GE 104 Spring 2010 Syllabus

Natural Environments: The Physical Landscape

Monday, Wednesday, & Friday: 1-2pm STO 143

Instructors

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Course description:

Welcome to GE 104! This course is about understanding and interpreting the natural world as you see it locally, regionally, and globally. Along the way, you will learn quite a bit of science—the science of physical geography—as well as how to think and observe like a scientist.

My approach in this course will be to facilitate your learning, not to only lecture in the usual sense. While there will be some lecturing, we will spend most of our time observing, discussing physical geography in the news, concluding, and learning the concepts and ideas of physical geography. Measurement and prediction are important parts of science, and you will also learn some simple math and statistical models that physical geographers use.

The objective of this course is to present a survey of the properties and mechanisms governing our physical environment.

The course will be structured according to five general topic areas:

I The atmosphere and climate
II Geological substrates, erosion, and weathering
III Soils and vegetation
IV Physical geography of North America
V Global change

You will need to read and study the reading assignments BEFORE the week begins. To encourage you to do this, I will give a 10-minute quiz on the chapter contents first thing in our Monday session. We will then go on to study and interact with the material together in class. On Wednesday, part of our class will concern the quantitative example found in each chapter. One or two problems will be assigned, which will be due on Friday. On Friday, we will continue studying the chapter, and conclude with a 10-minute quiz on the material.

Place Study

To provide a concrete focus for your learning, you will prepare a place study entitled: Physical Geography of _____. At the beginning of the course, you will choose a place for your study, and each week you will write a one-page report relating the

topics of the text chapter to your study area. Your page will also have two accompanying graphics to illustrate your points. Place-study reports will be due in the Wednesday session immediately following the week of the chapter. At the end of the course, you will put all the reports together, add a one-page introduction, a one-page conclusion, and a bibliography, and turn in a final report.

Prerequisites

There are no college-level prerequisites for this course. However, students should have basic science and math skills, including algebra and graph reading.

Textbook

The textbook is Introducing Physical Geography, A. H. and A. N. Strahler, Wiley, 2006 [4th Edition]. **OR** Physical Geography: Science and Systems of the Human Environment, A. H. and A. N. Strahler, Wiley, 2005 [3rd Edition]. The 3rd edition book is available at the bookstore.

Lab

Most weeks of the term you will have a written lab exercise to carry out during the two-hour lab portion of the course. In the labs, you will interact with maps, diagrams, and illustrations for specific learning objectives. Eight labs are planned. A packet of lab materials will be available in the Geography and Environment Office, CAS 457, at a date announced in class.

Labs: B1: Monday 3:00-5:00, STO 456; C1: Tuesday 11:00-1:00, STO 456. Labs will not start to meet until the week of January 25.

CourseInfo

GE104 has a BU CourseInfo (Blackboard) web page on which relevant materials and grades will be posted. It can be reached at: http://blackboard.bu.edu

Attendance

Attendance is part of both the lecture and lab grades. Attendance will be taken orally or by work given out and returned in class. Your attendance grade will be as follows:

Grade	**A**	**A-**	**B+**	**B**	**B-**	**C+**	**C**	**D**	**F**
Lecture Absences	0-2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Lab Absences	0		1		2		3	4	5

Grading

Lecture (70%)	
Chapter quizzes (Mon, Fri):	20%
Homework:	10%
Place Study:	20%
Attendance:	5%
Final Exam:	15%
Lab (30%)	
Lab Reports:	25%
Lab Attendance:	5%
Total	100%

Final Exam

The final exam will be held on May 8 from 3-5pm. You MUST be present to take the exam or receive a grade of 0. There is no make-up exam. There is no early exam.

Cellphones and Laptops

Cellphones and laptops may not be used in class.

Due Dates, Make-Ups and Dropped Grades

Work must be turned in on time. LATE WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED, BUT THE GRADE FOR THAT ASSIGNMENT WILL BE REDUCED BY 50%. IN-CLASS QUIZZES CANNOT BE MADE UP FOR ABSENCE. MISSING QUIZES WILL RECEIVE A GRADE OF 0. If you miss a quiz because of documented illness, sports team participation, or other BU-sanctioned event, it will be made up as an oral exam. See me for details.

At the end of the course, one lowest grade will be dropped from each type of grade: Monday quiz, Friday quiz, Friday homework problem, weekly place study report. Any missing place study reports must be made up without credit and turned in with the final place study at the completion of the course.

Collaboration

All work prepared for this course must be prepared by you as an individual without collaboration (unless you are explicitly directed otherwise by the teaching staff).

Originality of Work

All work prepared for this course must be written in your own words and prepared specifically for this course. You may not copy phrases, sentences, or paragraphs in written work from ANY source without quotes and specific attribution. This includes web sources. Copying will result in a 0 grade and repeated copying will be considered academic misconduct.

Academic Code

It is your responsibility to know and understand the provisions of the CAS Academic Conduct Code. Copies are available in CAS 105. Suspected cases of academic misconduct will be referred to the Dean's Office.

GE104 Lecture Syllabus Spring 2010

Week Beginning:	Topic	Text Chapter◊	Lab #
11-Jan	Landscapes & geography tools	Prologue (4E) **OR** 1 (3E)	—
18-Jan	The sun, Earth, & global climate	1 & 2 (4E) **OR** 3 & 4 (3E)	—
25-Jan	Earth materials	11 (4E) **OR** 12 (3E)	1 (Google earth)
1-Feb	Plate tectonics	12 (4E) **OR** 13 (3E)	1 (Google earth)
8-Feb	Volcanoes & Earth quakes	13 (4E) **OR** 14 (3E)	2 (plate tectonics, volcanoes)
15-Feb*	Weathering & Mass movement	14 (4E) **OR** 15 (3E)	—
22-Feb	Fluvial processes & the water cycle	16 (4E) **OR** 17 (3E)	3 (mass wasting, weather)
1-Mar	Glaciers & the ice ages	19 (4E) **OR** 20 (3E)	4 (fluvial/hydro)
8-Mar	Spring break	—	—
15-Mar	Soils	10 (4E) **OR** 21 (3E)	5 (soils)
22-Mar	Systems and cycles of the biosphere	To be distributed	6 (glaciers/coastal processes)
29-Mar	Biogeographical processes	9 (4E) **OR** 24 (3E)	7 (biogeography)
5-Apr	Global ecosystems	Continued from last week	TBD
12-Apr**	Physical geography of North America	To be distributed	TBD
19-Apr	Global change	To be distributed	8 (plants & orienteering)
26-Apr	Wrap-Up and Review	—	—
8-May	Final Exam 3:00–5:00	—	—

◊ either the 3rd or 4th edition of the textbook can be used. 3E refers to 3rd edition and 4E refers to the 4th edition textbooks.

* Monday schedule on Tuesday, February 16.

**Monday schedule on Thursday, April 22