

**Physical Geography  
Common Course Syllabus**

**Department:** Social Sciences

**Discipline:** Geography

**Course Number:** GEOG 1301

**Course Title:** Physical Geography

**Credit:** 3 Lecture, 0 Lab

**Satisfied a core curriculum requirement?** Yes, physical and life sciences

**Prerequisites:** None

**Available Formats:** Conventional, INET

**Campus:** Online

**Textbook:** Living Physical Geography by Gervais ISBN: 9781464106644

**Course Description:** This course introduces students to the processes that drive Earth's physical systems. Students will explore the relationships among these physical systems, with emphasis on weather and climate, water, ecosystems, geologic processes and land form development, and human interactions with the physical environment.

Course Objectives addressed:

1. Critical thinking: to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information.
2. Communication: to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication.
3. Empirical & Quantitative Skills: to include the manipulation and analysis of numerical data or observable facts resulting in informed conclusions.
4. Teamwork: to include the ability to consider different points of view and work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal

**Course Purpose:** To provide students a better understanding of the discipline of geography and use the techniques of spatial analysis to better understand natural science and human/environmental interactions.

**Course Evaluation:** See instructor's course information for specific grading criteria used in evaluating student performance.

**Attendance Policy:** Whenever absences become excessive and in the instructor's opinion, minimum course objectives cannot be met due to absences, the student will be withdrawn from the course. Each instructor will have additional information about attendance on his/her course information sheet.

**Learning Outcomes:** Students who complete this course will be expected have a better understanding of the discipline of Geography and be able to use techniques of spatial analysis to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the principles of scientific investigation as they apply to Earth's physical systems and processes.
2. Describe and explain the processes of Earth's physical systems: weather and climate, water, ecosystems, geologic processes and landform development.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the interactions among the Earth's physical systems.
4. Demonstrate an understanding of the modifications humans make to the environment through interactions with Earth's physical systems.

Section 001/004/005  
Spring 2019

Instructor: Kristin Sorensen  
E-mail: ksorensen@southplainscollege.edu  
Office: AD 143 (Levelland)  
Monday: 1:00-3:00  
Tuesday: 11:15-1:45  
Wednesday: 1:00-3:00  
Friday: 8:00-10:00  
Skype: sokkerfrk13

### **Course Requirements and Grades**

Grades will be based upon four exams, three map quizzes, two projects, 14 blogs (plus responses), and 15 twitter responses (current events). Exams will be essay questions from the text and reader. The final exam will be comprehensive multiple choice. In the case of excused absence from an exam for illness, family emergency or other cause, a make-up examination will be substituted for the missed examination.

### **Course Management:**

1. Students with disabilities, including but not limited to physical, psychiatric, or learning disabilities, who wish to request accommodations in this class should notify the Disability Services Office early in the semester so that the appropriate arrangements may be made. In accordance with federal law, a student requesting accommodations must provide acceptable documentation of his/her disability. For more information, call or visit the Disability Services Office in the Student Health & Wellness Office, 806-716-2577.
2. Make-up examinations and extensions of course deadlines will be granted at the discretion of the instructor. However, a significant and verifiable reason must exist. If you miss an exam due to illness or an emergency, please attempt to contact me by phone or e-mail. If you wish to take a

make-up exam or get an extension on the paper for any reason, you must contact me before the day the assignment is due.

3. Academic misconduct will not be tolerated. Each student is expected to be familiar with SPC's policy on academic integrity. I will assume that you understand this policy, and will judge any case of academic misconduct accordingly. If you have any questions about this policy, please see me.
4. You are responsible for ensuring that you are registered for this course.
5. I reserve the right to change the syllabus if necessary. Any changes will be announced in class and are the responsibility of the student.
6. Please respect the rights of your classmates when attending class. Do not distract your classmates when attending class. Do not come to class late repeatedly. Do not distract your classmates by reading the newspaper, eating loudly, or talking to your neighbors. Turn your cell phone off or on vibrate before entering the classroom. I do not want to see cell phones out on the tables. I reserve the right to lower grades in the event of consistent problems.
7. South Plains College seeks to provide an environment that is free of bias, discrimination, and harassment. If you have been the victim of sexual harassment/misconduct/assault we encourage you to report this. If you report this to a faculty member, she or he must notify our college's Title IX coordinator. If you wish to speak to someone in confidence, you may speak to a personal counselor or health professional in the SPC Health and Wellness Center. For more information about your options at SPC, please go to:

[https://myspc.southplainscollege.edu/ICS/Safety\\_and\\_Health/Sexual\\_Assault\\_Harassment.jnz](https://myspc.southplainscollege.edu/ICS/Safety_and_Health/Sexual_Assault_Harassment.jnz)

8. **Non-discrimination statement**

South Plains College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability or age in its programs and activities.

The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies:

Stan DeMerritt

Vice President for Student Affairs

South Plains College

1401 College Avenue, Box 5

Levelland, TX 79336

806-716-2360

COURSE EXPECTATIONS/POLICIES:

- ‡ **Above all**, the classroom will be maintained as a respectful, mature, and courteous learning community in which all participants will conduct themselves in a way that is respectful to differing mannerisms, ideas, opinions, beliefs, cultures, etc. This includes group and individual Skype meetings.
- ‡ Attending college is a privileged opportunity, not a right.
  - Every day, thousands of people dream of going to college, but are unable to because of things like finances and family constraints. Each semester, students request overrides into this course, but do not receive them.
  - It is expected that students and their behavior will reflect acknowledgement of and respect for the privileged opportunities available to them.
- ‡ Learning is **NOT** a spectator sport.
  - You, as a student, are partially responsible for engaging yourself in your own active learning.

- † If a student has special needs and/or requires special accommodations to enhance his/her learning abilities please see the instructor.

**ATTENDANCE:**

- Attendance is taken through individual and group Skype meetings. For any missed classes, students are responsible for acquiring notes from other students.
- If a borderline grade exists at the end of the semester, excellent attendance may increase the overall course grade.

**GRADING:**

- ✚ Your final grade is based on your performance on projects, exams, map quizzes, blogs (plus responses), and twitter responses (current events).
- ✚ At the end of the semester, grades will be rounded up. For example, an 89.45% is an "A" but an 89.44% is a "B".
- ✚ The grading scale is the traditional 90, 80, 70, 60 etc.

Grades will not be curved. What goes on your transcript is what you earned.

**Late Assignments:**

Assignments will be accepted late with the following penalties: 15% off after the first week, 30% off after the second week, 50% off after the third week. Late assignments will not be accepted for credit after the third week.

<b>Test 1</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Test 2</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Test 3</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Test 4</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Map Quiz</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Map Quiz</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Map Quiz</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Twitter</b>	<b>225</b>
<b>Blog</b>	<b>210</b>
<b>Blog Responses</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>Projects</b>	<b>200</b>
<b>Attendance</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1285</b>

**Grade Scale:**

<b>90-100</b>	<b>A</b>
<b>80-89</b>	<b>B</b>
<b>70-79</b>	<b>C</b>
<b>60-69</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>&lt;60</b>	<b>F</b>

**All Exams are taken through Blackboard. All exams will open on Sunday morning and are due no later than midnight on the following Sunday.**

**All Posts (Twitter and Blog) are due by midnight on Sunday.**

### **Twitter Posts**

Each student is required to post 3 times to twitter per week. One of these posts must contain a picture. The twitter account to follow is **@geography\_411**. The topic will be posted on twitter and blackboard Sunday night. Please address the tweets as follows:

-start a Tweet with a period but I prefer when people rework their sentence so it doesn't seem so obvious. Something like "So @somebody and I were at dinner...." Or tag at the end of the comment.

If you do **NOT** have a twitter account, you may email me the responses.

### **Blog Posts**

Each student is required to have a blog and make a response to each of the questions that are posted. There will be one (1) question posted each week. The post must be a minimum of 250 words. I suggest using wordpress.com to host your blog. It is free and easy to use. Once you have set up your blog, please send me the link to access it.

**Responses are due by midnight on Tuesday**

### **Blog Responses**

You must comment on three (3) posts from other students. Compare it to your blog or give some new insight.

### TOPIC SCHEDULE:

#### **Tentative schedule**

Jan. 14: Introduction

Jan. 16: Portrait of the Atmosphere

Jan. 23: Seasons and Solar Energy

Jan. 28: **Exam**

Jan. 30: Water in the atmosphere

Feb. 4: Library Day

Feb. 6: Atmospheric Circulation

Feb. 11: The Restless Sky (**Map Quiz**)

Feb. 13: The changing climate

Feb. 18: **Exam**

Feb. 20: Biogeography

Feb. 25: Biomes

Feb. 27: Soil and water resources

Mar. 4: Ocean ecosystems

Mar. 6: **Exam**

Mar. 18: Research Day  
Mar. 20: Earth history (**Map Quiz**)  
Mar. 25: Plate tectonics  
Mar. 27: Lab  
Apr. 1: Geohazards  
Apr. 3: Weathering and Mass movement  
Apr. 8: Lab  
Apr. 10: **Exam**  
Apr. 15: Fluvial systems  
Apr. 17: The Cryosphere  
Apr. 24: Water, wind, and time (**Map Quiz**)  
Apr. 29: The work of waves  
May 1: Movie

### **Final Exam May 6-9**

**Drops and Withdrawals:** From the SPC College Catalog page 21, “Any student withdrawing from all classes on the Levelland Campus must report in person to the Advising Center in the Student Services Building for a withdrawal form. Instructions for obtaining a clearance from some departments of the college will be given at this time. Students who wish to drop a course or withdraw from classes at the SPC Reese Center must report, in person, to the Advising Center at the SPC Reese Center building 8 for a withdrawal form. Students at the Byron Martin Advanced Technology Center should contact the advisor at the center for the withdrawal from. Students at the Plainview Extension Center must contact the Counseling Office in person for a withdrawal form.

Students who stop attending a class should go through the procedure for dropping a course; otherwise they may be administratively withdrawn for lack of attendance and their record will show an “X” or “F” instead of a “W.” Failure to follow college policy by withdrawing according to this procedure will be reflected on a student’s transcript by the presence of “X” or “F” marks, as determined by the instructor. It is the student’s responsibility to verify administrative drops for excessive absences through his or her student online account with Campus Connect.

A mark of “W” will be given for student-initiated drops or withdrawals that occur prior to and through “The Last Day to Drop” as indicated in the online academic calendar.

A student who quits attending class and is administratively withdrawn from class will receive a grade of “X” or “F” as determined by the instructor through “The Last Day to Drop” as indicated in the online academic calendar.

A student administratively dropped by the instructor may be reinstated, with the approval of the appropriate instructor. A student must initiate a request for reinstatement within seven (7) calendar days of the official date of drop by personally contacting the course instructor.”

### **Dropping the course**

- YOU must drop this course at the SPC registrar’s Office (there is **no on-line drop system** so on-line students must take care of this in person at the registrar’s office). This is an official procedure

which is described in the SPC Catalog. No one but YOU can initiate the drop and it must conform to the procedure for dropping a course. Failure to initiate and finalize the drop procedure will result in an F grade on your transcript. The drop cannot be made retroactive. The drop date can be found on the SPC calendar.

**Cheating and Plagiarism: from the SPC Catalog:** It is the aim of the faculty of South Plains College to foster a spirit of complete honesty and a high standard of integrity. The attempt of any student to present as his or her own any work which he or she has not honestly performed is regarded by the faculty and administration as a most serious offense and renders the offender liable to serious consequences, possibly suspension.

**Cheating:** Dishonesty of any kind on examinations or on written assignments, illegal possession of examinations, the use of unauthorized notes during an examination, obtaining information during an examination from the textbook or from the examination paper of another student, assisting others to cheat, alteration of grade records, illegal entry or unauthorized presence in an office are examples of cheating. Complete honesty is required of the student in the presentation of any and all phases of course work. This applies to quizzes of whatever length, as well as to final examinations, to daily reports and to term papers.

**Plagiarism:** Offering the work of another as one's own, without proper acknowledgment, is plagiarism; therefore, any student who fails to give credit for quotations or essentially identical expression of material taken from books, encyclopedias, magazines and other reference works, or from the themes, reports or other writings of fellow student, is guilty of plagiarism.

**My statement on plagiarism:** Plagiarism is a morally repugnant choice. At SPC we take the offense of plagiarism very seriously.

Plagiarism is a very simple thing to spot: a failing student all of a sudden writes an essay that ought to be published – and guess what it usually is published! A mediocre student all of a sudden starts to use words and phrases that if asked to explain what the word or phrase means the offender cannot do so. But what you probably do not know is that having read widely in almost all of the areas I have you write on I have read most of the works that have been used in on-line sources. I am not a novice when it comes to the scholarly material nor am I a novice when it comes to how students your age should write. You are young students with little experience and I expect you to write like it – I have never asked you to write and think like professional geographers and I certainly have not graded your work from that benchmark.

Secondly, plagiarism is the theft of another person's work. If you copy something from an internet source and present it as your own that is cheating, copying, and it is against the rules. In the "old days" before the internet, students had to at least go to the library and find a book to copy from; the internet has unfortunately made that a very simple (too simple, perhaps) process. If you take anything from this letter remember this: all anyone has to do to check for plagiarism is take a random phrase from an essay, copy it, and paste it into a Google search and the source comes up. Unlike the old days, I don't have to go to the library in search of the proof – I have access to the same sources as you! The internet has made plagiarism much easier but it has also made catching it much easier, too!

Plagiarism can also be defined as one or more students turning in the same or similar papers. I remember what I have read and can spot similar words and phrases from paper to paper, from section to section, and from semester to semester. SPC also maintains a file of every paper submitted by every student and student papers are automatically scanned for uncanny similarities.

Plagiarism also includes anything copied from an internet source, such as Wikipedia.

I am not just offended that you think so little about your own honor that you would steal from someone else, but I am disgusted that you would waste my time having to deal with this. **The consequence of plagiarism in my classes is this: the offender(s) will be receive zero credit for the entire assignment or exam.**

**SPC Policy regarding “standard English”:** All written assignments should be presented using the conventions of Standard Written English. South Plains College requires all students to become proficient in "academic English," a form of English that is typically used in academic, professional, and business contexts. While slang, regional idioms, and informal kinds of self-expression are appropriate in some contexts, they are out of place in academic writing. Writing instructors and professors in courses across the campus expect all students to demonstrate proficiency in using the conventions of academic English in their written work, whether it is in-class exams or take-home essays.

**Diversity Statement:** In this class, the teacher will establish and support an environment that values and nurtures individual and group differences and encourages engagement and interaction. Understanding and respecting multiple experiences and perspectives will serve to challenge and stimulate all of us to learn about others, about the larger world and about ourselves. By promoting diversity and intellectual exchange, we will not only mirror society as it is, but also model society as it should and can be.

**Students with disabilities:** Students with disabilities, including but not limited to physical, psychiatric, or learning disabilities, who wish to request accommodations in this class should notify the Disability Services Office early in the semester so that the appropriate arrangements may be made. In accordance with federal law, a student requesting accommodations must provide acceptable documentation of his/her disability to the Disability Services Office. For more information, call or visit the Disability Services Office at Levelland (Student Health & Wellness Office) 806-716-2577, Reese Center (Building 8) 806-716-4675, or Plainview Center (Main Office) 806-716-4302 or 806-296-9611.

**Non-Discrimination Statement:** South Plains College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability or age in its programs and activities. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies: Vice President for Student Affairs, South Plains College, 1401 College Avenue, Box 5, Levelland, TX 79336. Phone number 806-716-2360.

**Title IX Pregnancy Accommodations Statement:** If you are pregnant, or have given birth within six months, Under Title IX you have a right to reasonable accommodations to help continue your education. To activate accommodations you must submit a Title IX pregnancy accommodations request, along with specific medical documentation, to the Director of Health and Wellness. Once approved,

notification will be sent to the student and instructors. It is the student's responsibility to work with the instructor to arrange accommodations. Contact Crystal Gilster, Director of Health and Wellness at 806-716-2362 or [email cgilster@southplainscollege.edu](mailto:cgilster@southplainscollege.edu) for assistance.

**Campus Concealed Carry Statement:** Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in South Plains College buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and South Plains College policy, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations. For a list of locations and Frequently Asked Questions, please refer to the Campus Carry page at: <https://www.southplainscollege.edu/campuscarry.php>

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all South Plains College campuses. Report violations to the College Police Department at 806-716-2396 or 9-1-1.

**Blackboard Accessibility Standards:** Blackboard measures and evaluates accessibility levels using two sets of standards: Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act issued from the United States federal government and the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0) issued by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C). A third party conducts audits of our software releases to ensure the accessibility of the products. For Blackboard Learn 9.1's conformance with the accessibility standards under Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act using the Voluntary Product Accessibility Template® (VPAT®) tool, see the VPAT for Blackboard Learn Release 9.1. For Blackboard Learn 9.1 SP11 conformance statement for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0, Level AA see Learn Accessibility Conformance Statement. To learn more about Blackboard's commitment to accessibility, see <http://www.blackboard.com/accessibility>. (These resources are available in English only.)

### **Student Privacy**

South Plains College is bound by the Texas Open Records Law and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974. Information regarding these topics can be found in the South Plains College Catalog. As far as this class is concerned, I will NOT release or discuss your class performance, grades, averages, or attendance with anyone but you. This means that your parents, class counselors, principals, or any other interested party will not gain this information from me – if they need this sort of information they must ask you for it. This provision does not apply to student athletes or those for whom a grade check is part of their scholarship support.

**All** technological questions should be directed to the SPC technology center (their information is on the opening page of Blackboard). I do not solve technological/computer problems!

**Blackboard support and help:** *Blackboard tutorials* can be found on MySPC under Students>Distance Education. Once on the Distance Education page, click on Blackboard Learn 9 on menu to the right. Or access the tutorials at <http://ondemand.blackboard.com/students.htm>. When you log in to Blackboard there is a module (or box) that has help information on the My Blackboard Tab. You can also **learn more about Blackboard Learn through the [On Demand Learning Center](#)**. **The On Demand Learning Center**

**includes short, interactive video lessons called Quick Tutorials and short documents, called Getting Started Guides, designed to get you familiar with a feature in 15 minutes.**

If you encounter technological problems *while you are taking a test*, YOU must contact Blackboard Technical Support [blackboard@southplainscollege.edu](mailto:blackboard@southplainscollege.edu). to report the problem. I cannot resolve grade disputes about computers not working, Blackboard not working, the internet not working UNLESS you have reported the problem when you encounter it.

**Students: email Breanne Figueroa at [bfigueroa@southplainscollege.edu](mailto:bfigueroa@southplainscollege.edu) or call 716-2180.**

For an email address that reaches everyone in the Instructional Technology department, please use [blackboard@southplainscollege.edu](mailto:blackboard@southplainscollege.edu).

**You may have had or will have trouble submitting your exams.** To prevent this or to solve it read the instructions below for clearing your browser if you are using Mozilla or Explorer.

**Mozilla Firefox – Clear Browsing History While** in Firefox, click on Tools located at the top of the screen in the menu bar.

1. From that menu, select Clear Recent History.
2. From the Time Range drop down menu, select Everything.
3. Make sure all boxes are checked – NOTE: this will delete any passwords saved by Firefox and all recent websites visited.
4. Click Delete
5. Close Firefox, reopen.

**Internet Explorer – Clear Browsing History**

1. While in Internet Explorer, click on Tools located at the top of the screen in the menu bar.
2. Select Internet Options at the bottom of the list.
3. In the middle of the pop up window under browsing history, click Delete.
4. Make sure all boxes are checked – NOTE: this will delete any passwords saved by IE and all recent websites visited.
5. Click Delete

Close Internet Explorer, reopen.