

# GEO 201.101 Geography Orientation

Tuesdays, 2:00 – 3:30 pm, LSCB 18, Fall 2011

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**Office Hours:** 1:00 – 2:30 pm Mondays & Wednesdays; 4:30 – 5:30 pm Mondays;  
10:00 – 12:00pm Tuesdays; or by appointment (contact me via email to set up time)

**Course Description:** This 1-credit hour course will cover topics that are important to geography students, including: which geography courses to choose, the major sub-disciplines of geography, and career choices available for geography majors. You will meet the Geography faculty as they give brief overviews of the courses they teach and their research interests. Short field trips, which will generally take place during the class time, are included in the course and will showcase examples of the research interests of faculty members.

**Objectives:** The objective of the course is to introduce students to the study of geography, specifically the topics of courses taught by the Geography faculty in the Department of Earth Sciences. The students will be introduced to the Geography faculty members. Students will learn about the geography courses taught by each faculty member. Additionally, students will learn about career options for geographers.

**Course Content** (see schedule for details): Geography as a discipline offers students a wide range of topics to study. This course will briefly introduce students to: biogeography, soil geography, historical geography, GIS, remote sensing, geomorphology, extreme weather/hazards, mountain geography, and protected lands. We will also look at career options for geographers and graduate school opportunities.

**Course Material:** Course material will be provided to students. Students are responsible to reading the material and contribute their thoughts about the readings in class conversations. Supplemental readings may be assigned and are the student's responsibility to acquire and read. This course utilizes the Internet and you will need to access it several times during the course to complete the assignments.

**Attendance and classroom policies:** Students are expected to attend, be on time, and stay for ALL classes. Twenty-nine percent (or 70 points) of the course grade is based on your attendance. You will be marked as absent if you are late or leave early. During class (including field trips), there is no smoking or chewing tobacco, and cell phones are to be turned off and put away. You are expected to treat your classmates, guest speakers, and professor with courtesy and respect.

**Participation:** Students are expected to take part in the discussion about each week's topic, including their likes and dislikes about the readings, their opinions on the research of each sub-discipline, asking the guest speakers relevant questions, and to relate the sub-discipline to nonacademic careers. Twenty-nine percent of the course grade (70 points) is based on participation. Students who never voice a thought, opinion, or ask a question throughout the class cannot expect to be given points for participation.

**Assignments:** Students are required to complete five assignments. Assignment topics will be given the week before the assignment is due. The assignments are each worth 8.4% of the course grade (20 points each). All assignments are to be typed in a word processor software package (i.e. Microsoft Word) in 12-point font, Times New Roman. The assignments should have a 1-inch margin around the text and be double-spaced. No hand written assignments will be accepted. To receive full credit, assignments must be turned in on the announced due date unless other arrangements have been made IN ADVANCE. Late assignments lose 10% per day, including weekends. Assignments are due at the beginning of class unless otherwise noted.

<b>Grading Breakdown</b>		
<b>Task</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>Approx. Percentage</b>
Written assignments (5)	100 (20 points each)	42 (~8.4% each)
Participation/discussion	70	29
Attendance	70	29
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100%</b>

The *final* grades will be determined strictly based on the following rules and percentages:

A 100 to 90    B 89 to 80    C 79 to 70    D 69 to 60    F < 60%

**Make-up policy:** If you have a valid excuse on missing class, you must contact me via email either **before** the class or **within** 24 hours after a class to make arrangements on completing the missed material. All legitimate excuses require written validation. Valid excuses include: illness (your's or a dependent's), a death in the immediate family, or participating in a university-sponsored event. Only exceptional excuses from work-related absences are accepted. *Participation points cannot be made up.*

**Students with disabilities:** The University of South Alabama provides reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals with disabilities. If you have a specific disability that qualifies you for academic accommodations, please notify me and provide certification from Disability Services (Office of Special Student Services). The Office of Special Student Services is currently located in the PTCL building, at 5828 Old Shell Rd (phone: 460-7212). The Office of Special Student Services will certify a disability and advise faculty members of reasonable accommodations.

**Academic honesty policy:** The University of South Alabama is committed to the fundamental value of academic honesty. The student handbook, The Lowdown, defines plagiarism as one form of academic misconduct which is "subject to investigation and disciplinary action through appropriate university procedures." Plagiarism is using somebody else's ideas and/or words in your writing without correctly identifying the sources. As one resource for helping you avoid plagiarism, your written work in this class may be submitted to Turnitin.com, or a similar detection method, for an evaluation of the originality of your ideas and proper use and attribution of sources. Assignments submitted to Turnitin.com will be included as source documents in a restricted access database solely for the purpose of detecting possible plagiarism of such documents. As part of this process, you may be required to submit electronic as well as hard copies of your writing. By taking this course, you agree that all assignments may be subject to some form of originality review. A paper not submitted according to procedures and format set by the instructor may be penalized or may not be accepted at all.

**Class meeting times and places:** Occasionally, we may meet at places other than in our classroom. You will be given adequate notice about any changes in the usual meeting place. If possible, a optional field trip may be scheduled. Possible dates for the trip will be discussed during class.

**Course modifications:** The instructor may need to change the number and frequency of assignments and assigned readings or topics, as circumstances dictate (inclement weather, scheduling conflicts, etc). Additionally, the order of appearance of the speakers may change due to scheduling conflicts. Students will receive at least 48 hours notice *if possible* of such changes. The notice **may** be sent via email to your Jaguar email account.

**Student privacy:** In accordance with University Policy and federal law, I can only discuss your grades in the course in person. This means I cannot email your grades (even if you email me requesting your grades) or discuss your grades over the telephone. To talk with me about your grades, please come to see me during my office hours or set up an appointment to see me.

**Tentative schedule\***

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Speakers</b>	<b>Readings</b>	<b>Assignments</b>
Aug 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Intro, Being a geographer, hazards and geomorphology	Dr. Carol Sawyer	“Why Study Geography?” by Viles & Rogers	
Aug 30 <sup>th</sup>	The world of geography	Dr. Glenn Sebastian	“The Big Questions in Geography” by Cutter et al.	Assignment 1 due
Sept 6 <sup>th</sup>	Biogeography and Alabama geography Soil geography and Latin America	Dr. Mimi Fearn Dr. Roy Ryder	“Geographers and Government Employment” by Warf	Assignment 2 due
Sept 13 <sup>th</sup>	Historical geography, Protected Lands	Dr. Lary Dilsaver	“Geography’s Worlds” by C. Gregory Knight	Assignment 3 due
Sept 20 <sup>th</sup>	Geographic Information Science & Remote Sensing	Ms. Karen Jordan Mr. Sam Stutsman	“Applications of Geographic Concepts & Methods” by Palm & Brazel	Assignment 4 due
Sept 27 <sup>th</sup>	Your future Course wrap-up.	TBA	“Expose Yourself to Geography Research” by Gould	Assignment 5 due

**\*Schedule may be adjusted as the course progresses. Students will be notified of any changes.**