

**Geography 103**  
**Online**  
**Spring 2011**

**Online courses are typically harder than similar courses taken in the classroom!**  
**Online courses are not for everyone!**  
**This is not a self-paced class. It follows a schedule and has weekly assignments that are due on or before Midnight each Friday.**

**Instructor:** Penny Nicely, [nicelyp@wnc.edu](mailto:nicelyp@wnc.edu)

**Office Hours:** Tuesday and Wednesday 2:30 – 5:00PM, 102 Bently Hall, Douglas Campus. Other times by appointment. Students who want to be successful in an online class need to ask questions and communicate with the instructor on a regular basis. Prior to the start of class students should use the email address given above to contact the instructor. After class starts the email in the online classroom should be used. Emails will be answered promptly during office hours. Email is checked on a regular basis Thursday – Monday, but response will not be as immediate. You are always welcome to meet with the instructor in person during office hours. You may call the Douglas Campus 775-782-2413 during office hours to talk to the instructor. You can also set up an online chat during office hours.

**All assignments for this class are available for at least one week and are due on Friday at midnight. Recommendation:** Plan ahead, do not send emails on Friday afternoon/evening and expect answers in time to complete the assignments due that evening.

**Important notes about this class:**

- This class is taught over the Internet.
- **This is not a self-paced class.** This class does not meet in a classroom for 3 hours every week, however, this class does follow a schedule, just like a regular class that meets on campus. Be prepared to spend at least 9-12 hrs./week on this class, depending upon your existing computer skills, typing skills, reading skills and your level of comfort with a science class.
- If this is your first online class, visit and complete the web tutorial available on the WNC website by following the link to Webcampus.
- If this is your first online class on WebCT CT6 (new version of WebCT), visit and complete the WebCT6 tutorial.
- This class requires dedication and self-discipline for successful completion.
- A week by week schedule can be found on the Calendar Page on the Class Site.

**Description:**

Geog 103 W01: Physical Geography. 3 credits.

Prerequisite: MATH 120 or MATH 126 or higher or consent of instructor.

This course introduces the physical elements of geography, nature and distribution of climate, land forms, natural vegetation, and soils and includes four lab experiences.

This is a program requirement for the WNC AS Geoscience emphasis and meets science credit requirements for WNC AA, AS, and AGS degrees. Additional information about this course can be found with the course description in the WNC 2010-2011 online catalog.

**Transferability of Course within Nevada:** Transfers as Geog 103 to universities and community colleges of the NSHE (Nevada System of Higher Education).

**Required texts and materials:**

Note: The college bookstore has these items in stock and available 3-4 weeks or more before start of classes. It is your responsibility to see that you have them in your possession at the start of class.

*Physical Geography, The Global Environment*, 3rd ed., 2004, H. J. de Blij, Peter O. Muller, and Richard S. Williams, Jr., Oxford University Press, ISBN 0-19-516022-3

Wonder Globe 4 3/8-inch diameter, Replogle, or another globe if you already have one

*Essential World Atlas*, copyright 2004, Hammond, ISBN 0-8437-0852-2

Note that this atlas is required. **Other atlases will not be of use for the exercises.**

**Additionally, you will need the following equipment and supplies:**

- A reliable computer (see requirements below) with an Internet browser (Firefox or Microsoft Internet Explorer recommended, Exception: IE 8 does not work well with the Blackboard learning program)
- Reliable access to the Internet
- A printer, in order to print all of the class information and class content from the Class Site
- It is recommended that you use a binder (2-inch minimum) to organize all materials for the course. Students can find more information on how to organize their binder on the Binder Page located on the Class Site.
- A calculator

**Students will need their WNC NetID and their student W number to access WebCT**

**Computer Hardware and Software Requirements:**

- Windows XP or Vista or MAC System 7 or higher (Note: Other operating systems may work based on the browser used, but no support will be offered).
- 32 Mb of RAM (64 Mb recommended).
- 28.8 kbs Internet connection (56.6 kbs recommended).
- A WebCT verified browser (Internet Explorer – Exception: IE 8 does not work well with the Blackboard programs - or Firefox recommended).
- A program able to handle htm/html files (many word processors can now handle those types of files; also, Netscape Composer can be used instead of a word processor). You may find Microsoft Excell beneficial to produce graphs required for the labs.

**Note:** Students who do not have all the access mentioned above may decide to use the WNC computer labs in Carson, Douglas, and Fallon. Please check with the computer lab nearest you for their schedule.

### **Required Skills:**

In order to be successful in this class, the following skills **are necessary:**

- College level reading skills and ability to follow written instructions
- Basic computer skills including:
  - Knowledge and skills to e-mail the instructor, browse the Internet, and get to the class web pages
  - Knowledge and skills to save and modify files from the Internet; be able to drop files in the Assignment Tool Drop Box in WebCT
  - Knowledge and skills to send and receive email attachments
  - Basic word processing skills
- Self-motivation
- Good time management skills
- Ability to learn independently
- Desire to succeed in your learning experience

### **Required math skills:**

This is a college science class, and as such it requires the use of math. If you are not familiar with the following concepts you will have problems completing the course exercises:

- conversions (converting from one unit to another, i.e. from inches to miles)
- using simple formulas
- graphing multiple variables
- percentages
- positive and negative numbers
- fractions
- decimal numbers
- ratios and proportions

**If you have not taken an online class on WebCT at Western Nevada College before, you will need to access and follow the WNC Web Tutorial accessed at [www.wnc.edu/webcampus/tutorials/php](http://www.wnc.edu/webcampus/tutorials/php) before class starts.**

### **Course Objectives**

At the conclusion of the class, the successful student will:

- have gained factual knowledge about physical geography, including the grid system of latitude and longitude, seasons and time, maps, the atmosphere, climates, and landform formation in relation to mass wasting, streams and wind
- have learned fundamental principles, generalizations, and theories in relation to weather, climate, and landform formation;
- have gained a broader understanding and appreciation of physical geography.

As a result, successful students will be able to:

- understand what physical geography is;
- understand the latitude-longitude system of reference and be able to apply it to finding locations on maps;
- understand the evolution of the seasons and be able to relate this knowledge to personal experience of daily changes in sun angle and day length;
- understand how maps are made and why they are important in a geographic study;
- understand the different elements (such as temperature, pressure, wind, moisture) and controls (such as latitude, altitude, oceanic currents, winds, topographic barriers, water or land) of weather and climate and be able to discuss how they interrelate;

- be able to apply newly acquired knowledge of meteorology to the understanding of every day weather.
- be able to discuss how landforms develop as a result of mass movements, streams and winds.

### **Testing and Grades**

Students will **earn** their grade according to the following points allocation:

Labs (50 points each)	=	200 points
Quizzes	=	224 points (see assignment for point value of each quiz, generally 1 point for each answer)
Weekly discussion	=	50 points - (3 points per week + 5 points if you don't miss a week)
Midterm Exam	=	200 points
Final Exam	=	<u>200 points</u>
Total possible points	=	874 points

**You will not get a letter grade for quizzes, labs, or exams. Your final grade will be based the points you have earned during the semester. Once you have lost points they are gone. It is important to keep up and study as the course goes along.**

**Except for bonus questions on the exams, there will be no extra credit in this class.** By keeping track of your points you will always know what your grade is. You start with the total of 874 and subtract if you lose points - or- you can start at zero and add points as you receive them.

### **Grading Scale**

874 - 786 points	=	A
785 - 699 points	=	B
698 - 611 points	=	C
610 - 524 points	=	D
523 and below	=	F

**NOTE: No W's will be given in this course.**

**It is the student's responsibility to withdraw if they are not earning the grade they want.**

### **Weekly Assignments**

Links to detailed Weekly Assignments can be accessed from the **Calendar** or from the **Learning Module Tool** on the WebCT class site. Weekly assignments include:

- \* a reading assignment from the textbook (usually 2 units)
- \* reading of the instructor's lecture notes for the corresponding units
- \* completion of an online quiz for the corresponding units
- \* completion of review exercises included in the lecture notes (for your benefit, not to be handed in)
- \* lab assignments (4 during the semester)
- \* other miscellaneous items found on the Weekly Assignment files.

### **Lab Assignments**

Students will have to complete 4 lab assignments during the semester. Links to lab assignments can be found on the corresponding **Weekly Learning Modules** (Refer also to the Calendar Page). Lab assignments are set up as an assessment to which students have unlimited access until the due date.

## **Quizzes**

There is a quiz at the end of each week (except weeks 8, and 16). Quizzes are designed to enable students to check their knowledge. They will be available on the **Assessment Tool** and they have to be taken by midnight on the due date. Quizzes are open book, however they do have a time limit. Students need to make sure that they have completed the reading assignment in the textbook along with the lecture notes before attempting to take a quiz.

**Important:** The Quiz on the Syllabus for **Week 1** is the only quiz that you may take as many times as you need to in order to get the maximum 20 points. You **must** pass the quiz with 20 points in order to access the material and Quiz for Week 2.

**Weekly Discussion:** Students are required to participate in the class every week, except weeks 8 and 16. This participation takes place in the WebCT/Blackboard Discussion Area. Participation accounts for 50 points of a student's final grade in this class.

### **What Counts for Participation?**

- Students may participate by asking a question about the week's assignment, answering a question, or taking part in a general discussion of the topic for that week.
- Keep in mind that you will be reading everyone's discussion entry and they will be reading yours. Correct English is expected in these entries and basic courtesy for the views of others is also expected.
- The discussion board should act as an online study group, not a complaint center. The first week of class students should enter the discussion and introduce themselves, perhaps tell why they have taken the course and what their special area of interest is if they have one.
- Students will lose 3 participation points for each week they do not take part in the discussion and will not be eligible for the 5 additional participation points at the end of the semester. Note that while you may always continue the discussion thread from previous weeks, your participation points are earned by taking part in the current week's topics.
- **What is not participation?**
- Comments/complaints about the difficulty of the material. If you have questions about the material, you should ask them either as part of the discussion or directly emailed to the instructor.
- Comments on the quizzes, labs or exams other than questions/answers relating to the material covered. Remember that you may take the quiz/exam on Monday, but others won't take it until Thursday.

**Announcements:** Announcements will be made from time to time with information for the entire class. The announcement board should be checked several times each week. It is your responsibility to know the information that is provided in the announcements.

## **Midterm and Final Exams**

Midterm and Final Exams are proctored. **It is the student's responsibility to set up his/her own proctored exam with an appropriate proctoring center.** You will have to show a photo ID in order to take each exam.

The Midterm exam should be taken during week 8, between Saturday, March 12 and Friday, March 18. The final exam should be taken between Saturday, May 14 and Wednesday, May 18. Students are allowed to take the following material with them for those two exams: a blank sheet of paper for scratch paper, a calculator, a ruler and an Earth globe. The midterm exam will be on Units 1 through 11. The final exam will cover Units 12-14, 16-21, 37, 39, 49 and 52. Information on how to set up the exams is available on the **Exams Page** on WebCT. The midterm and final exam each account for 200 points of a student's final grade in the class, for a total of 400 points.

**It is the student's responsibility to communicate the details of his/her exam location (exact place where he/she will be taking the proctored exams) prior to setting up an appointment and by the date specified on the class calendar.** The instructor will send instructions to the centers with a list of students who will be taking the exam with them. If you do not supply the information to the instructor by the date required, you may find that you are not able to make an appointment for the exam. **Do not try to make your appointment until after the date set on the calendar. If the center has no information about the exam, they will not let you make an appointment.**

#### **Policies for late assignments and make-ups**

Only an emergency situation or work related travel counts as a reason for late lab assignments or quizzes. **ONLY** when conditions are out of a student's control, **AND** if the student contacts the instructor ahead of time to make other arrangements will late assignments or quizzes be accepted. Note that a visit from Aunt Cecelia or your grade-schooler's play are not acceptable excuses. You have a full week for each assignment and longer for the labs. Under **no** circumstances will an extension be allowed after Wednesday for an assignment due Friday.

If an emergency situation arises and a student wants to be able to hand in a late lab assignment or make-up a quiz, he/she has to contact the instructor **ahead** of time (before the due date) to explain the situation and to make other arrangements. Failure to contact the instructor **ahead** of time will result in **no make-up** opportunity.

Any late lab assignment or quiz **must** be pre-approved: students must get instructor approval **before** handing in a late lab assignment or taking a late quiz.

If a student is unable to take the Midterm exam during the times allotted (refer to "Midterm and Final" above) he/she needs to contact the instructor ahead of time in order to make other arrangements. **The midterm may only be taken early - there will be no provision for taking it after the due date. It is available for a full week.** There will be **no makeup for the final.**

#### **Academic Integrity**

True academic achievement is based on academic integrity. An honor code exists in this class that forbids plagiarism and other forms of academic fraud. **Plagiarism** includes copying material directly from a source, including another student, and/or failure to show where you found the material. The practice of plagiarism or other forms of dishonesty (such as submitting someone else's work as your own or cheating during an exam) will result in a failing grade for the course. **Students working together are expected to hand back separate and different assignments. Students who make their work available for plagiarism by others will suffer the same consequences**

**as students who plagiarized the work.** Thus, it is the student's responsibility to refrain from sharing his/her work with other students in the class.

### **How to Access this Online Course**

Students interested in this course need to register online by accessing WebReg from the WNC Home Page. Access to the WebCT Site will be available a week or so before the class actually starts. WebCT is username and password protected. A student's user name is the same as his/her WNC NetID. A student's password is his/her WNC W number. Students who do not know their username and/or password need to follow the directions found on the following site: [www.wnc.edu/webcampus/login.php](http://www.wnc.edu/webcampus/login.php) .

### **Updates and Changes to this Syllabus**

The instructor will be making changes to this syllabus until class starts on Monday, January 24, 2011. Students who print this syllabus before this date must make sure that they print it again on January 24. If changes are made after January 24, students will be notified with a CLASS ANNOUNCEMENT.