J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College
Course Outline

Course Prefix and Number: GEO 200 Credits: 3

Course Title: Introduction to Physical Geography

Course Description:

Examines the global patterns and processes of the atmosphere, biosphere, lithosphere, and hydrosphere. Explores Earth's physical systems and the interrelationships among them through studying Earth-Sun geometry, climate and weather phenomena, landforms, biomes, and environmental change. Lecture 3 hours. Total 3 hours per week. 3 credits

General Course Purpose:

This course can be used to satisfy the Social/Behavioral Science elective for all AS and AA transfer degrees. It is also for anyone interested in learning more about physical geography.

Course Prerequisites and Co-requisites:

None

Student Learning Outcomes:
Upon completing the course, the student will be able to

- Understand the global energy budget and the role of atmospheric and oceanic circulation in redistributing solar energy;
- Understand how climate affects the formation and distribution of landforms;
- Understand how climate and soil types affect the distribution of life on Earth;
- Understand the role of disturbance and natural hazards in the global ecosystem;
- Understand and interpret complex materials;
- Weigh evidence and decide if generalizations or conclusions based on the given data are warranted;
- Access needed information effectively and efficiently;
- Use logical and mathematical reasoning within the context of various disciplines; and
- Reason by deduction, induction, and analogy.

Major Topics to Be Included:

The course will cover the patterns of physical phenomena on the Earth's surface and the processes that create those patterns. They include:

- Atmospheric phenomena: including Earth-sun relations, climate classification and weather phenomena
- Hydro-spherical phenomena: including characteristics of oceans, estuaries, rivers, and lakes
- Landforms: including the characteristics and distribution of characteristic features of the land surface
- Soils: including the distribution of soil types
- Bio-geographic phenomena: including patterns of plant and animal distributions and the factors that limit those distributions.

Effective Date/Updated: May 1, 2023