

Geography 3980: Biogeography – Spring, 2019

Class times: M, W 3:55-5:15 pm
Classroom: Derby Hall, room 0070
Instruction format: lecture

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Office hours: 11 am - noon, 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 lectures delivered in class. We will begin with the concept of a specie’s 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. Gain familiarity with a few of the tools routinely used in obtaining and analyzing biogeographic data. This objective will be addressed through the homework assignments.
3. 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:

I regard this as an introductory course in Biogeography which is an extremely wide and diverse academic discipline. As such, we will make extensive use of the course textbook which provides an excellent survey of the biogeographic concepts and topics. Most class meetings will consist of discussions of the reading assignments and presentations from me designed to elucidate, elaborate or in some manner extend the material contained in the readings. We will also dedicate some class meetings to review sessions, exams, discussion of homework assignments, student presentations and a trip to the OSU Museum of Biodiversity.

Required texts:

Biogeography: Biological Diversity Across Space and Time by Lomolino, Riddle and Whittaker, 5th edition. This book should be available at the Gateway Barnes and Noble bookstore. Note that this book is also available in “used” condition online for considerably reduced price.

Student evaluation:

1. **Exams (30%).** There will be 2 mid-term exams (see schedule for dates/times). The exam format will be mixed and will likely include: matching, multiple choice, short answer and essay questions. Exam questions will reflect the material covered in reading assignments and in-class presentations. The exams will emphasize students’ abilities to construct arguments based on the principles discussed in class. The content of each exam will be discussed in detail in class during the schedule review sessions (see schedule below).
2. **Homework assignments (24%).** There will be 2 homework assignments, covering various aspects of the course, to be done individually. The assignments will be explained in detail in class as we approach them during the semester

3. **Reading responses (15%).** Students are responsible for keeping up with a weekly schedule of readings from the textbook. For each reading assignment students will complete a response in one of the forms described in the attached Reading Response Assignment description.
4. **Semester project (25%).** Each student will complete a semester long project. See the attached Semester Project description for details on this assignment.
5. **Participation (6%).** I will take attendance on most days the class meets (I say “most” as I will undoubtedly forget to pass the attendance sheet around on at least a couple of days). 4 of the 6 percentage points for participation will be based solely on these attendance surveys. The final 2% 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, lecture 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 accept the Student Health Service’s Absence Excuse Form, available at <https://shs.osu.edu/appointments/absence-excuse/> as the beginning of a dialog to determine whether an absence due to illness is to be excused.

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.

If you miss a midterm exam or the final exam, and if you can provide valid documentation which explains your absence (as above), the make-up exam must be written within one week (seven days) of the originally scheduled exam. If you do not write the missed exam within the seven day grace period, you will receive no grade (i.e., 0%) for it.

Class protocols (with thanks to Mat Coleman)

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. The use of cell phones, smart phones and other mobile communication devices in class is disruptive to your colleagues’ learning. The use of these devices is prohibited during class. Please turn off 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 more importantly, for 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 the lectures in the form of questions regarding the material at hand. 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. I will post a condensed version of the lecture slides for each class at the end of every week. This does not mean that you are free to miss class. I will present examples and details in class that will 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 exams 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.