

# Course Syllabus for GEO 111 Physical Geography

Spring 2012      MW 05:30 - 7:20pm      Rm: ???

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## Course Description

This survey course is designed to provide an understanding of all the elements of the physical environment. The course emphasizes the four spheres: the atmosphere (weather and climate), the lithosphere (soils, geology, and landforms), the hydrosphere (oceans, streams, and groundwater), and the biosphere (vegetation and animals).

## Required Materials / Activities

- Hess & McKnight, 2011, Physical Geography, 10<sup>th</sup> ed., Prentice Hall, ISBN 978-0-321-67734-1
- Topographic Map: Estes Park, Colorado 1:100,000 - 30x60 minute Quadrangle (*needed for LAB project*)
- i-clicker (ABSOLUTE MUST! YOUR GRADE DEPENDS ON IT)

## Specific (Measurable) Student Behavioral Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- A. describe the geographic patterns to the earth's physical environment through map applications (Biomes and Landforms). Includes application of technical skills, such as data analysis & simple math.
- B. explain basic environmental cycles in the atmosphere, biosphere, hydrosphere and lithosphere
- C. give examples of connections between the atmosphere, biosphere, hydrosphere and lithosphere.
- D. solve and analyze problems to physical geographic processes by applying geographic skills correctly to unfamiliar problems.

## Outline of Course Content

Major Topics & Subtopics

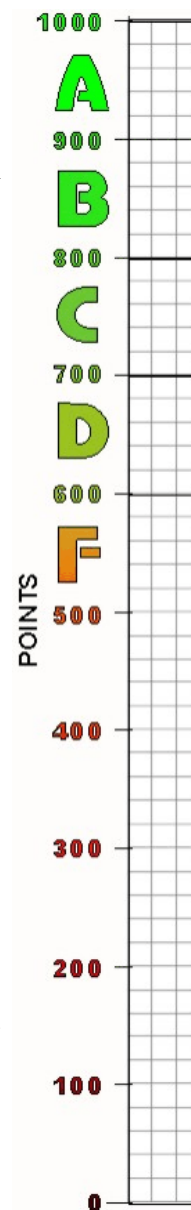
- I. Maps & Map Reading - A Geographers Tool
  - II. Atmosphere: (a) Weather, (b) Climate
  - III. Lithosphere: (a) Soils, (b) Geology, (c) Landforms
  - IV. Hydrosphere: (a) Oceans, (b) Streams, (c) Groundwater
  - V. Biosphere: (a) Vegetation, (b) Animals
- Atmosphere & Biosphere will be taught as one unit called BIOMES!

## Grading in Physical Geography

	Max. Points	My Points	MY GRADE
Participation	150		Keep track of your grade! Color in Grade Graph to the right!  <i>(Don't forget to drop lowest score for Tests)</i>
Online Chapter Quizzes (25 pts ea.): Ch. 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 15, 16	200		
Map Test	400 (100 ea. Lowest score dropped)		
Lithosphere Test			
Hydrosphere Test			
Atmosphere Test			
Biosphere Test			
Biome Project	150		
Comprehensive Final Exam*	100		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1000</b>		

\* Students with an average Test score above  $\geq 80\%$  and NONE of the Tests less than 70% may opt out of the Final Exam. They will receive their Test average as the Comprehensive Final Exam Score.

**FINAL GRADE:**      A = 900 - 1000 points      B = 800 - 899 points      C = 700 - 799 points  
                                  D = 600 - 699 points      F =  $\leq 599$  points



**PARTICIPATION:** You are EXPECTED to attend class & labs and PAY ATTENTION in both. Participation is defined as ATTENDANCE & STUDENT RESPONSES and will be tracked using the i-clicker system. Students can earn up to 5 points daily toward their participation grade by responding CORRECTLY to i-clicker questions randomly presented during lectures / labs. If you forget your i-clicker you must contact the instructor immediately if you want to receive some credit fondly called “pity-points”. I absolutely DESPISE students with less than 80% participation, whining about their grade at the end of the semester. (So, don’t even try!). In regards to attendance & class materials: Any handout, any notes, any exam questions discussed will only be given IN CLASS. If you miss class, you are on your own. I do not keep extra copies and NO, I do not have or publish lecture notes for your convenience! (THIS NOT AN ONLINE CLASS!)

**ABSENCES:** Frankly, registering for this course is equivalent and as serious as you taking a job. I expect from you the same professional courtesies that you would extend toward your employer. As with any employer, you do NOT get paid for missed days, meaning, there are NO participation points awarded if you do not show up for class. Period! However, similarly to the real employment world, I will grant you “sick or leave credit” worth 10 participation points, which you may use at your discretion. As with most employment situations, you may “cash in” your remaining “sick or leave days” for extra credit at the end of the semester. Absences beyond these allotted points will never be awarded anything, no matter the reason, including but not limited to illness, work conflicts, car accidents, booked vacations, etc.

*Note: Nothing in this policy shall require the instructor to reschedule classes, repeat lectures or other ungraded activities or provide ungraded individualized instruction solely for the benefit of students who is unable to attend regularly scheduled classes or activities.*

**EXAM or TEST MAKE-UP:** There is NO make-up for the online chapter quizzes, because they can be taken at your convenience. As far as the 5 tests are concerned, the lowest grade will be dropped. If you miss any test, you will receive a “0” and this score will count as your lowest grade. If you miss 2 or more tests, only ONE of the scores will be dropped, the others will still count! The final can NOT be missed at the scheduled day.

**COMPREHENSIVE FINAL EXAM:** Students with an average Test score of above 80% and with NONE of the Tests less than 70% may opt out of the Final Exam. If these qualifications are met, a student must OPT OUT IN WRITING by completing a special form (available online) and attach exam scores as proof. They will then receive their Test average from ALL the exams as their Comprehensive Final Exam Score. Students who do NOT file this form with all the proof necessary before the final exam MUST TAKE THE FINAL or they will receive a “0” even if they qualify!

*Disclaimer: Students who take the final and receive a lower score than their average score computed, can NOT revert back to their average score because it is higher. If you take the Final, you will receive the Final Exam score as your Grade. (No Exceptions!)*

**LATE WORK:** Since all assignments are available within the first few days of class, I will not accept ANY late work. Please note, this means ANY!!! You had practically the whole semester to complete the exercise(s), so don’t blame broken printers, crashed computers, uncooperative emails, sudden work conflicts or bouts of illness the day(s) before or even during the deadline for missing the deadline. *Hint: Turn your work in early and there will be NO problems!*

**EXTRA CREDIT:** Many assessments include extra points (approx. 10%), giving students the opportunity to earn a higher score of up to 110% (Except take-home, online or open note assessments). NO OTHER ADDITIONAL EXTRA CREDIT WILL BE GIVEN. So please DON'T ask.

**E-MAIL:** You may e-mail me any time at [kackstae@mscd.edu](mailto:kackstae@mscd.edu). In general, I will NOT accept any assignments via e-mail. These must be turned in as hard copies AT THE ALLOTTED DUE DATES!!!!.

**ELECTRONIC DEVICES (see also “CIVILITY”):** Put ALL your consumer electronics away (which means they are NOT to be visible, even if you don’t use them) including but not limited to cell phones, ipods, MP3 players, headphones, etc. They are NOT to be used at any time during my class. Cell phone calculators are NOT ALLOWED, you must bring a “real” calculator. Personal computers are allowed in class only with approval from the instructor and a written and signed contract. Permission for use of PCs will be immediately revoked for the remainder of the course if a student is found to be engaged in unrelated activities, such as checking e-mail, surfing the web, playing games, etc. Texting, emailing, gaming, listening to music or similar unrelated activities during classtime is not only rude and unprofessional, it is highly annoying to me and the majority of your fellow students. If you are caught you will be unceremoniously asked to leave my class and you will lose any or all participation points for that day. Repeat offenders will face disciplinary action on the college level. You have been warned!

**CHEATING & PLAGIARISM:** Any students found plagiarizing or otherwise cheating will receive an "F" for the course grade, and disciplinary action at the college level will be recommended. If you copy another student's work, both of you, the “copier” and the “copied” will receive 50%. YOU SHARE THE WORK, YOU SHARE THE GRADE!!! If more than one student is involved in the copying,

the grade will be prorated accordingly, e.g., 3 students = 33% each, 4 students = 25% each, and so forth! Be especially careful when you work on assignments in a group with other students. (*Note: You may share DATA that was collected together, you MAY NOT SHARE WRITE-UPS*). I-CLICKER WARNING: Responding to i-clicker questions for someone else (e.g., by using their i-clicker together with your own) CONSTITUTES ACADEMIC CHEATING (same as cheating on a test or exam).

### **BIOME PROJECT:**

During this assignment you will generate a BIOME -MAP of the Northern Front Range & Alpine Region. This will need some time, since information is not readily available and must be researched. The resulting product should be a map with shaded in biomes and an accompanying paper showing summary & explanation. In order to get the highest score possible you must use EXCEL or a similar product for some required segments. See Project Handout for details.

**CIVILITY:** The student code of conduct will be enforced in this class. The short version of the code: Students are expected to assist in maintaining a classroom environment conducive to learning and respectful of the instructor and fellow students. Students have an opportunity to gain from time spent in class. Therefore, students are prohibited from using cell-phones or beepers, text messaging, eating or drinking in class, making offensive remarks, reading newspapers, using their laptop or PDA for class unrelated activities (such as browsing the internet, checking email, watching videos, etc.) or doing other assignments unrelated to the class, sleeping or engaging in any other form of distraction. While you may feel that you are doing it quietly and unobtrusive enough, it does indeed distract other students (as scores of them have reported to me). Inappropriate behavior shall result minimally in a request to cease the behavior and upon continuation despite warnings to leave the class.

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:** Front Range Community College is committed to making reasonable accommodations to assist individuals with disabilities in reaching their academic potential. If you have disability which may impact your performance, attendance, or grades in this class and requesting accommodations, then you must first register with the Access Center, located in the Auraria Library, Suite 116, (303) 556-8387.

The Access Center is the designated department responsible for coordinating accommodations and services for students with disabilities. Accommodations will NOT be granted prior to my receipt of your faculty notification letter from the Access Center. Please note that accommodations are never provided retroactively (i.e., prior to the receipt of your letter). Once I have received your official Access Center Faculty Notification Letter, I would be happy to meet with you to discuss your accommodation. All discussion will remain confidential.

Please be aware that I am unable to grant certain accommodation: My presentations contain copyrighted material and can NOT be printed, copied, transcribed, forwarded or made available electronically or otherwise OUTSIDE OF MY PERSONAL COMPUTER AND CLASSROOM. Solution: Get an excellent notetaker! I also do NOT extend any deadlines on assignments, because (a) all my assignments are given out during the first week of class and (b) my assignment deadlines ARE ALREADY THE EXTENDED ONES, already tailored to the weakest of the weak students and those with disabilities. Solution: Start assignments right away. In this manner I can help you with plenty of time for completion.

**OTHER:** Students at Front Range Community College who because of their sincerely held religious beliefs, are unable to attend classes, take examinations, participate in graded activities or submit graded assignments on particular days shall, without penalty, be excused from such classes and be given a meaningful opportunity to make up such examinations and graded activities or assignments. Advance written notice that the student will be absent for the religious reasons must be given to the instructor during the first two weeks of the semester.

Nothing in the above policy shall require the instructor to reschedule classes, repeat lectures or other ungraded activities or provide ungraded individualized instruction solely for the benefit of students who, for religious reasons, are unable to attend regularly scheduled classes or activities. However, presentations, critiques, conferences, and similar activities involving individual students shall be scheduled to avoid conflicts with such student's religious observances or holidays provided that reasonable advance notice of scheduling conflicts is given to the instructor.

“NC” Policy - all students may request an NC (No credit) notation without faculty approval through the second week of classes. NC notations with faculty approval will only be granted through the sixth week of class. A request for an NC will not be granted after that week.

“I” Policy - The Incomplete notation will be assigned when a student has completed a major portion of the course requirements (75% minimum) but is unable to complete all of the course requirements due to unusual circumstances, such as hospitalization. (No, being stressed out, starting assignments too late and being unable to finish them, or going on a cruise during finals week which you booked last year are all NOT considered unusual circumstances). Authorized third party documentation of such unusual circumstances will

be absolutely required before an “I” is even taken under consideration. All students found eligible to receive an “I” in the course must complete a contract with the instructor stating specifically by when and how the “I” must be remedied.

This syllabus may be modified at any time without prior notice.