

GEOG 103 – Our Dynamic Planet
WKU Spring 2023

Location: Online course- Full Semester

Instructor: Dr. Jason Polk

E-mail: jason.polk@wku.edu

Office Phone: 270-745-5015

Office Hours: Th 3-4pm
or email anytime for an
appt. Discussion Boards also
available on Blackboard.

Required Materials

No textbook required. *Materials will be provided/required via Blackboard and other online sources.

Course Description

Our Dynamic Planet will introduce the spatial dimension of Earth's dynamic systems with a special emphasis on how their many interrelationships affect humans and their environment. These systems include air, water, weather, climate, tectonics, landforms, and ecosystems. I will do my best to introduce modern and exciting topics related to the natural world and cater to a variety of interests related to the main topics of this course! Although introductory in nature, I expect everyone to work hard and have a general understanding of the physical environment.

NOTE: For all new students effective from Fall 2014 (those attending WKU for the first time Fall 2014 or thereafter), the new Colonnade program requirements are in effect. For returning students (those previously enrolled at WKU prior to Fall 2014) the old General Education requirements remain in effect. GEOG 103 satisfies the Colonnade Natural Science requirement (Explorations, non-lab). GEOG 103 also satisfies the General Education Category D Science (non-lab) for returning students and is equivalent to GEOG 100 under the old Gen Ed program.

This course fulfills the Colonnade Program's requirements for the Natural and Physical Sciences subcategory of the Explorations Category. As part of that program, GEOG 103 has the following learning objectives:

Students will demonstrate the ability to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the methods of science inquiry.
2. Explain basic concepts and principles in one or more of the sciences.
3. Apply scientific principles to interpret and make predictions in one or more of the sciences.
4. Explain how scientific principles relate to issues of personal and/or public importance

The U.S. Department of Education requires that distance education courses must include regular and substantive interaction between students and faculty. For more information about Regular and Substantive Interaction at WKU, please visit the [Regular and Substantive Interaction in Online and Distance Learning webpage](#).

In this course, regular and substantive interaction will take place in the following ways:

- Weekly, asynchronous discussion boards with faculty and students,
- Regular synchronous meetings for review held for each exam,
- Weekly announcements, and
- Timely and detailed feedback on assignments provided within one week of submission.

Course Objectives

The course objectives for GEOG 103 are designed to integrate fully with the Colonnade Program. Upon successfully completing GEOG 103, you will be able to:

- Show an understanding of the scientific method and knowledge of natural science and its relevance in our lives.
- Discuss the mechanisms of heat transfer and how they relate to the Earth's energy balance.
- Describe how Earth-sun relationships affect the receipt and distribution of solar energy during the year and how these changes produce the seasons.
- Outline the major latitudinal pressure systems and wind belts and their influence on the circulation of global winds and ocean currents.
- Describe how the role of water vapor and carbon dioxide produce the greenhouse effect and discuss the key scientific issues associated with climate change.
- Describe all four types of fronts and the types of weather that occur with their passage.
- Explain the differences between weather and climate, and be aware of the factors that make weather forecasting a complex process.
- Classify the major categories of rocks (igneous, sedimentary, and metamorphic) and describe the rock cycle.
- Discuss the theory of plate tectonics and provide supporting evidence.
- Explain the development of ocean basins and describe major features of continental margins and the ocean floor.
- Discuss the importance of the oceans in the Earth system (i.e., aspects of carbon cycling, productivity, and ocean circulation).
- Associate the different types of faults with the type of tectonic force responsible for them.
- Describe the spatial and temporal risk associated with various natural hazards such as hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, and volcanoes.
- Explain the principal differences among the various physical and chemical weathering processes.
- Recognize some of the landforms and landscape features created by mass wasting.
- Distinguish between fluvial, eolian, and glacial processes and recognize some of the landforms and landscape features created by each.
- Describe basic groundwater movement and recognize various karst features.

Course Policies

- **Course Format-** This course is a **web-based, full semester course** and will be taught online through Blackboard with guided units, reviews (via Zoom), and deadlines for completion of Exams and Assignments. This course will consist of lecture PPTs, readings, videos, map work, and other learning tools meant to engage the student in the material and enhance the learning process.
- **Scheduled OPTIONAL Zoom Meetings Times-**There are four (4) Zoom meetings for this course that will be scheduled prior to the start of the course. These are **OPTIONAL reviews** that will also be recorded and placed on BB.
- **Absences/Participation-** Failure to meet class deadlines will negatively impact your grade, as exam questions may be drawn from lectures and class discussion.
- **Blackboard-** I will be using Blackboard, which is an online "classroom" that allows me to post your grades, assignment, notes, etc. The site can be reached through your WKU portal and at <https://wku.blackboard.com/> and you will need to obtain a login if you don't have one already. I will post class lecture materials, cancellations, schedule changes,

assignments, grades, etc. on the site for you to access. Any class correspondence will be through **your official WKU e-mail address only!**

- **Technology Requirements-** You must have access to a reliable Internet connection. It is suggested that Mozilla Firefox or Google Chrome are used as the main browser, as Blackboard often has trouble with Internet Explorer.
- **Email policy-** The best and most efficient way to contact me is through email. Email is also the primary mechanism through which I have to communicate with you, so please make sure that you regularly check your Topper email account throughout the term
- **Assignments-** There will be several assignments throughout the semester that you will complete, ranging from video assignments to outside projects. These must be typewritten and turned in on time. **NO LATE** assignments will be accepted without prior approval from the instructor and/or a valid excuse (it better be legit!). Additionally, some assignments will be in-class only, with **NO MAKE UPS** permitted without a documented excuse for absence approved **PRIOR** to the start of class. This policy will be strictly enforced.
- **Exams-** If you are absent for exams, you will receive a score of zero. **No make-up exams** will be allowed, except for students in extreme circumstances and only at the discretion of the instructor and with a valid excuse (i.e. doctor's note, obituary, etc.). Approximately 50% of each exam will be material covered in both lecture and outside reading and 50% of each exam will be material covered only in the lecture (mainly from slides, videos). There occasionally may be material on the exam covered only in the text or lecture. If a student has a valid excuse for missing an exam, then taking a make-up is permitted. **The instructor must be notified before the exam ASAP.** The make-up **MUST be taken within 48 hours** of the regularly scheduled exam. Extensions will be granted only for very extenuating circumstances. It is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor directly before the exam to inform them of the absence. It is also the student's responsibility to schedule the make-up. The Final exam will **NOT** be comprehensive.

Evaluation & Grading

Grades will be broken down as follows (subject to change as needed):

Exams (3 x 25 pts each) =	75 pts
Assignments	25 pts
Final Exam (25 points)	25 pts
Possible TOTAL =	125 points

Your final grade will be based on the number of points you have achieved out of the total available (i.e. NUMBER Pts Earned / Possible TOTAL (125) = Final Grade). There will be no "curving" or "rounding" of the points or grades.

Grades will be given in the following points/percentages:

113-125 pts	(90 – 100%)	A
101-112 pts	(80 – 89%)	B
88-100 pts	(70 – 79%)	C
75-87 pts	(60 – 69%)	D
0-74 pts	(0 – 59%)	F

Grades of Incomplete (X) will only be given if, due to circumstances beyond the control of the student, all but a small portion of the coursework is left incomplete by the student and then an “X” will be given at the instructor’s discretion.

- **Assignments-** Assignments will consist of discussion board questions, video questions, outside projects, and other exercises. They will be used to help you better understand certain topics covered in the course.
- **Exams-** There will be four (4) mandatory exams for this class. There will be a review session for each exam. The format may be M/C, short answer, matching, true/false, etc. and will cover certain sets of material. The final is NOT comprehensive.
- **Missed Exams-** See above policies on assignments and exams.

Class Schedule

The Department of Earth, Environmental, and Atmospheric Sciences strictly adheres to University policies, procedures, and deadlines regarding student schedule changes. It is the sole responsibility of the student to meet all deadlines in regard to adding, dropping, or changing the status of a course. Only in exceptional cases will a deadline be waived. The Student Schedule form requires a written description of the extenuating circumstances involved and the attachment of appropriate documentation. Poor academic performance, general malaise, or undocumented general stress factors are not considered as legitimate circumstances.

Ogden Student Course Attendance Statement

The faculty and staff of Ogden College of Science and Engineering are committed to providing you with learning experiences and opportunities. You must assume ownership of your education and be an active participant in the classroom and laboratory to take advantage of these opportunities. **Active participation requires you to attend.** Scientific studies have shown that attendance during scheduled classroom and laboratory meetings is directly correlated to your performance on assignments and exams and the potential to earn higher grades. Additionally, if you do not regularly attend class, you are missing important information about course topics, due dates, and assignment details that are crucial to your success in the course. Therefore, as a student enrolled in an Ogden course, you are expected to attend every class meeting and to inform your instructor regarding the reasons for any absences as soon as practical. Your instructor may incorporate class attendance/participation as part of the grading criteria.

University Policies

The Learning Center

(TLC) is located in the Academic Advising & Retention Center, DUC-A330) should you require academic assistance with this course (writing etc.), or any other course. TLC tutors in most major undergraduate subjects and course level are available throughout the week. To make an appointment, or to request tutor for a specific class, call 745-6254 or stop by DUC A330. Log on to the TLC’s website at www.wku.edu/tlc to learn more about the center. The hours for TLC are as follows: Mon-Thur. 8 am to 9 pm, Fri. 8 am to 4 pm, Sat. the center is closed but is open Sundays from 4 pm to 9 pm.

Academic Dishonesty

WKU adheres to a strict policy against plagiarism and cheating (see Scholastic Dishonesty Code in your Handbook). Academic dishonesty of any type will not be tolerated and the appropriate penalties will be faced by anyone who violates this policy.

Writing Center Assistance

The Writing Center has locations in Cherry Hall 123 and in the Commons at Cravens Library on the Bowling Green campus. The Glasgow Writing Center is located in room 163 on the Glasgow campus. The Writing Center also offers online consultations for students who live at a distance or who cannot visit during our operating hours. Our writing tutors have been trained to provide helpful feedback to students at all phases of a writing project: they can help you brainstorm ideas, structure your essay, clarify your purpose, strengthen your support, and edit for clarity and correctness. But they will not revise or edit the paper for you. See instructions on the website (www.wku.edu/writingcenter) for making online or face-to-face appointments. Or call (270) 745-5719 during our operating hours (also listed on our website) for help scheduling an appointment. More information about the Glasgow Writing Center hours can be found at the website: <http://wku.edu/startcenter/writingcenter.php>

Western Kentucky University (WKU) is committed to supporting faculty, staff and students by upholding WKU's Title IX Sexual Misconduct/Assault Policy (#0.2070) at <https://wku.edu/eoo/documents/titleix/wkutitleixpolicyandgrievanceprocedure.pdf> and

Discrimination and Harassment Policy (#0.2040) at https://wku.edu/policies/hr_policies/2040_discrimination_harassment_policy.pdf.

Under these policies, discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct based on sex/gender are prohibited. If you experience an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator, Andrea Anderson, 270-745-5398 or Title IX Investigators, Michael Crowe, 270-745-5429 or Joshua Hayes, 270-745-5121.

Please note that while you may report an incident of sex/gender based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct to a faculty member, WKU faculty are "Responsible Employees" of the University and **MUST** report what you share to WKU's Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator. If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, you may contact WKU's Counseling and Testing Center at 270-745-3159.

In compliance with University policy, students with disabilities who require academic and/or auxiliary accommodations for this course must contact the Student Accessibility Resource Center located in Downing Student Union, 1074. SARC can be reached by phone number at 270-745-5004 [270-745-3030 TTY] or via email at sarc.connect@wku.edu. Please do not request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a faculty notification letter (FNL) from The Student Accessibility Resource Center.