

Course Credit:

This is a three-credit course that meets the General Education requirements for a non-lab Science course in *Category II.A.I*. A minimum grade of “C” is required for Geography majors. Students may repeat this course only once to achieve a better grade.

Textbook:

Geosystems: An Introduction to Physical Geography, 7th Edition. Robert W. Christopherson. Prentice Hall: Upper Saddle River, New Jersey.

Course Requirements:

All students are required to enroll on Blackboard. Students are expected to attend each class and keep up to date with the readings on a daily basis. Lecture material will not necessarily duplicate material presented in the textbook, so if you miss a lecture, you may completely miss out on important information. I will not post PowerPoint slides on Blackboard. However, some useful information and other supplemental materials will be provided through Blackboard. Please keep in mind that I do so to aid your note-taking; NOT to replace it!

You are responsible for all materials covered in class. If you miss a class, even for a legitimate reason (e.g., for a class field trip or university sponsored sporting event in which you are participating), you are still responsible for the materials covered. You should get notes from your classmates for any classes you missed.

Class participation is always welcome and encouraged. If you are confused, ask a question. If you're lost, please let me know. Ask questions or contribute comments during class and ask questions before and after class. Use my office hours and use e-mail to ask questions! The more you participate, the more you will learn - and only you can learn the material - I cannot learn it for you. So participate in class!

Attendance Policy:

In the event you happen to miss a lecture, do what you need to do; then see the syllabus and get notes from your classmates to find out what you missed in class. In any science class, if you miss one class period you miss a *lot* of material. Please come to see me or my teaching assistant if you have any specific questions.

If you believe that there is a chance that you may **miss more than four classes**, you may want to enroll in this class during a different semester, when you will have fewer interruptions.

Evaluation:

Student performance will be evaluated with exams, quizzes, and homework assignments.

- There will be four **exams** throughout this semester. Exams will be composed of a combination of formats, including, but not limited to, multiple choice, matching, true-false, fill-in-the-blank, and labeling diagrams. Each exam will be oriented toward the material most recently presented. Physical Geography, however, is the subject that builds upon concepts and therefore each exam will likely contain some previously covered materials. The final exam will not be comprehensive and will mainly emphasize the material covered after the previous exam.
- In-class **quizzes** will occur at about a two-week interval. These will test you on materials covered usually within the most recent two weeks, although testing outside of this period may also occur due to the nature of the subject. Quizzes are unannounced multiple choices

or short-answer questions that are given in the last ten minutes of class. **Make-up quizzes will not be given for any reason.**

- Twelve **homework assignments** will be given throughout the semester. All homework assignments are due by 12:00 pm, Eastern Standard Time, on the announced due date. **Late assignments will not be graded.**

Grades and Grading Policy:

Your grade for the course will be determined by the percentage of possible points that you have earned for all exams, assignments, and quizzes. The four-exam will constitute 80% of the student's grade (20% each), homework assignments will account for 15%, and in-class quizzes will account for 5% of the final grade.

I reserve the right to raise or lower each grade slightly, depending on circumstances such as extraordinary progress made in the course or other mitigating circumstances. This numerical score will be converted to a letter grade that indicates your level of performance in this class. The percentage equivalents of each of the letter grades are as follows:

A	93% - 100%	C+	77% - 80%
A-	90% - 93%	C	70% - 77%
B+	87% - 90%	D+	67% - 70%
B	83% - 87%	D	60% - 67%
B-	80% - 83%	F	Below 60%

Grade disputes / complaints **must be lodged within two weeks** of grades being released on Blackboard. In the case of a missing grade, you must provide evidence of having done the work. In the case of clear errors in grading, I will correct your grade on Blackboard. Failure to contact me or my teaching assistant within two weeks of grades being completed for any given assignment or exam means that you forfeit the chance for a review of the grade.

Extra credit:

In fairness to all students, I do not offer Extra Credit assignments at any time. Please speak with me if you are having problems. I will be happy to help you.

Make-up Policy:

If your absence is excused, you may have the opportunity to make up the exam. Absences may be excused if they are verifiable documents. For expected absences, you must provide at least two business days advance notice of the absence. Acceptable reasons for absences include but are not limited to personal or family illness or emergency, religious holidays, etc. per Towson University Attendance Policies. Oversleeping, missing the bus, cannot find a parking space, etc., are not excusable excuses. You may be required to provide written documentation in order to receive an excused absence.

Make-up exams will be given only in the event of illness or other verifiable emergency. **You will have 24 hours after a missed exam to contact me or leave a message.** Please do not call me at home under any circumstances. The secretary in the department (410-704-2973) will gladly take a message. If you know in advance that you must be absent on the day of a scheduled exam, please let me know so that we can schedule a make-up time. Make-up exams will be scheduled at the instructor's discretion and may not be of the exact same format. Unexcused absences from exams will result in a zero for the exam.

**** Please note that homework assignments and in-class quizzes cannot be made-up.**

Due Date Policy:

All homework assignments are due by **12:00 pm, Eastern Standard Time, on the announced due date**. In fairness to the majority of students who work hard to meet expectations and deadlines, late assignments will **NOT** be graded. This is meant to emphasize the importance of effective time management and the need to begin work on the next assignment. Also, because a week or more is given to complete assignments, last minute glitches are not acceptable reasons -- do not wait until the last minute to work or submit your homework assignment.

Help!

All of us learn in different ways and with varying degrees of success. If you know of any factors in your life that may hinder your ability to learn up to your potential in this course, please notify me at once. If you are having difficulty with the course material, please visit me right away. Coming to see me just before a test is being given is a poor strategy for success. Like any of your other courses, the material in this course will be built upon earlier concepts and information; if you fall behind, it will become harder and harder to catch up. This is what office hours are for!

Academic Honesty:

Academic honesty and integrity is expected at all times. Students are responsible for the Scholastic Dishonesty Code, which can be found in Appendix F of the Towson University Catalog under the "Student Academic Integrity Policy" section. Scholastic dishonest includes but is not limited to: copying others' work, using notes during tests, and sabotaging others' work. Dishonesty in this class will not be tolerated. Cheating will result in an automatic failing grade for this course. Cases of academic dishonesty will be handled according to University guidelines.

Student with Disabilities:

This course is in compliance with Towson University policies for students with disabilities. Students with disabilities or students who suspect that they have a disability but do not have documentation are encouraged to contact Disability Support Services (DSS) 7720 York Road, Suite 232, (410) 704-2638, for advice on how to obtain an appropriate evaluation. A memo from DSS authorizing your accommodation is needed before any accommodation can be made.

If for any reason you need any accommodation due to physical or learning disability, please talk with me **within the first week of class** so we can make any necessary arrangements.

Lecture and Reading Schedule:

The lecture schedule indicates the intended scope and timing of materials presented in the course. If unanticipated events occur, the lecture schedule will be modified accordingly.

Week	Date	Topic	Readings
1	Jan 27	Introduction to course; fundamental geographical concepts; Earth's four spheres	Ch. 1
	Jan 29	Earth-Sun relationships; solar energy; seasons	Ch. 2
2	Feb 3	Composition and structure of the atmosphere <i>Tuesday February 3: Add/drop deadline</i>	Ch. 3
	Feb 5	Air pollution Global energy balance; heat transfer processes	Ch. 3 Ch. 4
3	Feb 10	Greenhouse effect; energy budget	Ch. 4
	Feb 12	Temperature concept; temperature patterns	Ch. 5
4	Feb 17	EXAM # 1	Ch. 1 - 4
	Feb 19	Properties of water; humidity	Ch. 7
5	Feb 24	Humidity (cont.); adiabatic cooling; lapse rates	Ch. 7
	Feb 26	Atmospheric stability Lifting mechanisms	Ch. 7 Ch. 8 pp.210-214
6	Mar 3	Cloud and fog formation processes	Ch. 7
	Mar 5	Atmospheric circulation; forces driving the wind	Ch. 6
7	Mar 10	Local winds; wind patterns; ocean currents	Ch. 6
	Mar 12	EXAM # 2	Ch. 5, 7, and part of 8
8	Mar 17	Spring Break – No class	
	Mar 19	Spring Break – No class	
9	Mar 24	Air masses and fronts; mid-latitude cyclone	Ch. 8
	Mar 26	No class	
10	Mar 31	Violent weather: thunderstorms, tornadoes, and hurricanes	Ch. 8
	Apr 2	Global climate systems	Ch. 10
11	Apr 7	<i>Monday April 6: Last day to change to P/F or withdraw</i> Global climate systems (cont.); global warming	Ch. 10
	Apr 9	Introduction to landform: geologic time scale, Earth's internal structure, rock types	Ch. 11
12	Apr 14	Plate Tectonics; subduction, sea-floor spreading	Ch. 11
	Apr 16	EXAM #3	Ch. 6, 8, and 10
13	Apr 21	Continent and ocean crust; folding; faulting	Ch. 12
	Apr 23	Mountain building; earthquakes and volcanism	Ch. 12
14	Apr 28	Fluvial processes and drainage patterns	Ch. 14
	Apr 30	Streamflow characteristics	Ch. 14
15	May 5	Coastal processes and landforms	Ch. 16
	May 7	Coastal landforms (cont.)	Ch. 16
16	May 12	Review / Catch up	
	May 18	FINAL EXAM (Monday) 10:15 am - 12:15 pm in LI100	Ch. 11, 12, 14, and 16

Homework Assignment Schedule:

All students are required to enroll on Blackboard. Course materials will be posted on-line at the beginning of the week and you are responsible for all materials covered in class. If unanticipated events occur, the due date will be modified accordingly. All homework assignments are due by **12:00 pm, Eastern Standard Time, on the announced due date.** Late homework assignments will not be graded.

Assignment	Chapter	Date Posted on Blackboard	Due Date (by 12:00 pm, EST)
HW #1	1 and 2	Jan 27 – Feb 2	Monday, Feb 2
HW #2	3	Feb 3 – 9	Monday, Feb 9
HW #3	4	Feb 10 – 16	Monday, Feb 16
HW #4	5	Feb 17 – 23	Monday, Feb 22
HW #5	7 Part I – humidity and atmospheric stability	Feb 24 – Mar 2	Monday, Mar 2
HW #6	7 Part II – cloud and fog formation	Mar 3 – Mar 9	Monday, Mar 9
HW #7	6	Mar 10 – Mar 26	Thursday, Mar 26
HW #8	8	Mar 31 – Apr 6	Monday, Apr 6
HW #9	10	Apr 7 – Apr 13	Monday, Apr 13
HW #10	11	Apr 21 – 27	Monday, Apr 27
HW #11	12	Apr 28 – May 4	Monday, May 4
HW #12	14	May 5 – May 11	Monday, May 11