

# GPHY 111 – Introduction to Physical Geography

Spring 2020 (CRN 31307)

Stone Hall 304, MWF 11:00-11:50 am

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**Office Hours:** by appointment only

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## Recommended Textbook

Geosystems Core by Christopherson (ISBN: 978-0321834744)

## Course Description

Physical geography is the study of the spatial distribution of natural phenomena that interact to create a dynamic Earth. In this course, you will learn about processes occurring in the four spheres of Earth – the atmosphere, hydrosphere, lithosphere, and biosphere – that influence the environments in which we live. As such, the concepts and skills you learn in this class will be extremely applicable to your life because physical geography helps transform abstract spaces to meaningful places.

This introductory course functions to provide students with a solid foundation in the most important physical geography concepts, including: weather, climate, seasons, water resources, plate tectonics, weathering, erosion, and landscape evolution. You will learn about earthquakes, volcanoes, avalanches, glaciers, mountains, beaches, lakes, and extreme weather. You will leave this course with an increased understanding of how our lives are so closely tied to the physical landscape.

## Learning Outcomes

1. Students will define basic terminology used to describe physical processes and landscape forms both quantitatively and qualitatively.
2. Students will understand the main variables that influence spatial variation in weather and climate processes.
3. Students will gain spatial understanding by using maps and other geographical representations to acquire, process, and report information from a spatial perspective.
4. Students will recognize the spatial distribution of landscapes, relate these differences to variations in weather and climate, and reflect on how the variation impacts their lives.

## Course Components

### Midterm Exams

Three 50-question multiple-choice midterm exams will be given during the semester. Midterm exam dates are posted on the course schedule and will not be changed. A list of topics will be posted one-week before an exam to guide your studying. It is your responsibility to arrive prepared on exam days with the following items: (1) red scantron (must purchase at the UM Bookstore), (2) pencil (pens will not work), (3) 790# to list on scantron. You must use a Red Scantron to record your exam answers. If you do not have a Red Scantron or pencil on exam day, you will not be eligible to take the exam or to make-up the exam.

### Final Exam

A 100-question multiple-choice final exam will be given on Monday, May 4, 2020 from 10:10 AM – 12:10 PM in Stone Hall 304. The Final Exam is cumulative and mandatory for all students to take. Again, it is your responsibility to come prepared on exam days with the necessary materials (identified above). No make-ups allowed.

### Assignments

Six homework assignments will be given during the semester. Assignment dates are not listed on the course schedule, and instead, assignment due dates will be announced verbally in class, by email, and will be posted in the Assignment section in Moodle. Assignments are designed to engage students in course content in a more active approach rather than passive lecturing. You will work with data related to physical geography topics and answer associated questions. You will be given exactly one week to complete the assignment after it is assigned. Assignments will be posted to Moodle but a hard copy must be turned in for grading. All assignments must be stapled before turning them in.

### Journals

Approximately six 5-point journal activities will be given during the semester. These journals are designed to help you develop a sense of place by reflecting on the physical and social aspects of a place. Journal entries will be assigned randomly throughout the semester and will be announced at the end of class. You must be present in class to complete a journal entry. Entries can be handwritten or typed, and you must turn in a hard copy at the beginning of the next class, meaning you do not have a full week to complete journal assignments. There will be no right or wrong answer to journal entries, rather, you will be asked to reflect on a concept and apply it to your daily life. Answers should be well-developed and provide supporting evidence. Make sure you back up whatever claims you make in your journal to receive full credit.

### Self-Reflections

Three 5-point self-reflections will be given during the semester: one during the first week of classes, one in the middle of the semester, and one at the end of the semester. These are designed to help you set personal goals, reflect on your course performance, and ultimately help you learn to identify necessary steps that help you succeed not only in this course but in other courses as well. You are required to complete these reflections as they are factored into your final grade.

## Course Policies

### Attendance

A sign in sheet will be passed around at the beginning of each class. There is no separate grade component for attendance, however, attendance will be your only opportunity for extra credit.. If you miss 3 OR LESS classes, you will receive 5 bonus points on your final exam. If you miss 3 OR MORE classes, you will not lose any points, you will not get the extra points on your final, and you will not have any other opportunity to get extra credit points. It is up to you to decide if you want to come to class. Excessive absences will result in a lower overall grade as you will miss out on lectures, discussions, and journals. Late arrival/early departure is not permitted and is extremely disruptive. If you come to class, sign in, and then leave early, do not expect to get credit for that day as your name will be crossed off the sign in sheet.

### Use of Moodle

Moodle is an online learning system that gives you access to course materials 24/7. Moodle will be utilized in this course in a variety of ways. The course syllabus and PowerPoint lectures will be posted, and you will submit some of your homework assignments to a Moodle dropbox. Grades for exams, assignments, and journals will all be posted to Moodle. If you have difficulty accessing the course Moodle site, please inform the course instructor immediately.

If you are asked to submit any files to Moodle, they must be submitted as either a .doc or a .pdf file. These file types are options in Microsoft Word. Files created using Mac software (Pages) are not .doc or .pdf files and are not readable in Moodle. There have also been issues working with Chromebooks. If you do not have Microsoft Office, you are advised to work on school computers in the library and various labs across campus. If you submit an unreadable file, you will not be able to resubmit later.

### Grade Disputes

If you notice an incorrect grade is posted to Moodle, you have one-week after the grade is posted to dispute the incorrect grade. If you wait until the end of the semester to dispute a missing assignment grade from Week 2, your grade will not be updated.

### Late Assignment and Missed Exams

No late assignments will be accepted and no late exams will be issued in this class. It is your responsibility to manage your time and meet deadlines. Exceptions can be made under extreme circumstances on a case by case bases. Some examples of exceptions include, but are not limited to: (1) Illness; (2) Death in the family; (3) Inability to make it to class due to automotive problems or loss of childcare; (4) Debilitating injury. In order to be granted an exception, you must provide documentation validating your excuse. I ask that you are proactive in communicating with me regarding missed deadlines. This means that you should reach out to me ASAP, preferably before class, to communicate your issue and provide documentation. If you wait until after you miss class or an assignment, an exception may not be granted.

## Electronic Devices

Please refrain from using your cell phone in class. I understand you'll want to check the time occasionally, but if you are on your phone consistently during course you will be asked to leave and will not receive attendance credit. Computers are not permitted for taking notes (exception is DSS accommodations). The exact lectures shown in class are posted to Moodle Computers are not permitted. You may not use computers in this course for any reason, including taking notes. Computers can cause excessive distractions especially if the user is browsing the internet rather than using the computer to take notes. Please plan on using a notebook to take your notes.

## Course Communication

I will send out emails to the class regularly. If you do not attend class or check your email regularly, you will likely miss out on important information. All email correspondence must go through your university email. You can email me to ask questions on course materials, to set up a meeting, or with any other questions or concerns. If you email me from a non-school email account I will not respond. Please work only with your university email account.

## Dropped Grades

At the end of the semester, when calculating your final average for this course, one assignment and one journal will be dropped. This means that your final grade will be an average of three midterm exams, one final exam, five assignments, and n-1 journals. Please keep in mind that you are not permitted to make up exams, assignments, or journals. Dropped grades serve as a cushion to help accommodate emergencies and unintended absences. If you choose to skip an assignment or journal, and then have an emergency that causes you to miss a second assignment or journal, there will be no options to make up the missed work. Use your freebies wisely. They are intended to be used during an emergency. If you complete all assignments and journals, you will have a better chance of getting a higher course grade at the end of the semester.

## Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct is taken very seriously, and the course instructor will not hesitate to investigate and discipline any student suspected of violating the following criteria:

- Plagiarism of any kind on assignments
- Copying material from another student or from the internet during an exam
- Signing another student's name on the sign in sheet
- Disclosing exam content during or after you have taken the exam
- Removing exam material from the classroom or instructor's office
- Causing repeated disruptions during class lectures

If a student is caught violating these criteria, the department chair and dean will be notified to determine proper disciplinary action. More detailed information is outlined in the [Student Conduct Code](#).

## Disability Modifications

Every student enrolled in this course will have an equal opportunity to succeed. If you believe you have a disability that will hinder your performance in this class, please contact Disability Services to create a plan that ensures proper accommodation of your needs. *All documentation from Disability Services must be provided to the course instructor.*

Disability Services can be accessed at any point during the semester.

## Disability Services for Students

Lommasson Center 154

Phone: (406) 243-2243

## Final Grade Components

<b>Midterm Exams</b>	35%
<b>Assignments</b>	30%
<b>Journals</b>	15%
<b>Self-Reflections</b>	5%
<b>Final Exam</b>	15%

## Grade Breakdown

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	F
93.3-100%	90-93.2%	86.7-89.9%	83.3-86.6%	80-83.2%	76.7-79.9%	73.3-76.6%	70-73.2%	66.7-69.9%	63.3-66.6%	60-63.2%	<60%

## Schedule

Week	Date	Topic
1	1/13/2020	Review Syllabus and Moodle
	1/15/2020	What is Physical Geography?
	1/17/2020	Maps and Cartography
2	1/20/2020	<b>No Classes - Martin Luther King Jr. Day</b>
	1/22/2020	Maps and Cartography
	1/24/2020	Earth Locations
3	1/27/2020	Global Time
	1/29/2020	Solar Energy
	1/31/2020	Seasons
4	2/3/2020	Global Temperature
	2/5/2020	The Atmosphere
	2/7/2020	Energy in the Atmosphere

<b>Week</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>
<b>5</b>	2/10/2020	<b>Exam #1</b>
	2/12/2020	Atmospheric Circulation
	2/14/2020	Atmospheric Circulation
<b>6</b>	2/17/2020	<b>No Classes - President's Day</b>
	2/19/2020	Humidity
	2/21/2020	Atmospheric Stability
<b>7</b>	2/24/2020	Clouds and Fog
	2/26/2020	Air Masses and Lifting Mechanisms
	2/28/2020	Cyclones, Thunderstorms, Hurricanes
<b>8</b>	3/2/2020	Weather Forecasting and Montana Weather
	3/4/2020	Global Climate Systems
	3/6/2020	Climate Change
<b>9</b>	3/9/2020	<b>Exam #2</b>
	3/11/2020	Water Resources and Scarcity
	3/13/2020	Oceanic Circulation
<b>10</b>	3/16/2020	<b>No Classes - Spring Break</b>
	3/18/2020	<b>No Classes - Spring Break</b>
	3/20/2020	<b>No Classes - Spring Break</b>
<b>11</b>	3/23/2020	Rocks and Tectonics
	3/25/2020	Rocks and Tectonics
	3/27/2020	Earthquakes and Faulting
<b>12</b>	3/30/2020	Volcanoes and Mountain Building
	4/1/2020	Weathering and Mass Movement
	4/3/2020	Fluvial Erosion and Deposition
<b>13</b>	4/6/2020	Fluvial Landscapes
	4/8/2020	Coastal Processes
	4/10/2020	Coastal Landforms
<b>14</b>	4/13/2020	<b>Exam #3</b>
	4/15/2020	Wind Processes and Landforms
	4/17/2020	Glacial Processes and Landforms
<b>15</b>	4/20/2020	Montana Mountains and Rivers
	4/22/2020	The Desert Southwest
	4/24/2020	TBD
<b>16</b>	4/27/2020	TBD
	4/29/2020	TBD
	5/1/2020	TBD
<b>FINAL</b>	5/4/2020	<b>Final Exam, 10:10 AM - 12:10 PM, Stone Hall 304</b>