Why Physical Geography?

Well, you know about the quakes in Japan and Haiti, right? What about in the US? And not California! A relatively recent quake in the States caused a major river to change directions.

And of course what about our New England weather! Why did we get a hurricane last summer. What’s this thing called a Nor’easter? And how does it affect us.

The big difference between Physical Geography and other lab science courses is that in Geography we look at both the natural landscape and the human one. It is sort of like combining psychology with biology, or economics with geology, or political science with chemistry. Geography does all that.

After all Geography is:

The study of people and their environments including the spatial distributions, movements and interactions.

If you are still reading this, move to the next page for the details of the course ....
Physical Geography (4 Credits)

CLASSROOM: Online
INSTRUCTOR: Robert S. Bristow, Ph.D.
OFFICE: Wilson 203, 572-5215, rbristow@westfield.ma.edu

Please direct all communications regarding this course through the web site (Plato)

OFFICE HOURS: Asynchronous (online) or by Appointment

GARP0102 PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY (4 CREDITS): Physical Geography is the study of the spatial variations of the physical phenomena on the surface of the Earth. It focuses on the geosystems of the Earth, including the four major “Spheres”: Atmosphere (weather, climatology), Lithosphere (landforms), Hydrosphere (water resources) and Biosphere (flora and fauna). The human-environmental interaction is emphasized. Laboratory and field experiments will explore the various spheres of the Earth and include map interpretation, remote sensing analysis, atmospheric studies, geomorphology investigation and other human-environment interactions. This course satisfies WSU lab Science core requirement. No prerequisites.

Course objectives:

1. Identify and understand the scientific theories and processes of the physical environment and the natural world.
2. Employs scientific methodology.
3. Recognize, understand and appreciate the ethical issues and societal impact of scientific endeavors.
4. Recognize and understand the relationships of scientific theories and concepts to human behavior and development.

Text: I use the text by McKnight and Hess. Physical Geography. 9th ed. Prentice Hall. But feel free to get any contemporary introductory Physical Geography text from Amazon or eBay to save $.


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<th>Goal</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Measurement</th>
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<td>Learns the basic vocabulary, history, major theories, and key figures in the fields of geography and planning.</td>
<td>Recognition and appropriate use of terms and context references to historical evolution of the field</td>
<td>Exams and labs that require application of terminology and integration of theory.</td>
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<td>Applies spatial analysis skills based on the fundamental concepts of physical, social and cultural geography</td>
<td>Demonstrates geographic literacy in the physical and human dimensions of geography</td>
<td>Place Location/ Outline maps, Quizzes. Classification, Organization, pattern Recognition/ i.e., Köppen’s climate Typology</td>
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Format: Online course where reading the text is important. Outline notes are provided online. Every two weeks there will be a multiple choice quiz on the previous chapters. A total of 6 quizzes are offered, and the top five will count toward final grade (200 Points). A final exam will include material from last three chapters as well as a general review of the entire course (100 Points). Quizzes and Test are timed.

Since this course includes a lab, lab assignments will be given throughout the semester and due every two weeks. Each lab is worth 40 points. Top 5 labs will count for a total of 200 points. Labs are due Sunday nights at midnight. See Online Calendar. There is no make up for labs or quizzes.

Grading:

A = 450 + points  
B = 400 - 449 points  
C = 350 - 399 points  
D = 300 - 349 points

Plus and minus grades are determined at end of semester.