GEOGRAPHY 2410 – PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT
SOUTHWEST TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY, SPRING 2002

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Office Hours: 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM Mondays and Wednesdays or by appointment
Class Time: 11:00 AM –11:50 AM Monday, Wednesday, and Fridays
Classroom: Evans Liberal Arts (ELA) Building, Room 116
Course Line Number: 231448

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is a systematic study of the various elements that make up the Earth's physical environment, weather, climate, vegetation, soil, and landforms. These systems transfer matter and energy among different earth systems (atmosphere, hydrosphere, lithosphere, biosphere).

This course is concerned with the natural processes that interact to produce the earth's varying physical environments. Relationships and explanations involving the basics of matter and energy transfer are emphasized throughout the course -- not descriptions. Because geography is a discipline that encompasses both natural and social science, physical geography deals with the interface between human and natural systems. The emphasis of the course, however, is on the nature of the processes that affect the lithosphere, hydrosphere, atmosphere, and biosphere.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, you should be able to understand introductory principles of how the earth "works" within its relationship with the sun and solar system, and the nature of the earth's surface. In addition, you should have developed a basic understanding of the atmosphere, hydrosphere, biosphere, and lithosphere of the earth. Toward this end, an integral part of this course will be both lectures and laboratory exercises.

COURSE MATERIALS

Readings for this class will be from the textbook, Essentials of Physical Geography by Gabler, Sager, Wise, and Petersen. Other materials are required for the lab sections, and will be discussed by your lab instructor.

EVALUATION AND GRADING POLICIES

I will evaluate your performance and assign grades based on two major areas of work in this course. First, I will assess your knowledge of the lecture material with three examinations (two midterms and a final). Second, your performance in the laboratory section is also used to evaluate your final grade.

All students are expected to take exams at the scheduled time. In the event this is impossible you must contact the instructor as far in advance as possible to determine if

other arrangements will be permitted. Make up exams may or may not be permitted at the discretion of the instructor and, if permitted: 1) the format of the exam may be changed, and 2) the possible points earned may be significantly reduced. If exams are not taken at the scheduled time, the following policies apply.

Situation 1, Anticipated Absence During a Scheduled Exam. Personally notify the instructor as far in advance as possible to determine if the reason is acceptable and a make up exam will be permitted. Failure to notify the instructor in advance will result in forfeiture of make up privilege. Examples of acceptable excuses include documented illness and doctor appointments that cannot be scheduled at any other time. Examples of unacceptable excuses include attending social functions and early departures for holidays. ***Situation 2, An Extreme, Unavoidable Catastrophe Occurs Immediately Preceding the Scheduled Exam Which Makes it Impossible to Take the Exam.*** Examples include being involved in an automobile accident, or other unexpected circumstances beyond the student's control. In such cases, notify the instructor as soon as possible and bring in documentation of the incident so that the instructor may make arrangements for a make up as soon as possible. ***Situation 3, No Acceptable Excuse Exists – No Shows = No Make Up.***

There is a maximum of 400 points for all of the lecture exams and lab exercises. The basis for grading will be as follows: 100 points for each of two midterm examinations, 100 points for a final examination, and 100 points for the laboratory section grade. The final grades will be determined based on the following rules:

A	≥90% (≥360 points)
B	≥80% and <90% (320 – 359 points)
C	≥70% and <80% (280 – 319 points)
D	≥60% and <70% (240 – 279 points)
F	<60% (< 240 points)

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Good attendance in lecture and lab is key to your success in this course. First, the exams will be based on lecture material. Second, the lab schedule is fairly rigorous, and you will quickly fall behind if you repeatedly miss labs. If you have an unexcused absence on an exam day or the day an assignment is due, you will receive a zero on that exam or assignment.

If you must miss class or an exam because of an illness, a personal emergency, or some other extenuating circumstance, please contact me as soon as possible so I can make alternative arrangements for you (this is key). Of course, good attendance means more than just showing up for class. Please read and adhere to the policy on classroom etiquette that appears below. These codes of conduct will allow everyone to participate equally as learners. Thank you for your cooperation.

CODE OF CONDUCT

In the Department of Geography, instructors strive to create an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect in which learning, debate, and intellectual growth can thrive. Creating this atmosphere, however, requires that instructors and students work to achieve a classroom in which learning is not disrupted. At the most basic level, this means that

everyone should attend class, be prepared with readings and assignments completed, and that students pay attention. This means no conversations with friends, reading the newspaper, coming late, or leaving early. Such behavior is disruptive to the instructor and to your fellow classmates.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students having special needs/disabilities that require accommodations for successful completion of this course must notify both SWT's Office of Disability Services and the course instructor by no later than the end of the first week of classes. Failure of the student to do so may result in the necessary accommodations not being made.

SWT ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY

Learning and teaching take place best in an atmosphere of intellectual fair-minded openness. All members of the academic community are responsible for supporting freedom and openness through rigorous personal standards of honesty and fairness. Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty undermine the very purpose of the university and diminish the value of an education. Specific sanctions for academic dishonesty are outlined in *SWTexan*.

Schedule by Week	Topics	Readings
January 14	Introduction, Earth Measurement, Earth Systems	Chapter 1 & 2
January 21	*No Class Monday (Martin Luther King, Jr. Day)* Earth Systems, Earth-Sun Relationships	Chapter 3
January 28	Electromagnetic Spectrum, Composition & Structure of the Atmosphere	Chapter 4
February 4	Radiation and Budgeting, Greenhouse Effect, Atmospheric Temperature and Pressure	Chapter 4 & 5
February 11	Winds, Global Circulation Patterns	Chapter 5 & 6
February 18	**Exam 1 (Monday, February 18)** Moisture and Air Masses, Synoptic Meteorology	Chapter 7 & 8
February 25	Present-day Climatology, Climate Classification, Paleoclimatology	Chapter 9 & 10
March 4	Regional Climates	Chapter 10 & 11

March 11	*SPRING BREAK*	NONE
March 18	Biogeography, *No lecture W & F (AAG WEEK)*	Chapter 12
March 25	Soils, Introduction to Ecosystems	Chapter 13
April 1	**Exam 2 (Monday, April 1)** Plate Tectonics	Chapter 14
April 8	Constructional Landforms, Weathering	Chapter 15 & 16
April 15	Mass Wasting, Hillslopes, Karst, Groundwater	Chapter 16 & 17
April 22	Fluvial Processes and Landforms, Glacial Systems	Chapter 18 & 19
April 29	Arid Lands Landforms, No class Wednesday **Final Exam, Friday, May 3, 11:30am – 2:00 pm**	Chapter 20