1. General Course Information

Physical Geography is a Category B1 (Lower Division Science) GE course. It is also a required core course for geography majors. This is a completely asynchronous online course. No required in class meetings or scheduled online meetings. However, there are deadlines and due dates to follow.

Learning Objective: Aligned with GEO major and GE Student Learning Objectives (SLOs), after complete the course, student should be able to:

1. Identify and articulate major concepts related to the four spheres of the natural environment (atmosphere, lithosphere, hydrosphere, and biosphere) and their geographic based interactions (GE SLO 1a, 1d; GEO SLO 1).
2. Use some of the quantitative tools and methods to explore, model, and draw conclusions on natural environmental phenomena (GE SLOs 1e, 2a; GEO SLO 2).
3. Identify and articulate absolute and relative locations on the Earth's surface and their significance associated with the physical environment and human activities (GE SLOs 1a, 1d, 1e; GEO SLO1).
4. Identify and articulate the interconnectedness of natural processes occurring on Earth, both spatially and temporally (GE SLOS 1a, 1d; GEO SLO 1, 2).
5. Perform basic scientific writing and research skills (GE SLOs 1a, 2a; GEO SLO 3).

2. Instructor Contact Information

Instructor Dr. Lin Wu  Web Office 5-149 Phone: 909-869-3578  Email: LWu@cpp.edu, Office Hours

Your E-mails will be responded within 48 hours (most of them within 24 hours) during the weekdays. Please indicate GEO101 in the subject area of your e-mail message and make sure that your full name is in the message.

Appointments are not needed if you plan to visit me during my office hours; however, it is highly recommended that you let me know ahead of time. Occasionally, I have to change office hours or locations in a short notice.
3. **Required Text and Other Sources**

(Note: to reduce the textbook cost to students, I am using the 5th edition (2010) instead of the newer 6th edition (2013) of the textbook. I’ll update the contents if needed through lectures posted in Blackboard. If any of you would like to use the 6th edition of the book, it could work too.)

Links to web sources that enhance the course are listed with the lectures, assignments, and references sections in the Blackboard.

4. **Grading**

**Grade distribution**
- Assignments (Virtual Labs, Topic based blogs, etc.) 50%
- Quizzes 10%
- Midterm 20%
- Final 20%

**Grades**
- A: 90% +
- B: 80 – 89%
- C: 70 – 79%
- D: 60-69%
- F <60%
  Plus and Minus may be given

5. **Quizzes and Exams**

Exams and quizzes are intended to assess your mastering of the knowledge related to the course subjects. You are responsible for the materials assigned in the textbook readings, online lectures (in various format), virtual labs and other learning activities.

**Quizzes**
- Quiz days are scheduled on the course calendar. Most of the quiz days are Mondays from 12 am to 11:59 pm.
- You have 10 minutes to complete 10 questions in each quiz.
- You can use books, notes during the quiz for quick references, however, you will not have enough time to search for answers if you are not well prepared.
- You can take each quiz only once; however, there will be non-graded in-lecture interactive quizzes and practice quizzes available throughout the course to help you to be prepared for the real quiz.
- To accommodate occasional technical or other problems for an individual student, one lowest (or missed) quiz score will be dropped.
- Quiz scores are typically released after the quiz period ends and I discuss (posted video or notes) the quiz results with the class as feedbacks to help you prepare the exams. Occasionally, I may need to adjust a quiz score if majority of the class missed a particular question.

**Midterm and Final**
- Exam days are scheduled on the course calendar. The exams are available on the test day from 12:00 am to 11:59 pm.
- You have 60 minutes to complete 50 questions in each exam.
- You can use books and notes during the exam for quick references, however, you will not have enough time to search for answers if you are not well prepared.
• You can take each exam only once; however, the non-graded in-lecture interactive quizzes, practice quizzes, and quizzes should help to prepare you for the exam.

6. Learning Activities

In addition to reading the textbook and viewing posted lectures (some are interactive) you will be asked to work on Virtual Labs and contribute to discussions and other class activities.

Virtual Lab/Virtual Field Trip

• The Virtual labs and virtual field trips are interactive activities using a combination of field activities and online activities to enhance your learning experience related to the course subjects and to build connections between the course subjects and every day life.
• Many of these assignments use online resources, but may require you to configure your computer system properly or you can use the computer labs on campus.
• Just like real lab and real field trips, the virtual labs/virtual field trips require time to plan, to do the activities, and to complete reports so it is important that you arrange your time to work on these learning activities and complete them on time. No late work will be accepted unless prearranged.
• These work should be completed individually unless it is specified as a group project.
• Typically, you should receive your grade within a week after the submission deadline and collective lab results from the class will be discussed to add feedback to your learning.

Blogs

• Blogs are integral part of this online class. It is intended to enhance/broaden your knowledge while improving writing/communication skills and provide an online platform to interact with your classmates and the instructor.
• Detailed instructions on contributing to blogs are given in Bb and it is very important that you write thoughtfully and follow the directions carefully.
• Your contribution to the blogs are graded based on the number of entries written, responsiveness to the written entries by others, and contents and quality of your writing. A more detailed grading rubric is posed in Bb.

7. Schedule and Topics

(Schedules and topics may change. Detailed schedules are posted in Bb.)

Week 0 Topic: Orientation and introduction to the course
Objectives: Receive basic information about the course; understand the course objectives, expectations, and logistics. Setting up your learning environment.

Week 1 Topic: Introduction to Geography, and Physical Geography, Maps, GPS, RS, and GIS
Objectives: To be able to describe the field of geography and the subjects included in physical geography. Learn how to read maps and explore the applications of Geographic Information Systems. Explore how these tools can help you in your daily activities and the field of your study.

Week 2 Topic: Earth-Sun Relationship
Objectives: to be able to describe and explain the rotation and revolution of the earth and the resulting daily and seasonal phenomena. To be able to identify and describe location use geographic grid system and use standard time system. Examine how human activities are affected by these systems.

Week 3 Topic: Radiation and Temperature
Objectives: to be able to describe the characteristics of atmosphere and solar radiation. Explain how
temperature varies with time, latitude, altitude, and inland/coastal location. Explore application of the knowledge to improve energy conservation, quality of life, and productivity in various industries.

**Week 4** Topic: Moisture and Wind  
Objectives: To be able to identify and explain the processes in which water changes its state in the atmosphere and the resulting phenomena. To be able to describe and explain cloud and precipitation formation. To be able to describe the relationship between wind and pressure systems and their spatial distribution. Look into how the precipitation and wind/pressure distribution affect people in different parts of the world.

**Week 5** Topic: Weather and Climate  
Objectives: To be able to describe and explain the structure, formation, distribution, and movement of different weather systems. Describe and explain climate patterns and the impact of weather and climate on everyday life.

**Week 6** Review and Midterm Exam

**Week 7** Biosphere  
Objectives: Describe and explain the basic elements and flow pattern of various cycles in the biosphere, the factors that affect natural plants and wild animal and their distribution patterns. Learn to identify these cycles and elements in everyday life, and understand how human activities affect these cycles and vice versa.

**Week 8** Rocks, Moving Plates and Earthquakes  
Objectives: To be able to describe, identify, and explain the structure of the lithosphere (rock layer) of the earth and the phenomena caused by the internal forces and processes. Look into issues related to earthquakes and other natural disasters.

**Week 9** Topic: Mass Movement, and Fluvial (stream related) Landforms  
Objectives: To be able to describe and explain the processes in the hydrologic cycle and how water shaping the surface of the earth. To be able to identify fluvial landforms and to explain their formation. Explore the impact of stream processes and mass movement on human activities.

**Week 10** Topic: Wave, Wind, and Glacial Landforms  
Objectives: To be able to identify landforms generated by ocean waves, wind, and glaciers and to explain the processes that generated these landforms. Deepen the appreciation of the diversity and beauty of our natural environment.

**Final Week** Final Exam

8. Taking and Teaching the Online Course

- Although this is a complete online class offered through the campus Blackboard, it is **not** a self-paced, self-guided course. The course is conduced on the weekly bases following the same calendar as a traditional academic course.
- Each week, you will be given instructions assigning you tasks to be completed or to begin during the week. These tasks include readings, virtual labs, blog entries, quizzes, etc. It typically takes 6 – 8 hours weekly to complete the learning tasks.
- Although you can choose your time and day to work on these tasks, you need to follow the given time frames carefully.
- Typically, you will be given at least one week to complete an assignment and a one-day period to take a quiz. All quizzes, tests, assignments and other due dates are posted in multiple places in the online classroom.
- **Make sure that you receive class announcements and reminders timely.**
My teaching of the class will be delivered in a combination of the following forms:

- **Instructions and lectures** in text or multimedia format posted in Bb to guide you through reading and to help you focusing on the most important subjects.
- Detailed **“how to” directions** in text or multimedia format to guide you through virtual lab/field trip and other learning activities.
- **Announcements** to explain and reflect on progress, feedback, and current events related to the course subjects, or other class related matters;
- **Blog entries** to prompt your contributions or to respond your writings.
- Making **practice quizzes** to help you getting feedback on your learning.
- Making **quizzes and exams to** assess your learning.
- **Grades, comments and exam/lab summaries** to give you feedback about your learning process; and
- **E-mail, voice call and in person meetings** if necessary to assist you with your individual needs.

Although an online class provides flexibility and opportunity for many, it is not for everyone. In addition to access required software and hardware, studies suggest that the keys to be a successful online student are:

- **Commitment**: An online class is not easy. You need to have the commitment and patience to overcome technical and other problems that often accompanying an online class.
- **Time management**: An online class gives you the flexibility of managing your time but may not save you time. You need to locate at least 6 to 8 hours each week for this course within the period that you can work efficiently.
- **Study Skills**: You need to develop efficient study skills to master the required course material. I have designed many different learning activities to help you studying the material. You need to develop your learning skills to make these activities productive to you.
- **Technical skills**: You will need certain degree of technical proficiency to be successful in an online course. The technical guide section in Bb provides you with resources that will help you to solve technical problems.
- **Open communication** is very important in an online class. Let me know when you have questions, concerns, or suggestions. Send me a message if you find something not working properly (broken links, unreleased information that suppose to be available to you, wrong answers for the quiz, typo errors, etc.) I also like to know if the work loads are reasonable and the works that I designed are helpful or not.
- Appointments are not needed if you plan to visit me during my office hours; however, it is highly recommended that you let me know ahead of time. Occasionally, I have to change office hours or locations in a short notice.

9. **Course Policy and Other Disciplinary Matters**

- No make-up examinations and quizzes will be given unless special arrangements were made before the examination date on individual basis. Exceptions will only be given for unforeseeable circumstances with proving documents.
- Additional in-class exams or oral exams may be required of individual students if inconsistencies in grades occurred.
- See assignment section for late assignment policy. All the required course work should be completed individually unless it is indicated otherwise. Copied (from web, book, your roommates, etc.) or “co-authored” assignments will not be accepted. Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Copied/shared assignments will result in no grades for all students involved. If difficulties with the class arise, students should contact me ASAP to work out solutions within the course structure.
• No extra work for extra credit will be offered.
• Appropriate languages should be used all times when you post messages or interact online with the class. Posting improper massages and offensive languages will be subject to university disciplinary actions.
• Refer to current University Catalog and Student Conduct & Integrity for university policies regarding cheating, plagiarism and other serious academic offenses.
• If you encounter technical problems, you need to seek help to resolve the problem (see technical guide section in Bb for resources) as early as possible.