

University of Victoria - Department of Geography

COURSE DESCRIPTION – Fall 2014

GEOG103: Introduction to Physical Geography

Instructor: Dr. Ian J. Walker **Office hours:** T, R 0900-1000 DTB B124
Lectures: M, R 1000-1120 HSD A240
Labs: as scheduled

Objectives: This course introduces students to the study of Physical Geography using an applied, earth-systems approach. The course examines processes within and interrelations between the atmosphere, biosphere, hydrosphere, and lithosphere that result in patterns of weather and climate, landforms, soils and ecosystems. Lectures will be structured around ‘real-world’ issues (e.g., climate change, natural hazards, natural resources) where the intersection between Earth sciences and human activities will be explored. Lecture material is complemented by field and laboratory assignments and supplementary readings.

Prerequisites: none.

Recommended Text: There is no required text for this course, although we recommend use of an online e-book entitled, “Fundamentals of Physical Geography” 2nd edition, by Michael Pidwirny & Scott Jones, UBC Okanagan, online at: <http://www.physicalgeography.net>.

Two excellent print textbooks, both with Canadian editions, are:

- De Blij et al. (2010). Physical Geography. The Global Environment. 2nd Canadian edition. Oxford. (ISBN: 9780195428971)
- Strahler, A.H. & Archibold, O.W. (2008). Physical Geography: Science & systems of the human environment. 4th Canadian edition. Wiley. (ISBN 978470125557)

Course webpage: <http://moodle.uvic.ca>. Here you will find all relevant course materials and information (course outline, course manual, readings, labs, etc.).

Evaluation components:	Mid-term exam:	25%
	Labs (5 x 7%):	35%
	Lab Exam:	15%
	Final Exam:	25%

- **NOTE:** students must obtain passing grades for both the examination component (mid-term + final) and the laboratory component (labs + lab exam) to obtain credit

Important Course Policies:

- Students must complete all evaluation components to obtain credit.
 - Students must obtain a passing grade on both the examination component (mid-term + final) and the laboratory component (labs + lab exam) to obtain credit.
 - Extenuating circumstances &/or exceptions to these policies will require: a) direct discussion with the course instructor in advance, if possible, and b) official medical or counseling documentation.
 - Labs are an important part of GEOG103
 - All details regarding your labs & their marks are managed by your TA. Please discuss any issues on labs with your TA first.
 - A lateness penalty of 25% of the total mark per day will be applied to all late assignments. This deduction will apply unless you make arrangements with your TA in advance or you can provide official medical or counseling documentation for extenuating circumstances.
 - Please attend only the laboratory section for which you are registered. If you must miss a lab, please make arrangements with your TA in advance to attend another section.
 - You must pass the laboratory component (labs + lab exam) to obtain credit for this course.
 - Examinations:
 - Attendance for mid-term and final examinations is mandatory. Exceptions will be made only under the following conditions:
 - The instructor is informed before the exam that the absence will occur and agrees that the extenuating circumstances warrant the absence. Personal preferences or commitments (e.g., holidays, travel, etc.) are not considered 'extenuating'.
 - Students must provide official counseling or medical documentation to support their request.
 - Do not sit an exam if you are ill. Contact the instructor immediately and provide medical documentation in advance, if possible. A Request for Academic Concession (<http://registrar.uvic.ca/undergrad/records/documents/def.html>) must be filed by the student as soon as possible following the illness.
- Please feel free to contact the course instructor with any concerns.

Grading:

Grades assigned for GEOG103 are in accordance with the Department of Geography grade structure and interpretations as follows:

A+	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	D	F
90-100%	85-89%	80-84%	77-79%	73-76%	70-72%	65-69%	60-64%	50-59%	<=49%

<i>Passing Grades</i>	<i>Description (as listed in the Undergraduate Calendar)</i>
A+ A A-	Exceptional, outstanding and excellent performance. Normally achieved by a minority of students. These grades indicate a student who is self-initiating, exceeds expectation and has an insightful grasp of the subject matter.
B+ B B-	Very good, good and solid performance. Normally achieved by the largest number of students. These grades indicate a good grasp of the subject matter or excellent grasp in one area balanced with satisfactory grasp in the other area.
C+ C	Satisfactory, or minimally satisfactory. These grades indicate a satisfactory performance and knowledge of the subject matter.
D	Marginal Performance. A student receiving this grade demonstrated a superficial grasp of the subject matter.
<i>Failing Grades</i>	<i>Description (as listed in the Undergraduate Calendar)</i>
E	Conditional supplemental.
F	Unsatisfactory performance. Wrote final examination and completed course requirements; no supplemental.
N	Did not write examination or complete course requirements by the end of term or session; no supplemental.
<i>Temporary Grades</i>	<i>Description (as listed in the Undergraduate Calendar)</i>
DEF	Deferred status granted. Used only when deferred status has been granted because of illness, an accident or family affliction. Requires approved Request for Academic Concession.

“The University of Victoria is committed to promoting, providing and protecting a positive and safe learning and working environment for all its members.”

Lecture Outline:

Date	Lecture	Theme	Topics	Labs
R Sep 4	1	Introduction	Course details, What is Physical Geography?	No labs this week
M Sep 8	2	A. Global climates & climatic change	Global climatic changes & ice ages	No labs this week
R Sep 11	3		Global climates	
M Sep 15	4		Composition & structure of Earth's atmosphere	Mt. Tolmie field trip
R Sep 18	5		Atmospheric circulation & winds, extreme weather	
M Sep 22	6	B. Global Water	The Hydrosphere: water mass & energy exchanges, precipitation	1) Topographic Maps
R Sep 25	7		Watersheds & surface water systems	
M Sep 29	8		Rivers, flooding & fluvial landscapes	2) Climatology lab
R Oct 2	9		Groundwater systems & resources	
M Oct 6	10		Glacier systems, processes & landscapes	3) Stream table experiment
R Oct 9	11	C. Natural Hazards	The Lithosphere: Earth's age, structure & tectonics	
M Oct 13		No lecture – Thanksgiving		No labs this week
R Oct 16	12		Mid-term review	
M Oct 20		Mid-term exam (in lecture)		No labs this week
R Oct 23	13		Landscape hazards & risks	
M Oct 27	14		Slope systems, mass wasting features & hazards	4) Mass wasting lab
R Oct 30	15		Permafrost (periglacial) processes & hazards	
M Nov 3	16		Coastal processes, landforms & hazards	No labs this week
R Nov 6	17	D. Biogeography	The Biosphere: origins & organization of life on Earth	
M Nov 10		No lecture - Reading Break		No labs this week
R Nov 13	18		Weathering & soils	
M Nov 17	19		Historical biogeography: evolution, speciation, extinctions	5) Biogeography lab
R Nov 20	20		Ecological biogeography	
M Nov 24	21		Island biogeography	No labs this week
R Nov 27	22		Biogeography Case Study	
M Dec 1			Course review	