

Geography 3980: Biogeography – Spring, 2021

Class times: M, W 3:55-5:15 pm
Classroom: Hopkins Hall, room 250
Instruction format: lecture

Instructor: Jim DeGrand
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Office: 0110 Derby Hall
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Office hours: 2:00 – 3:00 pm, M & W, or by appointment

Course Description (from the official OSU Course Catalogue):

In this course we examine “the patterns and processes responsible for the global distribution of Earth's flora and fauna; the inter-relationship between biota and soils; climate and topography will be emphasized.”

Course objectives

1. Become familiar with the wide range of concepts and theories that fall under the heading of biogeography. This will be achieved primarily through readings of the course textbook and presentations delivered in class. We will begin with the concept of a species' niche and the abiotic (soils, climate) and biotic factors (competition, predation, symbiosis, parasitism, etc) which determine it. We will then consider how evolution, working through time, allows species to adapt and develop to occupy these niches thus forming the communities, formations and biomes we observe today.
2. Further develop skills in oral presentation and in the analysis of scientific literature. This objective will be met through the student semester project (see below).

Course format:

This as an introductory course in Biogeography which is an extremely wide and diverse academic discipline. We will use lectures and material assigned through Carmen to deliver course content. The course will be divided into a series of modules, each approximately 2 weeks long, in which we will explore various aspects of biogeography. Each module will culminate with in-class student led discussions and an on-line (Carmen) quiz/exam. We will meet online for the first 2 weeks of the semester and in person in Hopkins Hall thereafter.

Required texts:

Biogeography: A Very Short Introduction by Mark Lomolino. This book is available online through the OSU Library.

Other papers, extracts from books and videos as assigned by me.

Student evaluation:

1. **End of module Quizzes/Exams/Exercises (56%).** There will be an assessment assigned for each of the course modules. These assessments will take the form of quizzes/exams or exercises administered through Carmen. The distinction between a quiz/exam and an exercise is that exercises will not be timed, quizzes/exams will be. All assessments are open-book. The format of the quizzes/exams will be varied and will generally include: matching, multiple choice, short answer and essay questions. The content of each quiz/exam will be discussed in class as we approach the end of each module.
2. **Semester project (25%).** Each student will complete a semester long project. Each project will culminate in some type of product to be submitted to me, a presentation to the class done at the end of the semester or both. See the attached Semester Project description for details on this assignment.
3. **Class discussion leadership (5%)** A portion of the final class session during each module will be devoted to a class discussion of the material assigned for that module. Students, working in groups of 2, will co-lead 6 of these discussions. You can check the list of modules on Carmen and sign up for the one you would like to do.

Your grade for this component of the course will be based on how well prepared you are to discuss the assigned material and how successful you are in encouraging an open discussion of the issues raised by or related to this material.

4. **Participation (14%).** I will take attendance on most days the class meets. 4 of the 14 percentage points for participation will be based solely on these attendance surveys. The remaining 10 percentage points will be based on my assessment of your participation in class activities: keeping up with the reading and with your semester project, being active in class discussions, lectures and during student presentations.

Attendance, late work, make-up exams, etc

I expect you to attend all lectures and remain in the classroom for the duration of the lecture. Missing class will likely result in a reduction in participation points and poorer scores on exams.

Each homework assignment will be associated with a due date and time. Any assignment received after this time will be considered late. Late submissions incur an immediate reduction of 10% from the score of the assignment. This penalty increases 10% per additional day the assignment is late. So, for example, an assignment due in class on a Wednesday which is turned in at 9:00 am on Friday morning would suffer a 20% deduction.

Absences and late work will not be penalized in the case of excused absences. Excused absences include: participation in a scheduled activity of an official University organization, verifiable confining illness, verifiable family emergencies, subpoenas, jury duty, and military service. If you miss a presentation or homework assignment deadline for any of these reasons, you must provide me with verifiable documentation (a note from your University organization, a doctor's note, etc.). The documentation must include a name and a telephone number for someone who can explain your absence.

I concur with the statements on OSU's Student Health Service's website that most illnesses (colds, dizziness, headaches, nausea, etc) that keep students out of the classroom do not require an office visit or medical treatment. Instead, these conditions are typically best treated through self-care. In recognition of this, I will not require a note from a health care provider before considering an absence to be excusable based on illness. What I absolutely insist on is timely communication from you informing me as to the reason for your absence. Timely, in this instance, means on the same day as your absence. This communication will initiate a dialog between us in which we will determine whether an absence is to be excused or not.

If you miss an assignment deadline, and you can provide valid documentation, I will give you an extra 24 hours to hand in the assignment. After 24 hours, the original late penalty procedure is restarted.

Class protocols

This will be a rewarding and engaging class, but before we get started please read the following protocols which hold, without exception, for all enrolled students. These are designed to make your learning experience more enjoyable. I take teaching very seriously, and I would like you to take learning equally so.

1. Cell phones, smart phones and other mobile communication devices: I will use the online service TopHat to track attendance. Other than this, there is no need for a smart phone during class so their use is prohibited. Please turn off or silence your devices before the class starts. If you use your mobile device or if your cell rings in class, I will ask you to leave the classroom for the remainder of the lecture period. There will be no exceptions to this rule.
2. If you are using a laptop, tablet or another portable computing device, my expectation is that you are using it to take notes. Using your portable devices for other reasons (surfing, email, videos) is a distraction for you and your peers. If I detect that you are using your tablet and/or laptop for any of these other activities, I will ask you to leave the classroom for the remainder of the lecture period. There will be no exceptions to this rule.
3. I welcome your active participation during class. It is my responsibility to ensure that students' participation in class is orderly and respectful. If your participation disrupts the class, or is not respectful to me or your peers, I will ask you to leave the classroom for the lecture period and to meet with me afterwards to discuss your enrollment in the class.

4. Slides I present in class will be posted to our Carmen site on a regular basis. This does not mean that you are free to miss class. There may be material presented in class that does not appear on the lecture slides. If you miss a class, it is highly recommended that you get a full set of notes from one of your colleagues. The module assessments are designed explicitly for students who attend class regularly.

Academic misconduct

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct <http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/>.

Disability Services

The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Student Life Disability Services. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. SLDS contact information: slds@osu.edu; 614-292-3307; slds.osu.edu; 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue.

Classroom environment: statements on sexual violence/harassment and diversity

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories (e.g., race). If you or someone you know has been sexually harassed or assaulted, you may find the appropriate resources at <http://titleix.osu.edu> or by contacting the Ohio State Title IX Coordinator, Kellie Brennan, at titleix@osu.edu

The Ohio State University affirms the importance and value of diversity in the student body. Our programs and curricula reflect our multicultural society and global economy and seek to provide opportunities for students to learn more about persons who are different from them. We are committed to maintaining a community that recognizes and values the inherent worth and dignity of every person; fosters sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect among each member of our community; and encourages each individual to strive to reach his or her own potential. Discrimination against any individual based upon protected status, which is defined as age, color, disability, gender identity or expression, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status, is prohibited.