GEOG 1503 - Physical Geography

Fall 2026 Syllabus, Section 03, CRN 40078,

Credit hours: 3

Instructor

Dawna Cerney

Ph.D.

Email: dlcerney@ysu.edu

Public Instructor Information

Instructor Title: Ph.D.
Instructor Professional Qualifications:

Ph. D., Environmental Geography, Texas State University

Master's, Environmental Design, University of Calgary

Bachelor's, BS Geography, University of Lethbridge

Associate, Engineering Design, Lethbridge Community College

Instructor Office Location: DeBartolo 416

Instructor Office Phone: (330) 9412301

Course Description

1503. Physical Geography. An introductory analysis of selected elements of the natural habitat and their geographic distribution. Includes processes involved in weather, climates, soils, vegetation, and landforms. 3 s.h.
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This course is a systematic study of the various elements that make up the Earth's physical environment - weather and climate, biota, soil, and landforms. The aim of this course is to develop an understanding of the study of physical geography, the complexity of earth systems, and recognition of the human relationships to those systems. It focuses on the mechanisms of matter and energy transfer through and among the earth systems (atmosphere, hydrosphere, lithosphere, and biosphere) and is concerned with the natural processes that interact to produce the earth's physical environments. Emphasis will be on the processes within the lithosphere, hydrosphere, atmosphere, and biosphere.

The intent of this course is to provide insight into scientific explanations of the Earth and its physical features. The course presents science-based frameworks and evidence used within the discipline of geography. The instructor does not seek to challenge personal beliefs or alternative ways of understanding the Earth, nor to persuade students that scientific explanations are the only valid perspectives.

"The (Geography) Degree helps develop a whole range of employability skills including numeracy, teamwork through regular field trips, analytical skills in the lag and a certain technical savviness through using various specialist computing applications. Also, the subject area in itself cultivates sensitivity. Those all potentially help a geographer to stand out in the labor market." (White 2010)

> *"Moreover, a national 2018 survey of employers found that only around 40 percent say that recent college graduates exhibit professionalism, a good work ethic, and have decent oral and written communication, and only 33 percent say that recent graduates possess leadership skills. This is particularly concerning given that soft skills and their combination with technical skills are becoming more important than ever." (Christos Makridis, 2020)*

Course Readings

Group	Title	Author	ISBN
Required	McKnight's Physical Geography Edition: 13th	Hess, Darrel / Tasa, Dennis G.	9780135800089

This book is First Day ready

The course readings are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances, research developments, current events, and/or to ensure better learning.

Schedule of Topics and Assignments

Week of	Reading(s)	Proposed Topic	Due/To Prepare for Class
8/24	McKnight's Physical Geography - Chapter 1	Module 1: Introduction to the Earth	No items due - prepare for Syllabus Quiz test 1, and Mini Module 1
8/31	McKnight's Physical Geography - Chapter 2	Module 1: Introduction to the Atmosphere	Mini Module Assignment 1 Due – September 2, 11:59.60pm Syllabus Quiz – September 4, 11.59.60 pm Test 1 Due – September 5, 11.59.60 pm
9/7	McKnight's Physical Geography - Chapter 3	Module 2: Insolation and Temperature	Mini Module Assignment 2 Due – September 9 11:59.60pm
9/14	McKnight's Physical Geography - Chapter 5	Module 2: Atmospheric Pressure and Winds	Assignment 1 Due: September 18 11:59.60pm Test 2 Due – September 19, 11.59.60 pm
9/21	McKnight's Physical Geography - Chapter 6	Module 3: Atmospheric Moisture	Mini Module Assignment 3 Due – September 24, 11:59.60pm
9/28	McKnight's Physical Geography - Chapter 7	Module 3: Atmospheric Disturbances	Assignment 2 Due – October 2, 11:59.60pm Test 3 Due – October 3, 11.59.60 pm
10/5	McKnight's Physical Geography - Chapter 8	Module 4: Climates	Mini Module Assignment 4 Due – October 7 11:59.60pm
10/12	McKnight's Physical Geography - Chapter 9	Module 4: Hydrosphere	Test 4 Due – October 17, 11.59.60 pm
10/19	McKnight's Physical Geography - Chapters 10, 11	Module 5: Biogeography	Mini Module Assignment 5 Due – October 21, 11:59.60pm
10/26	McKnight's Physical Geography - Chapter 13	Module 5: Landforms	Assignment 3 Due – October 30, 11:59.60pm Test 5 Due – October 31, 11.59.60 pm
11/2	McKnight's Physical Geography - Chapter 14	Module 6 Earth Internal Processes	Mini Module Assignment 6 – November 4 11:59.60pm
11/9	McKnight's Physical Geography - Chapters 15	Module 6: Weathering and MassWasting	Assignment 4 Due – November 13, 11:59.60pm Test 6 Due – November 14, 11.59.60 pm
11/16	McKnight's Physical Geography - Chapter 16	Module 7: Fluvial Processes	No assessments due. Prepare for Mini Module Assignment
11/23	McKnight's Physical Geography - Chapter 18	Module 7: Arid Lands	Mini Module Assignment 7 Due – November 25 11:59.60pm.
11/30	McKnight's Physical Geography - Chapter 20	Module 7: Glacial Modification	Test 7 Due – December 5, 11.59.60 pm
12/7	No readings	Final Exam Week	Any excused pre-arranged makeup tests are scheduled

The course schedule, policies, procedures, and assignments in this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances, by mutual agreement, and/or to ensure better learning.