

SCI 205 – Physical Geography

Course Information:

- **Course Number:** SCI 205
- **Title:** Physical Geography

Course Description:

There are various processes on earth that are driven not only by the earth itself, but also by the atmosphere, water, and terrestrial biome. Physical geography is the study of these processes and how they shape the earth's environment. This introductory course will provide an overview of these processes and explore the patterns that they create through observing them with a hands on GIS based approach.

Course Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Describe physical geography and a GIS
- Define the major processes that shape the physical earth
- Analyze GIS data to identify natural patterns and processes
- Apply information toward predicting natural characteristics of the earth

Required Texts/Readings

Textbook:

Readings will be given throughout the semester at the beginning of each module. The readings will be available on Moodle at the beginning of each module. All students are expected to complete the assigned readings prior to and discussions and activities. The required text book is:

- **Title:** Geosystems: An Introduction to Physical Geography
- **Edition:** 9th
- **Author(s):** Robert W. Christopherson
- **ISBN13:** 9780321926982
- **ISBN10:** 0321926986
- **Publication Date:** 01/05/2014

This book is available in three delivery options that range in price. You may buy either the traditional book, the a la carte (Loose leaf for a binder), or online. All of the books contain the required material, so whichever form you prefer is acceptable. Additional web-based readings and videos will be given throughout the semester.

Required software:

A Geographical Information Systems Software – All instruction will use Google Earth, <https://www.google.com/earth/explore/products/desktop.html>

Required hardware:

You are required to have a computer that can run Google Earth and that you have the rights to install Google Earth on if it is not already installed.

Citation resource:

Purdue OWL: APA Formatting and Style Guide. Available at: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

Technical Resources:

For problems accessing Moodle, The Sage Colleges Helpdesk may be able to help. They have a knowledge based website which is available at <http://kb.sage.edu/kb> where you can search and browse for answers to problems with Moodle as well as various other technologies. They may also be reached via email at helpdesk@sage.edu or by phone at (518) 244-4777.

If you have technical problems with Moodle other than logging on, you should contact the 24/7 help center at 1-800-985-8781 or the various resources available here: <http://kb.learninghouse.com/>.

Computer Literacy:

Students are expected to be able to use the internet (including search engines, i.e. Google), access E-mail, utilize various aspects of Moodle, and other software that may enhance the content of this course.

Course Requirements:

This course consists of seven week long modules. Each week will start off with a list of readings and then there will be a **quiz** based on the readings. Also based on these readings, there will be one in depth **assignment**. In addition, you will also need to participate in a **discussion** by creating *one original post* as well as *responding* to at least one other person's post with substantive feedback.

The quizzes will be untimed and open book. The format of the quizzes may vary from module to module, but will generally follow the format of matching terms to definitions and multiple choice. Although the quizzes are based solely on the reading, not all answers may be directly found in the reading. Instead, all answers will be based on the information found in the book and your ability to synthesize that information.

Each assignment will be in the form of an interactive activity. Most (if not all) will be completed by using a GIS to observe a natural phenomenon, derive conclusions from your observation, and answer questions.

For each module there will also be a class discussion. For these discussions, a topic or question will be presented by the instructor which will be based on the current theme and reading. The discussion posts in response to the presented topic or question will require that the course material be interpreted, applied, and supplemented with additional information that includes personal experiences and additional content.

In addition, for each discussion you need to respond to one of your classmate's posts. The responses need to be respectful and add value to the original post. They could either constructively refute their ideas or provide additional support for them. A response that simply agrees with the original post is not acceptable.

These posts will be graded on quality rather than quantity, however, most original posts will be 1-2 paragraphs (4-8 sentences) and the response posts will be slightly shorter.

Quizzes and labs are due on Sunday of the week assigned by 11:55 pm, ET.
Discussion Forum initial posts are due Wednesday of each week by 11:55 pm, ET, with responses to classmates' posts due on Sunday by 11:55 pm each week.

Methods of Evaluation and Grading Criteria:

Evaluation:

Assignment	Grade
Assignments/Mini Projects	40% of final grade
Quizzes	20% of final grade
Graded Discussions	40% of final grade
Possible Bonus Opportunities	5% of final grade
Total	100%

Grading Policy:

Total Score	Course Grade	Value
679-700 points	A+	4.0
651-678.9 points	A	4.0
630-650.9 points	A-	3.7
609-629.9 points	B+	3.3
581-608.9 points	B	3.0
560-580.9 points	B-	2.7
539-559.9 points	C+	2.3
511-529.9 points	C	2.0
490-510.9 points	C-	1.7
469-489.9 points	D+	1.3
441-468.9 points	D	1.0
420-440.9 points	D-	0.7
Below 420 points	F	0.0

The grading policy for this course follows the College's policy which can be found online at: <http://catalog.sage.edu/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=244&print>. The course will follow an A-F grading scheme as follows, with pluses and minuses assigned to indicate a grade that is above or below the average score within each category:

A = Excellent
B = Good

C = Satisfactory
D = Passing
F = Failure

Course Schedule:

Module	Topics
1	What is geography? (1) Location Observation tools – GIS The seasons and energy (2)
2	The atmosphere (3-4) Temperatures(5) The ocean(6)
3	Water: forms, resources, and distribution (7-9)
4	The climate (10-11)
5	The dynamic earth: earthquakes, volcanos, wind & water processes (12-17)
6	Terrestrial Biomes Soils and ecosystems (18, 19 & 20 up to p. 613)
7	Biogeography and conservation (rest of Ch. 20)

Policies and Procedures

The Spirit of Learning: Statement on Appropriate Conduct:

All members of The Sage Colleges community are expected to conduct themselves in a way which respects the learning environment. Thus, Sage has the right to remove any student from a classroom, an online classroom, other academic area, or program at any time if the student's behavior is contrary to the spirit of learning or hinders the operation of the program in any way. Violent, disruptive, harassing or intimidating behavior is not tolerated in the physical or online classroom, or any other place on campus. Any student whose conduct disrupts a class or other learning environment may be required to leave the premises immediately and subjected to disciplinary and/or legal action.

Americans with Disabilities Act:

The Sage Colleges is committed to providing equal access and responding to the needs of students with disabilities, as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act. A student seeking academic adjustments under the Americans with Disabilities Act must register and provide

documentation to the Director of Disabilities Services. Any student in need of classroom assistance or modification under the Americans with Disabilities Act must inform the instructor of the needed adjustment by first obtaining the necessary accommodation letters from the Director of Disabilities Services in order for reasonable accommodations to be provided. It is recommended that students do so at the onset of classes as reasonable prior notice needs to be given. The Director of Disabilities Services can be contacted in Troy at 65 First Street Troy NY 12180 (518) 244-6874 or in Albany at 140 New Scotland Avenue, Albany NY 12208 (518) 292-8624.

Policy on Academic Honesty:

Academic dishonesty in any of its forms, including cheating, plagiarism, misuse of SageNet, and failure to comply with guidelines for the conduct of human research, will not be tolerated at The Sage Colleges. A full statement of the policy on Academic Honesty can be found as an appendix to the Student Conduct Code on The Sage Colleges web site. A hard copy can be requested from the Dean of Students in Albany Kahl Campus Center 145 (518) 292-1753 or in Troy McKinstry Student Center 244-2207.

For guidance in proper referencing of sources, as well as how to avoid plagiarism, consult the most recent editions of the following works, which are available in the reference section of the libraries on the Troy and Albany campus.

- Joseph Gibaldi, *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, New York, Modern Language Association.
- Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press.
<http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/DocChicago.html>
- American Psychological Association. *Publication Manual for the American Psychological Association*, Washington, D.C., American Psychological Association.
<http://apastyle.apa.org/>

Religious Observance:

The Sage Colleges recognize the value of participation in and observance of religious obligations and practices by individual students. No student will be penalized because a religious observance prevents participation in any course requirement. An opportunity will be provided for each student to make any requirement missed for an absence due to religious observance. A student who intends to be absent from classes for a religious observance must notify each instructor in advance and make arrangements to cover missed course materials and to complete the course requirement(s) missed. The College reserves the right to confirm the existence of the observance through an interfaith calendar.

E-Mail Policy for The Sage Colleges:

Sage considers MySage (username@sage.edu) the exclusive vehicle for official college e-mail communication. As such, username@sage.edu will be considered the official e-mail address for writing and forwarding electronic correspondence. All users are expected to regularly check

their Sage e-mail account (on MySage) and to acknowledge messages in a timely manner. In addition to general College notices, faculty members frequently use the College's e-mail system to notify and correspond with members of their classes. It is recommended that students frequently access their College assigned e-mail account for information. All students are responsible for managing their disk quota such that there is room for new mail to arrive. Any electronic business conducted with the College must be done via a sage.edu account.

Make Up Policy:

There are generally no make-up opportunities for missed assignments, discussions, or quizzes except in extenuating circumstances. Completed assignments, discussions, quizzes are due on the due date at the specified time and it is your responsibility to make sure they are properly uploaded and submitted through Moodle. Late assignments will be accepted up to one day late, but at the cost of a full letter grade for missing the first deadline. Assignments submitted later than one day past the deadline will automatically be assigned 0. Quizzes, discussion posts, and the project and its associated proposal and presentation will not be accepted late. It is expected that you will have a backup plan that would allow you to complete the required course work on time in the event that you are having technical difficulties on your end (i.e. computer virus, inconstant internet connection, etc.). If you know that it will be difficult for you to consistently turn in the required work on time, you should take this course at a time that better fits your schedule.

My Expectations of You:

This course is set at a very fast pace that is not self-paced. Exercising good time management skills, determination, and engagement will be critical to your success in this course. You are expected to keep up with the readings and work, as it will be very difficult to catch up if you fall behind. You should plan to spend 10-15 hours per week on this course and should be logging into the course several times each week.

Although all interactions between you and other students take place online, this is not a social media site or instant message board between you and your friends. I expect all posts to use proper English, be in complete sentences, be properly cited in APA format when applicable, and be appropriate for a classroom setting. I may remove any content that is not presented in a professional manner.

In addition, I expect for you all to help each other through this course. If you have any questions, please post them to the "ask a question" discussion before emailing me directly. I will expect that your fellow students will help to answer your question before I do, and that you will do the same for them. If you do decide you want to email me for specific help, make sure to include a specific question. Do not say that you cannot get something to work, instead say this is the file I am using and these are the steps I have tried.

Lastly, I expect that you regularly check your email, the "ask a question" discussion, and the class announcements. If I send you an email, I expect to hear back in a relatively short period of time.

Although no geography or previous GIS experience is required coming into this class, I do expect that everyone has a basic understanding of how to use a computer and browse the internet.

What You Can Expect From Me:

I will make sure to log onto the course and my email at least every 48 business hours and respond to any questions or concerns you may have presented within the same time frame. I will hold you to high standards and challenge you intellectually. This means that I may not necessarily give you the answer every time you ask a question, but instead will make sure to provide you with direction on how to find the answer or provide you with additional resources to answer your question.