

GEOG 227: Our Vulnerable Planet
Web Class: all online
Office Location: EST 428
Office Phone #: (270)745-2407

Spring 2022 – Bi-term
Instructor: Jill Brown
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“Everything has to do with geography.” – Judy Martz

***Bi-term course meets second half of the semester - start date: March 21st, 2022.**

***Online asynchronous course: all work is done online and is to be submitted by the due date.**

OFFICE HOURS: M & W 9-10am - Other times available by appointment over zoom or in person.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Students in Our Vulnerable Planet will understand the physical processes behind and the spatial dimension of anthropogenic hazards with a special emphasis on how the hazards affect the 7 billion people on Earth and the ecosystems that support them. The semester will conclude with a discussion of how predicted global change may affect the risk and severity of some of these hazards in the future.

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” - Nelson Mandela

COLONNADE PROGRAM: This course fulfills the Colonnade Program’s requirement for Connections, Systems subcategory. To receive Colonnade credit, you must have 21 hours of Foundations and/or Explorations courses, or junior status. You cannot have taken a previous Connections course in the GEOG discipline and still receive Colonnade credit for this course.

COLONNADE LEARNING OBJECTIVES: This course fulfills Colonnade Program’s requirements for the Systems subcategory of the Connections Category. As part of that program, GEOG 227 has the following learning objectives: 1. Analyze how systems evolve; 2. Compare the study of individual components to the analysis of entire systems; 3. Evaluate how system-level thinking informs decision-making, public policy, and/or the sustainability of the system itself.

REQUIRED TEXT & READING ASSIGNMENTS: The assigned book is not a typical textbook and you should be able to find an used copy: McNeill, J.R. and Engelke, Peter. 2014. *The Great Acceleration: An Environmental History of the Anthropocene since 1945*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Resources will also be posted on Blackboard, and include journal articles, podcasts, videos, websites, maps and other types of media. Students will aid in acquiring resources for the course. Resources will show up on the tests.

“The reading of all good books is like a conversation with the finest minds of past centuries.” – Rene Descartes

GRADING SCALE: Grade is determined using a percentage system.

A=90-100% B=80-90% C=70-79% D=60-69% F=59% and lower.

GRADE DETERMINATION:

3 Exams 75%

Unit Assignments 15%

Discussion Boards 10%

“An investment in knowledge pays the best interest.” – Benjamin Franklin

Exams: 75% of grade - There will be 3 exams. Each exam will concentrate on the material learned during that section. However, due to the cumulative nature of some of the material, each exam will require knowledge gained from previous sections. Any of the following types of questions could be on the exams: multiple choice, multiple answer, matching, fill-in-the-blank, ordering, short answer, examples, essays, and place locations on a map. Schedule time in a quiet place without interruptions and good internet for the exam.

UNIT ASSIGNMENTS: 15% of grade – There will be a variety of online assignments that correlate with the course material.

DISCUSSION BOARDS: 10% of grade – Discussion board assignments with an interaction component will be used to discuss anthropogenic hazards that you are interested in researching. A variety of anthropogenic hazards will be discussed regarding the following aspects:

1. Technical/scientific aspects of the anthropogenic hazard.
2. A discussion of a specific occurrence of an anthropogenic hazard.
3. A discussion of how predicted global environmental change may affect the risk and severity of these hazards.

Discussion board will also be used for exam reviews.

“When ideas are shared, they don’t add up, they multiply.” – John Lehrer

PLACE LOCATIONS & INTERNATIONAL CONTENT: This course provides students with opportunities to explore the world, with the United States and across the world. The place locations discussed in class lectures, resources, and assignments could show up on the exams.

“The world is a book, and those who do not travel, read only a page.” – Saint Augustine

POLICIES FOR MAKING UP MISSED WORK:

Exam make-up policy: Students who miss an exam must adhere to the following criteria in order to have an individual make-up exam:

1. Instructor must be notified before the scheduled exam takes place.
2. Exam must be made up within 3 days of the missed exam.
3. Student must have a valid excuse for missing the exam. Validity is up to the instructor.

Students who do not adhere to the above criteria will take a full-semester comprehensive final at the scheduled final exam time. The grade of the comprehensive final will count as two grades, the final exam and the missed exam.

Discussion Boards: Anthropogenic hazard discussion boards are accepted up to 3 days late for half credit. Exam review discussion boards turn off 10 minutes before the exam opens and cannot be turned in late.

Unit Assignments: Unit assignments are accepted up to 3 days late for half credit.

“Action is the foundational key to all success.” – Pablo Picasso

TECHNOLOGY: Students should have basic computer skills, be able to navigate on the Internet, and be able to send and receive e-mails.

Blackboard: Blackboard will be used for announcements, PowerPoints, handouts, and grades, among other things. Grades are available on Blackboard, but the instructor keeps a copy of the official grades for each student.

E-mail: Be sure to have access to your WKU e-mail address. This form of communication will be used to contact individuals during the semester. All students should be familiar with proper email etiquette,

such as addressing the recipient (Ms. Brown), using correct grammar and spelling, and signing your name. E-mails are answered Monday through Friday during office hours.

Submitting Questions Electronically: Questions that apply to the whole class should be submitted through discussion board in the general Q & A (question and answer) forum in Blackboard. Students can answer each other's questions on discussion board. Examples of questions that apply to the whole class include: questions regarding assignments, the exams, and lecture material. Questions that apply only to you should be submitted via e-mail; for example: questions regarding grades or absences.

DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR POLICY: Be respectful during discussion boards. Besides being rude, this type of behavior disrupts the sharing of knowledge. Disruptive behavior will evoke one warning, then one conference, then a written notification that the person is violating the intellectual integrity of the class, and then the student will be permanently removed from the classroom.

CHEATING/ACADEMIC DISHONESTY: There is ZERO tolerance for cheating. Students that are caught cheating will be dropped from the course with an F. This includes cheating on tests, copying another student's homework, forged excuses, and plagiarism in written papers. When writing a paper, copying another person's work without giving credit is PLAGIARISM (this includes photographs, written words, and another student's paper). A good rule of thumb is not to use more than three consecutive words of another's work and rephrase the rest of the ideas into your own words.

GEOG 227 LEARNING OBJECTIVES: The course objectives for GEOG 227 are designed to integrate fully with the Colonnade Program. Upon successfully completing GEOG 227, you will be able to gain an understanding of:

- The physical processes responsible for anthropogenic hazards, including climate change, desertification, deforestation, urban sprawl, and air and water pollution.
- The geographic distribution of anthropogenic hazards and the frequency that they occur.
- How society evaluates and confronts the dangers posed by these anthropogenic hazards from a political, social and ethical perspective.
- How predicted global change may affect the risk and severity of these hazards in the future.

COURSE TOPICS:

- 1 Intro: Systems and Anthropogenic Hazards
- 2 Energy
- 3 Population Growth & Need for Food
Exam
- 4 Climate
- 5 Biodiversity
- 6 Cities and Urban Sprawl
Exam
- 7 Globalization, Economy, and Consumerism
- 8 War and Cold War
- 9 Environmental Culture
- 10 Human Health and the Environment
Exam

**“We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them.”
– Albert Einstein**

UNIVERSITY POLICIES:

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.

SCHEDULE CHANGE POLICY: The student is responsible for meeting all deadlines in regard to adding, dropping, or changing the status of a course. Deadlines will be waived only in exceptional cases. The student schedule exception appeal form shall be used to initiate all waivers. This form requires a written attachment of appropriate documentation. Poor academic performance, general malaise, or undocumented general stress factors are not considered as legitimate circumstances. The last day to withdraw from a course with a W is listed on the academic calendar.

ADA ACCOMMODATION: 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, Room 1074. The 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.

TITLE IX/Discrimination & Harassment: Western Kentucky University (WKU) is committed to supporting faculty, staff and students by upholding WKU's [Sex and Gender-Based Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation](#) (#0.070) and [Discrimination and Harassment Policy](#) (#0.2040). 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, Deborah Wilkins, 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.

WKU Statement on COVID-19: All students are strongly encouraged to [get the COVID-19 vaccine](#). Out of respect for the health and safety of the WKU community and in adherence with CDC guidelines and practices of all public universities and colleges in [Kentucky](#), the University requires that a cloth face covering (reusable or disposable) that covers both the nose and mouth must be worn at all times when in public areas within all buildings. Students must properly wear face coverings while in class regardless of the room size or the nature of the classroom activities. Students who fail to wear a face covering as required will be in violation of the WKU Student Code of Conduct and will be asked to comply or will face disciplinary action, including possible dismissal from the

University. Accommodations can be requested in special cases through the Student Accessibility and Resource Center (**SARC**): [270-745-5004](tel:270-745-5004) (voice), [270-745-3030](tel:270-745-3030) (TTY), or [270-288-0597](tel:270-288-0597) (video).

All students must immediately report a positive Covid-19 test result or close contact with a person who has tested positive to the Covid-19 Assistance Line at 270-745-2019. The assistance line is available to answer questions regarding any Covid-19 related issue. This guidance is subject to change based on requirements set forth by public health agencies or the office of the governor. Please refer to the Healthy on the Hill website for the most current information. www.wku.edu/healthyonthehill

COURSE SCHEDULE: The schedule and procedures in this course are subject to change according to class progress.

IMPORTANT CLASS & WKU DATES ARE POSTED IN BLACKBOARD WITH THE SYLLABUS AND UPDATED IN THE COURSE ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Last updated March 11, 2022