

**Professor:** Dr. Matthew Lachniet (pronounced "LOCK-neat")  
**Office:** 201-A Lilly Fong Geosciences (LFG)  
**Contact info:** e-mail: [matthew.lachniet@unlv.edu](mailto:matthew.lachniet@unlv.edu); Phone: 702-895-4388  
**Office Hours:** T/W 1:00 to 2:00 pm, and by appointment  
**Room and Time:** WHI Auditorium, T/R 10:00 – 11:15 am.  
**Required books:** *Text: Geosystems, 6<sup>th</sup> Ed., R.W. Christopherson. Prentice Hall, 689 pages.*  
 Available in the UNLV Bookstore, or by online subscription at <http://www.safarix.com/0131531174>  
**Class Website:** [http://www.unlv.edu/faculty/lachniet/Physical\\_Geography.html](http://www.unlv.edu/faculty/lachniet/Physical_Geography.html)  
**Textbook Website:** [http://wps.prenhall.com/esm\\_christopherson\\_geosystems\\_6](http://wps.prenhall.com/esm_christopherson_geosystems_6)

### Course Background

Physical Geography is a 3 credit survey course in the scientific understanding of the Earth's dynamic systems, and how these systems vary over the Earth. The goal of physical geography is to explain and explore Earth's systems – energy, air, water, climate, tectonics, landforms, rocks, soils, plants, ecosystems, and biomes in the spatial dimension. In the process of discovering Earth's systems we will attempt to understand the human-Earth relationship in an effort to create a complete view of our planet.

There are no prerequisites for GEOG 101. This course is aimed at students with an interest in the physical world around them, and students looking to fulfill the UNLV core science requirement. Students should want to take this course in order to understand the variability of our natural world – why is Las Vegas in a desert? What makes the Amazon rain forest so rainy? Why are there big mountains along the west coast of the Americas from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego? Where does our drinking water come from? Why do the winds blow from west to east in North America?

### Course Objective and Assignments

The objective of this course is to familiarize students with basic physical geographic concepts and information. The student will be expected to finish this course with a working knowledge of the four "Spheres": the Atmosphere, Hydrosphere, Lithosphere, and Biosphere.

Month	Week	Day	Date	Topic	Chapter
<b>August</b>	1	T	29	Essentials of Geography	1
		Th	31	Essentials of Geography	1
<b>September</b>	2	T	5	Solar Energy to Earth and the Seasons	2
		Th	7	Earth's Modern Atmosphere	3
	3	T	12	Atmosphere and Surface Energy Balances	4
		Th	14	Global Temperatures	5
	4	T	19	Atmospheric and Oceanic Circulations	6
		Th	21	<b>Wrap-up and Review Chapters 1-6</b>	
	5	T	26	<b>Exam 1 - Chapters 1-6</b>	
<b>October</b>		Th	28	Water and Atmospheric Moisture	7
	6	T	3	Weather	8
		Th	5	Water Resources	9
	7	T	10	Global Climate Systems	10
		Th	12	The Dynamic Planet	11
	8	T	17	Tectonics, Earthquakes, and Volcanism	12
		Th	19	<b>Wrap-up and Review Chapters 7-12</b>	
	9	T	24	<b>Exam 2 - Chapters 7-12</b>	
<b>November</b>		Th	26	Weathering, Karst Landscapes, and Mass Movement	13
	10	T	31	River Systems and Landforms	14
		Th	2	Eolian Processes and Arid Landscapes	15
	11	T	7	The Oceans, Coastal Processes and Landforms	16
		Th	9	Glacial and Periglacial Processes and Landforms	17
	12	T	14	<b>Wrap-up and Review Chapters 13-17</b>	
	Th	16	<b>Exam 3 - Chapters 13-17</b>		
<b>December</b>		T	21	The Geography of Soils	18
		Th	23	<b>No Class - Thanksgiving Break</b>	
	14	T	28	Ecosystem Essentials	19
		Th	30	Terrestrial Biomes	20
	15	T	5	Earth and the Human Denominator	21
		Th	7	<b>Review</b>	
	16	T	12	<b>FINAL EXAM, 10:10 a.m. to - 12:10 p.m. in WHI AUD</b>	

**Schedule:**

The schedule is tentative and is subject to change depending on our progress in the classroom. The instructor also reserves the right to change a lecture topic to reflect world events. The Exam dates, however, will remain fixed. **Keep in mind that ANYTHING in the chapters is fair game for exam questions, not just what I present in lecture.** It is in your best interest to actually read the assignments. Attend lectures to find out what topics I will emphasize on the exams.

**How do you succeed in this class?**

- a. Observe the world around you.
- b. Show up.
- b. Show up on time
- d. Show up prepared.
- e. Turn off or silence your cell-phone/pager/other noisy device.
- f. Pay attention
- g. Ask questions and participate
- h. Review/compare notes
- i. Utilize web resources
- j. Do your own work
- k. Use office hours (Not just before the final exam).

**Grading policy**

Final grades will be assigned according to the following schedule.

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Semester average</u>
A	93-100
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	Below 60

**Final grades will be computed as follows:**

Exams: **90%** (Exam I 25%, Exam II 25%, Exam III 25%, Cumulative Final Exam 25%)

Quizzes and other assignments: **10%** (Primarily quizzes, and in-class exercises)

## Logistics and Policies

### Participation

I expect that students will come to this class with very different backgrounds and levels of educational training. As a result, you may find some material difficult, feel that you are already familiar with some of the concepts, or have personal experiences that can inform us all. Whatever your situation, please share your position with us through class participation. Most importantly, however, if you are confused about a concept, **please ask questions** in class for clarification and further explanation. You will not be alone in your confusion. There are a variety of learning styles and I will attempt to present the material in ways that will be effective for all of you. If you do not feel comfortable asking questions in class, please see me after class, during office hours, or via e-mail.

### Attendance

It is important that you attend class daily because we cover a lot of material, and I will provide guidance for reading assignments and exam questions regularly. You are responsible for all material covered in lectures no matter what causes your absence. **Neither make-up lectures nor make-up exams will be given** except as specified below. Topics covered may vary from the schedule somewhat, but the exam dates remain fixed. If you are absent from a scheduled exam without a written medical, military, or university excuse, you will receive a zero for that exam.

### Cheating, Plagiarism, and Academic Dishonesty

You are required to be familiar with university policies and procedures in the current UNLV Undergraduate Catalog. (Fall 2006 – Spring 2008). Those policies are outlined in the section on Student Academic Misconduct (p. 63-66). To deter incidents of cheating and/or plagiarism this class employs a "zero tolerance" policy, meaning that if a student commits cheating or plagiarism they receive a grade of F for the class and a notation may be added to your transcript to indicate academic misconduct.

### Special Assistance

If you have a documented disability that requires assistance, you will need to go to Disability Services (DS) for coordination in your academic accommodations. DS is located within the Learning Enhancement Services office in the Reynolds Student Services Center, room 137. The DS phone number is 702-895-0866, or TDD 702-895-0652.

### Religious Holidays

A student missing a class or lab assignment because of observance of a religious holiday shall have the opportunity to make up missed work. You must notify me before absences.

### Nondiscrimination

The University of Nevada Las Vegas does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national or ethnic origin, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, or veteran status.

### Official Extracurricular Activity

All students who represent UNLV at any official extracurricular activity have the opportunity to make up an assignment. However, you must provide official written notification to me at least 1 week prior to the missed class(es).

### Learning Environment

The classroom is intended to be a place of learning, as specified in the UNLV Undergraduate Catalog under Classroom Conduct (p. 63). Any other activities which disrupt the class or interfere with the learning experience of others will not be tolerated. If these guidelines are not followed I may, as outlined in the University Catalog, initiate an administrative drop.

### Cell Phone Policy:

Cell phones have become an integral part of our society, but out of respect for your fellow students and your professor, please turn off all cell phones before entering class. Your peers' time is valuable, and please respect everyone's right to a disruption-free learning experience. It is disrupting to use cell phones or leave the room to answer a cell phone call while class is in session, so please practice respect for your fellow students.

### Copyright

The University requires all members of the University Community to familiarize themselves and to follow copyright and fair use requirements. **YOU ARE INDIVIDUALLY AND SOLELY RESPONSIBLE FOR VIOLATIONS OF COPYRIGHT AND FAIR USE LAWS. THE UNIVERSITY WILL NEITHER PROTECT NOR DEFEND YOU NOR ASSUME ANY RESPONSIBILITY FOR EMPLOYEE OR STUDENT VIOLATIONS OF FAIR USE LAWS.** Violations of copyright laws could subject you to federal and state civil penalties and criminal liability, as well as disciplinary action under University policies. To familiarize yourself with copyright and fair use policies, you are encouraged to visit the following website: <http://www.unlv.edu/committees/copyright/>.