current events.

Communication skills (development and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication): Students are expected to articulate their ideas in writing. They should be able to answer questions verbally in class and to participate in open discussion of topics. Upon forming presentation groups, students must offer their respective observations and conclusions in a presentation that emphasizes verbal, visual, and organizational skills.

Empirical and quantitative skills (the manipulation and analysis of numerical data or observable facts resulting in informed conclusions): The instructor regularly asks students, in class and on exams, to solve problems involving basic geographic techniques and the application of standard geographic models of social behavior.

Teamwork (working effectively with others to consider different points of view while sharing a shared purpose or goal): Students are organized into study and presentation groups to review course material or complete assignments, and to design and carry out collective presentations to the class.

Textbooks and Materials

- *Visualizing Physical Geography, 2nd Edition.* 2012. T. Foresman, and A. H. Strahler. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. ISBN-13: 978-0-470-62615-3.
- A student resource site for textbook provides resources to assist you with the material, including self- tests, web resources, and flashcards is located at: http://bcs.wiley.com/he-bcs/Books?action=index&itemId=0470626151&bcsId=7016

Course Expectations

This course will include both lecture and discussion, and students are expected to be on time and to participate fully. This includes completing all readings, participating in in-class activities, quizzes, and regular attendance. Missing class will have a negative impact on your grade.

Assignments

1. **Class Attendance and Participation - Regular class attendance is a course requirement.** Attendance and in-class activities/quizzes combined will count for 10% of the grade.

2. **Exams:** Four exams are scheduled during the semester based on both lectures and assigned readings. The lowest test grade will be dropped. Each exam will count for 30% of the final grade. Exams may include multiple choice, matching, true/false and short answer questions. Exams are not comprehensive. Students must take the tests in class on the days designated on the syllabus calendar. Make up exams will not be granted. Because one exam grade will be dropped for the semester, this will take the place of the exam that needs to be made up.

Grading

Participation (Attendance, Unannounced Reading Comprehension Quizzes, In-class activities)	100
Exam 1	300
Exam 2	300
Exam 3	300
Exam 4	300* *Lowest test score will drop*
Total	**1000**

The following scale will be used to determine your final letter grade:

A	900-1000	(Unusual Excellence)
B	800-899	(Above Average)
C	700-799	(Average)
D	600-699	(Below Average But Passing)
F	599 and below	
Credit/No Credit	600 and above Pass	

Mid-term grades will be reported per UTSA policy.

Students with Disabilities

Any student with a documented disability who requires academic accommodations (including extended test times, note takers, alternative print formats, etc.) should contact Disability Services at MS 2.03.18, 458-4157 as soon as possible to request an official letter outlining authorized accommodations. Qualified students must make an appointment to meet with me outside of class time to discuss these accommodations, so that I can do all I can to help. This appointment must be made no later than the first week of the semester. The responsibility of obtaining necessary documentation and informing the instructor through the proper channels rests entirely with the student. Please refer to http://www.utsa.edu/disability/students.htm for more information.

Academic Integrity

Academic Honesty: All students are expected and encouraged to contribute to an atmosphere of high ethical standards, observing all accepted principles of academic honesty. Academic dishonesty is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct, and includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, or any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts. Specific information concerning procedures and penalties for scholastic dishonesty may be found in the UTSA Information Bulletin. In all cases, the UTSA Handbook of Operating Procedures and the Student Code of Conduct are the final word in academic policy and procedures for students and faculty.

The University of Texas at San Antonio Academic Honor Code:
A. Preamble: The University of Texas at San Antonio community of past, present and future students, faculty, staff, and administrators share a commitment to integrity and the ethical pursuit of knowledge. We honor the traditions of our university by conducting ourselves with a steadfast duty to honor, courage, and virtue in all matters both public and private. By choosing integrity and responsibility, we promote personal growth, success, and lifelong learning for the advancement of ourselves, our university, and our community.
B. Honor Pledge: In support of the ideals of integrity, the students of the University of Texas at San Antonio pledge: "As a UTSA Roadrunner I live with honor and integrity."
C. Shared responsibility: The University of Texas at San Antonio community shares the responsibility and commitment to integrity and the ethical pursuit of knowledge and adheres to the UTSA Honor Code.

The Roadrunner Creed: The University of Texas at San Antonio is a community of scholars, where integrity, excellence, inclusiveness, respect, collaboration, and innovation are fostered. As a Roadrunner, I will:
• Uphold the highest standards of academic and personal integrity by practicing and expecting fair and ethical conduct;
• Respect and accept individual differences, recognizing the inherent dignity of each person;
• Contribute to campus life and the larger community through my active engagement; and
• Support the fearless exploration of dreams and ideas in the advancement of ingenuity, creativity, and discovery.
Guided by these principles now and forever, I am a Roadrunner!

Classroom Behavior
Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, ethnicity, nationality, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, and gender/gender variance.

Please SILENCE your electronic devices before the start of class. If you are talking on your phone, texting, listening to music, surfing the web, Facebooking, Tweeting, etc. during class you will not receive credit for attendance that day and you may be asked to leave.

Contacting the Instructor
The best way to reach me is by email. Please give me 24 hours to respond to your emails and 48 hours over the weekend. My office is a shared office, and dialing (458-7570) will ring to the office, but instead of voicemail, it will forward to the front desk in the Department. This is not a good way to reach me except during office hours. Please remember to sign your emails, first and last name, and reference which course you are enrolled in (this will help avoid confusion on my part!)

Tomás Rivera Center
The Tomás Rivera Center provides academic support services for assistance in study strategies and course content. These services are available to you at no additional cost. For more information regarding these services, please visit the TRC web site at www.utsa.edu/trcss.

Course Schedule

Week 1:
January 13-15: Chapter 1: Discovering the Earth's Dimensions: Mapping the Earth

Week 2:
January 22-24: Chapter 2: Solar Energy and Global Energy Systems

Week 3:
January 27-31: Chapter 2: Solar Energy and Global Energy Systems

Week 4:
February 3-7: Chapter 3: Air Temperature

Week 5:
February 10: **Exam #1: Chapters 1-3**
February 12-14: Film: "National Geographic: Six Degrees Could Change the World"

Week 6:
February 17-21: Chapter 4: Atmospheric Moisture and Precipitation

Week 7:
February 24-28: Chapter 5: Global Atmospheric and Oceanic Circulation

Week 8:
March 3-5: Chapter 6: Weather Systems
March 7: **Exam #2: Chapters 4-6**

Week 9:
March 10-14 Spring Break

Week 10:
March 17-21: Chapter 6: Weather Systems

Week 11:
March 24-28: Mon: Chapter 6: Weather System/ Chapter 7: Global Climates
Wed/Fri: Chapter 8: Earth from the Inside Out

Week 12:
March 31- April 4: Chapter 9: Plate Tectonics and Volcanoes

Week 13:
April 7: **Exam #3: Chapters 6-9**
April 9-11: Chapter 10: Weathering and Mass Wasting

Week 14:
April 14-18: Chapter 11: Fresh Water of the Continent

Week 15:
April 21-25: Chapter 12: Landforms Made by Running Water
Chapter 13: Landforms Made by Wind and Waves

Week 16:
April 28-30: Chapter 14: Glacial and Periglacial Landforms

May 8, 9:45 am: Final Exam: Exam #4: Chapters 11-14