

Geography 2050 – Physical Geography: The Atmosphere Course Syllabus – Spring 2014
Online course on Moodle

Contact Information

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Course Description (from LSU Catalog)

Physical principles, processes, and operations in the atmosphere and world climatic realms.

Course Overview

The topical focus of GEOG 2050 “Physical Geography: The Atmosphere” includes: (1) basic concepts in atmospheric science, including atmospheric structure and composition, energy balances, and atmospheric circulation; (2) characterization of meteorological and climatological variability and processes at different space and time scales, including macro- and meso-scale weather processes and climate changes; and (3) linkage of variations in the Earth’s weather and climate patterns to humans and their environment. Scientific thinking and real-world applications of meteorological and climatological information are emphasized, along with an interactive approach to learning using Moodle2, multimedia, and web resources.

Course Calendar – Spring 2014 (Subject to change)

Topic	Week starting	Reading	Quiz
Introduction to online class Essentials of Geography	January 15	Chapter 1	January 17
Maps	January 20	Chapter 1	January 24
Solar Radiation & Seasons	January 27	Chapter 2	January 31
Atmospheric Composition & Structure	February 3	Chapter 3	February 7
Exam #1	Exam February 11-14		
Atmosphere and Energy Balance	February 17	Chapter 4	February 21
Global Temperatures	February 24	Chapter 5	February 28
Mardi Gras Holiday March 2-4			
Exam #2	Exam March 5-7		
Atmospheric and Ocean Circulation	March 10	Chapter 6	March 14
Water and Moisture	March 17	Chapter 7	March 21
Water Resources	March 24	Chapter 9	March 29
Exam #3	Exam April 1-4		
Weather – Thunderstorms	April 7	Chapter 8	April 11
Spring break April 14-20			
Weather – Severe storms	April 21	Chapters 8	April 25
Global Climate Systems and Climate Variability	April 28	Chapter 10	May 2
Exam #4	May 5-9		

Other Important dates

- Jan 24 (Fri) - Final date for dropping courses without receiving a grade of "W."
- Jan 27 (Mon) - Final date for adding courses for credit and making section changes.
- April 4 (Fri) - Final date for resigning from the University and/or dropping courses.
- April 4 (Fri) - Final date to request rescheduling a final examination when three examinations are scheduled in 24 hours.

Textbook (required)

The required textbook is Geosystems (8th edition) by Robert W. Christopherson. Electronic and unbound versions are available at a reduce price, see bookstore. *Mastering Geography is not required for the course but there are practice quizzes you may find helpful.* The textbook web site for the 8th edition is <http://www.masteringgeography.com>. You have access to that website if you have a new copy of the textbook. If you have the electronic version, older edition, or a used copy, you can buy access to the textbook website. The textbook web site **is not** required but you may find it helpful.

Moodle

All course related materials will be posted on Moodle that you access through your My LSU account <https://www.lsu.edu/mylsu>. All course activities are completed in Moodle except for the exams. If you need help with Moodle, contact the Help Desk helpdesk@lsu.edu or <http://grok.lsu.edu/categories.aspx?parentcategoryid=2787>. Grades are posted on Moodle within a week after each exam.

Weekly Activity and Weekly Quizzes (10% of your grade)

Each week I will post activities in Moodle for you to complete, there are 11 activities and quizzes. The weekly activities require you to complete a series of tasks and questions designed to help you learn the material; there are one to three parts each week. Once you complete all parts of the weekly activity, you can take the weekly quiz. These activities are designed to help you comprehend and understand the topics discussed each week. You can use the textbook, the Internet, and other references to help you. You have until **8 pm on Friday** to complete the weekly activity and take the weekly quiz. At the end of the semester, I will drop your lowest weekly quiz grades and count the top 10 quiz grades. I will discuss the activities and give you clues in the online lecture, so listening to lectures will help you.

No extra credit assignments will not be given in the online version of GEOG 2050.

Grades

Grades for the course will be assigned based on four factors, weighted as follows:

Exam #1 22.5% Exam #2 22.5% Exam #3 22.5% Exam #4 22.5% Weekly Quizzes 10%

All exams will be given at the Computer Testing Center (CTC) <http://www.cae.lsu.edu/default.asp>. You schedule your own exam appointments on the CTC web site with your myLSU ID. There is a three-day window to take the exams (5 days for the Exam #4). You need your LSU student photo ID to take the exam. The questions are multiple choice and matching and are designed to monitor and assess student performance in the two general education learning objectives. Please note that there will not be a cumulative final exam; instead, there will be four exams spaced throughout semester.

Final course letter grades will be assigned using a standard A-B-C-D-F system, with 90% the lowest A, 80% the lowest B, 70% the lowest C, 60% the lowest D, and < 59.5% F. Grades are rounded to the nearest whole number (e.g., 89.50 = 90 and 89.49 = 89). A final numerical score for the course is calculated as percentages of the five components. Based on the final score, a final letter grade is assigned. I generally do not curve exam grades but reserve the right to do so. **The final course grades will not be curved.** Failure to complete any exam will result in a zero for that exam. Please resolve any grade disagreements with the instructor and report any discrepancies in writing to the instructor by May 5, 2014.

Students should keep in mind that grading is an assessment of quality, not a measure of effort. Please do not interpret my attempt to make the classroom environment friendly and welcoming as any indication of relaxed academic expectations.

On the contrary, you should expect a rigorous learning experience, as I set a high academic standard for the class.

Missed Exams

Exams are given in the Computer Testing Center over a three-day period to give students the flexibility to make their own exam schedules. Therefore, requests for makeup exams are **rarely** permitted and **make-up exams are essay and are given in my office** if the makeup occurs after the exam period. If you have a legitimate excuse, you must notify the instructor by email or telephone **before the exam begins** or, when that is logistically impossible, very soon afterwards on the same day. You must provide proof for your excuse in writing (doctor's note, towing receipt with time listed, etc.). Students will only be allowed to take exams **early** in the case of a legitimate university conflict (i.e., travel for an athletic event or other university business). Conflicts with jobs, other classes, and your personal life are not satisfactory excuses. Personal travel is **not**, in any circumstance, a legitimate excuse.

*I highly recommend **not** scheduling your exam for the last time slots on the last day if there is a chance you will not make your exam appointment. Students who take exams in the last time slots statistically score lower.*

Students who take their exams the first day score higher than any other day.

How to earn a high grade this class - A learning strategy with an emphasis on time management

Students often ask how best to prepare for these tests. I strongly encourage you to:

- Read** the chapter for each week without taking notes the weekend before then reread and take notes during the week.
- Listen to every lecture** and take notes. Pause lectures and reverse if you miss a concept, refer to textbook if needed.
- Complete** the weekly activities on Moodle and answer the quiz questions correctly.
- Answer** the questions at the end of the chapter and review the additional materials posted on Moodle.
- Get help from the TAs** by posting questions on the Weekly Discussion on Moodle and attending review sessions.
- Complete** the study items and quizzes on the textbook website <http://www.pearsonhighered.com/mygeoscience/>.

The textbook publisher sells a student study guide you may find useful. Additionally, you may want to form study groups. All of the exam questions will be drawn directly from material presented in lectures including the weekly activities.

General weekly study plan

If you have never practice time management before, I will help you by giving you a weekly plan for how to study for this course. For every credit hour of a course, you should spend 2-3 hours studying. For this 3 credit hour online course, that is 3 hours a week listening to lectures on Moodle and 6 to 9 hours reading, studying and completing activities for a total of 9 to 12 hours per week. Find a good place to study with no distractions. You should devote 1-2 UNDISTRACTED hours a day to this class; turn off cell phone, texting, Facebook, email, roommates, etc. Each day you should complete the items below and add to your class notebook. These notes are your study guides for the exams. Create your exam study sheet for that week's chapter at the end of the week. Then all you need to review for the exam is your study sheet and notes.

Saturday and Sunday **Read** the assigned chapter for the week, *just read*, no highlighting, outlining, or writing notes.
Write down your thoughts on items not clear to you after reading the chapter.

Post your questions on the Weekly Discussion in Moodle and we will address your questions.

Monday **Listen** to the first lecture and take notes.

Review your questions from your first reading and summarize what you do and do not understand.

Look at the Weekly Discussion if you need help or have questions.

Tuesday **Start** the weekly activity on Moodle, complete as much as you can.

Start answering questions at the end of the chapter.

Meet with your study group.

Wednesday **Listen** to the second lecture and take notes.

Review your questions from your first reading and summarize what you do and do not understand.

Look at the Weekly Discussion if you need help or have questions.

Answer questions at the end of the chapter.

Thursday **Listen** to the third (if there is one) lecture and take notes.

Complete weekly activity on Moodle. Record or print activity in your notebook.

Review supplemental items on Textbook web site.

Start your study sheet for that chapter for the exam.

Look at the Weekly Discussion and read questions and answers from other students posted on Moodle.

Friday **Reread chapter and review** your questions and summarize what you understand and do not understand.

Complete your study sheet for that chapter so you can review it before the quiz and the exam.

Take the weekly quiz on Moodle. Record or print activity answers in your notebook.

If you follow this plan, you will have read all the material, prepared for the exam, and have a study sheets to review before the exam. You will not need to cram the night before the exam and you should do well. Enjoy your Friday night and be ready to start the next chapter on Saturday.

TA and Weekly Discussions on Moodle

Moodle is the primary means of communication for this course and email is secondary. If you have general questions related to the course, post them on TA forum, and if you have questions related to the weekly topic posted them to the Weekly Discussion. If you need to contact instructors regarding missing an exam or for private matters, send an email geog2050@srcc.lsu.edu. Students must check their email and Moodle regularly (2-3 times per week) to stay informed of any course news and announcements.

Email Policy ALL COURSE-RELATED EMAILS MUST BE SENT TO geog2050@srcc.lsu.edu

Students **must** ensure that their email address on Moodle is accurate, as important course information will be provided periodically via the Moodle email interface. Teaching Assistants (TA) are the primary recipient for the above email address. The TAs will forward any emails that need my attention. Whenever possible, we will respond to a student's email inquiry within 24 hours. In return, we ask that students observe some basic guidelines regarding email etiquette:

- Address your email message professionally (*i.e., written letter with proper spelling and grammar and salutation*).
- Sign your name with contact information; in a large class it is difficult to identify a student solely by email address.
- When making requests for information or assistance, always be polite.

In addition, in order to make class-related email exchanges as efficient as possible, we will **not** respond to emails requesting basic course information that is in this syllabus or on Moodle. The class syllabus and schedule is posted on Moodle. *If your email request pertains to the whole class, I reserve the right to post it on Moodle, Weekly Discussion, or the TA forum so that all your classmates can benefit.*

Class Policies

- Please be on time for your scheduled exam time.
- Please respect others on the online forums, no bullying, and no cursing.
- You are expected to do your own work.
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Academic Integrity

Students are encouraged to share ideas, skills, and to freely discuss the principles and applications of course materials *outside* of class lectures and exams. However, the guiding principle of academic integrity is that a student's submitted work must be the student's own. ***There is no place or tolerance for cheating in this course.***

“Academic Misconduct” shall mean cheating, plagiarism, collusion, falsifying academic records, and all other actions which are described in Section 8.1.C. or any act or other form of academic dishonesty or omission designed to give an unfair academic advantage to the student.” *LSU Code of Student Conduct*

Misrepresentation of your own work through plagiarism, collusion, or data distortion is a serious breach of the LSU Code of Student Conduct, which states:

“Plagiarism” is defined as the unacknowledged inclusion of someone else's words, structure, ideas, or data. When a student submits work as his/her own that includes the words, structure, ideas, or data of others, the source of this information must be acknowledged through complete, accurate, and specific references, and, if verbatim statements are included, through quotation marks as well. Failure to identify any source (including interviews, surveys, etc.), published in any medium (including on the internet) or unpublished, from which words, structure, ideas, or data have been taken, constitutes plagiarism.”

LSU Code of Student Conduct is available at <http://appl003.lsu.edu/slas/dos.nsf/index>.

This includes the weekly activities and quizzes on Moodle. **DO NOT** give your answers to another student; this is a cheating violation (LSU Code of Student Conduct section 8.1.C).

Cheating will result in a referral to the Dean of Students.

Attendance

Attendance will not be taken in the online class but you are expected to work each week on the activities and lectures. The evaluation of student performance will be based entirely on material presented in online lectures and weekly activities. Therefore, it will be nearly impossible to earn a high grade without working on the class material on a daily basis. “A” and “B” students devote time every day to the course and complete the weekly activities; “C,” “D,” and “F” students tend to procrastinate and cram for the exams.

General Education Learning Objectives

This course satisfies three credits for the university's general education natural (physical) sciences requirement. As such, it addresses in a sustained way many of the following criteria:

- The structure and properties of atoms and matter
- Chemical reactions, motions, and forces
- The conservation of energy and the increase in disorder
- The interactions of energy and matter
- Energy in the earth system, geochemical cycles, and the origin and evolution of the universe and the earth system

In fulfillment of the general education requirement, GEOG 2050 is focused on energy in the Earth system, geochemical cycles, and the origin and evolution of the universe and the earth system.

This course emphasizes all of the above criteria to some extent, but in particular

- The conservation of energy and the increase in disorder
- The interactions of energy and matter

The learning goals for students in GEOG 2050 are to:

- (1) Demonstrate knowledge of a broad survey in the discipline, including the underlying principles that govern the natural world
- (2) Demonstrate the ability to use inductive and deductive reasoning to understand scientific phenomena.

Physical or Learning Disabilities

Any student with a documented disability needing academic adjustments is requested to speak with the Office of Disability Services and the instructor, as early in the semester as possible. Please contact the Office of Disability Services, 112 Johnston Hall, 225-578-5919. All discussions will remain confidential. This publication/material is available in alternative formats upon request. I look forward to talking with you soon to learn how I may be helpful in enhancing your academic success in this course.