

The University of Western Ontario  
 Department of Geography and Environment  
**GEOG 1300B: Introduction to the Physical Environment**  
 Winter 2025

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## 1. Course Information

Lecture Delivery Mode	Day and Time	Location
In-person	See UWO Course Timetable	

Lab Delivery Mode	Day and Time	Location
In-person	See UWO Course Timetable	



Winter Classes Start	Reading Week	Winter Classes End	Study Days	Winter Final Exams
Jan 6	Feb 17 – 23	Apr 4	Apr 5 – 6	Apr 7 – 30

Jan 14: Last day to add a second term half course

Feb 17: Family Day

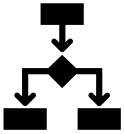
Mar 31: Last day to drop a second term half course without penalty



Course Instructor	Contact Information	Office	Office Hours
Mark Moscicki	mmoscic@uwo.ca	See OWL	

## 2. Calendar Description

### Course Description



An introduction to the phenomena and processes of the Earth-atmosphere system that underlie human-environment interactions and environmental change: the physical geography of Earth. The course introduces a variety of fundamental geographic concepts.

2 lecture hours, 2 laboratory hours, 0.5 course weight

Antirequisites: GEOG 1100, GEOG 2131 A/B

Prerequisite: None

## 3. Textbook



Geosystems: An Introduction to Physical Geography (4<sup>th</sup> Canadian Edition), Pearson  
Authors: R. Christopherson, G. Birkeland, M. Byrne, and P. Giles

For information about textbook cost, please click [here](#). Students need to purchase this edition. Older editions will not be sufficient.

## 4. Learning Objectives

The objectives of this course are to provide students with:

- an understanding of the core themes and concepts in physical geography
- an explanation of the physical principles of atmospheric, lithospheric, hydrologic, and biogeographic processes and their mutual interaction
- a description of the spatial and temporal variations in the characteristics of the environment
- an explanation of the direct and indirect effects of human activity on the physical environment
- an introduction to numerical based geographical problem-solving skills
- improved map reading skills and general geographic knowledge



## 5. Course Format

Attendance at lecture and laboratory sessions is expected. Question sets will be completed during class time in the classroom. Selected course material will be posted to [OWL Brightspace](#).

[Google Chrome](#) or [Mozilla Firefox](#) are the preferred browsers to optimally use OWL Brightspace; update your browsers frequently. Students interested in evaluating their internet speed, please click [here](#). Using the proper browser is important, especially when using different features integrated with OWL Brightspace.



If students need assistance, support can be found on the [OWL Brightspace Help page](#). Alternatively, students can contact the [Western Technology Services Helpdesk](#). They are also available by phone at 519-661-3800 or ext. 83800.

Closed captioning is provided on all video clips.

## 6. Evaluation

The midterm exam will cover material studied from Jan 8 through Feb 12. The final exam is cumulative but weighted toward material studied in the second half of the semester. Exams will consist of multiple choice, definition, fill in the blank, short answer, and discussion questions.



<i>Component</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Value</i>
Laboratory Exercises	Weekly	32%
Question Sets	Weekly	5%
Photo Portfolio #1	Feb 7	3%
Midterm Test	Feb 26	20%
Photo Portfolio #2	Mar 7	3%
Photo Portfolio #3	Apr 6	3%
Final Exam	TBA	34%

### Requirements

The evaluation methods above are essential requirements of the course. Students must complete at least 5 laboratory exercises to pass the course. Students who have not met this requirement will not be permitted to write the final exam.

### Course Grades

Grades will not be adjusted on the basis of need. It is important to monitor your performance in the course. You are responsible for your grades in the course.

## Late Assessments

Laboratory exercises submitted late without approved documentation will be subject to a penalty of 10% per day.

## 7. Lecture Schedule

<i>Lecture</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Reading: Chapter</i>
1	Jan 6	Introduction	
		Geographic Techniques	1
2	Jan 13	Solar Energy and the Seasons	2
		The Atmosphere	3
3	Jan 20	Energy Balances	4
		Wind	6
4	Jan 27	Climatic Controls	5
		Global Climates	10
5	Feb 3	Weather Systems	8
		The Water Budget	9
6	Feb 10	Midterm Test	
	Feb 24	Water at the Surface	9
		Internal Structure of the Earth	12
7	Mar 3	Crustal Formation	13
		Weathering	14
8	Mar 10	Karst Landscapes	14
		River Systems	15
9	Mar 17	Floodplains	15
		Coastal Environments	16
10	Mar 24	Glacial Processes	17
		Periglacial Landscapes	17
11	Mar 31	Soils	18
		Ecosystems	19

## 8. Laboratory Schedule

There are eight lab exercises; each one will be introduced at the beginning of the lab session. Each exercise is worth 4% of the course grade. Students are encouraged to complete the exercises during the time allotted in the lab classroom.

Lab exercises are not accepted electronically; a completed paper copy of each exercise is required to be submitted by its due date to avoid a lateness penalty.

<i>Exercise</i>	<i>Date (Tue)</i>	<i>Date (Wed)</i>	<i>Date (Thu)</i>	<i>Topic</i>
1	Jan 14	Jan 15	Jan 16	Topographic Maps; Geographic Techniques
2	Jan 21	Jan 22	Jan 23	Earth-Sun Relations; Seasonality; Air Pressure
3	Jan 28	Jan 29	Jan 31	Radiation Balances; Wind
4	Feb 11	Feb 12	Feb 13	Weather Systems
5	Feb 25	Feb 26	Feb 7	The Water Budget; Groundwater
6	Mar 11	Mar 12	Mar 13	Landforms and Landscapes
7	Mar 18	Mar 19	Mar 20	Fluvial Processes
8	Mar 25	Mar 26	Mar 27	Google Earth Explorations

## 9. Communication



Students should check the course website regularly to keep up with announcements. E-mails to the instructor or to a teaching assistant must be sent from a UWO account and should contain the course code in the subject. E-mails will receive a response within 24 hours on weekdays.

## 10. Accommodation Policies

### Accessible Education

Students with disabilities work with Accessible Education which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#).

### Absence from Course Commitments

Students must familiarize themselves with the [Policy on Academic Consideration – Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs](#)

Students missing course work for medical, compassionate or extenuating circumstances can request academic consideration by completing a request through the central academic consideration portal. Students are permitted one academic consideration request per course per term without supporting documentation. Note that supporting documentation is always required for the final exam.

Missed lecture notes are not sent out by e-mail. It is the students' responsibility to obtain any missed lecture notes from a classmate.

### **General Information about Missed Work**

University policy requires that all requests for academic considerations must be accompanied by a self-attestation within 48 hours. Any academic considerations granted in this course will be determined by the instructor, in consultation with the academic advisors in your Faculty of Registration, in accordance with information presented in this course outline. Supporting documentation for academic considerations for absences due to illness should use the [Student Medical Certificate](#) or, where that is not possible, equivalent documentation by a health care practitioner.

### **Course Assessment that Requires Supporting Documentation (Midterm Test)**

The midterm test has been designated as an assessment that requires formal documentation because it is considered central to the learning objectives for this course. Students seeking academic consideration for the midterm test will be required to provide formal supporting documentation to their Faculty of Registration. If academic consideration for the midterm test is granted, then a make-up midterm test will be scheduled. If a student is unable to attend the make-up midterm test at the scheduled time for a valid reason, then its weight will be transferred to the final exam.

### **Course Assessment with a Flexible Deadline (Photo Portfolio)**

All three segments of the photo portfolio have a flexible deadline. Students are expected to submit each segment by the deadline listed on the course outline. Should illness or extenuating circumstances arise, students are permitted to submit it up to 48 hours past the deadline without academic penalty. Should a segment be submitted beyond 48 hours past the deadline, a late penalty of 10% per day will be subtracted from the assessed grade. Since a flexible deadline is used for the portfolio, requests for academic consideration for the portfolio will not be granted. If you have a long-term academic consideration or an accommodation for disability that allows greater flexibility than provided here, you must notify the instructor at least one week prior to the deadline listed on the course outline.

### **Accommodation for Religious Holidays**

Students should review the policy for [Accommodation for Religious Holidays](#). Where a student will be unable to write an exam due to a conflicting religious holiday, they should

inform the instructor as soon as possible but not later than two weeks prior to writing the final exam. In the case of conflict with a midterm test, students should inform the instructor as soon as possible but not later than one week prior.

## **11. Make-up Examinations**

A make-up exam will only be granted with approval from an Academic Counselling office. All documentation for missed exams must be provided to an Academic Counselling Office within 48 hours of the originally scheduled exam and students must notify the instructor of the absence within 48 hours of the originally scheduled exam. Otherwise, a grade of zero on the exam will be assigned. The content of make-up exams will differ from the originally scheduled exam. If a student is absent from both the midterm exam and its make-up exam for reasons that have been approved by an Academic Counselling office, then the weight of the midterm exam will be transferred to the final exam.

## **12. Academic Offences**

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a [scholastic offence](#).

The use of artificial intelligence tools including ChatGPT is not permitted in the laboratory exercises or the photo portfolio. Representing an idea or expression of an idea that was generated by artificial intelligence will be considered an offence.

The photo portfolio is subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the university for the detection of plagiarism. All content submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of content subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com.

## **13. Use of Electronic Devices**

No electronic devices will be permitted during the test or exam.

## **14. Commitment to Accessibility**

The Department of Geography and Environment strives at all times to provide accessibility to all faculty, staff, students and visitors in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. Please contact the instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make the course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Student Accessibility

Services (SAS) at 519-661-2147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation. Information regarding [accommodated exams](#) is available. More information about [accessibility](#) is available as well.

## **15. Mental Health**

If you or someone you know is experiencing distress, there are several resources at Western to assist you. Please visit the University's [Health and Wellness](#) site for more information on mental health resources.

## **16. Gender-Based and Sexual Violence**

Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced gender-based or sexual violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts [here](#). To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact [support@uwo.ca](mailto:support@uwo.ca).

## **17. Support Sites**

[Student Support Services](#)  
[Student Development Centre](#)

## **18. Important Dates**

Jan 6: Winter classes begin  
Jan 14: Last day to add a second term half course  
Feb 17: Family Day (department office closed)  
Feb 17 - 23: Winter Reading Week (no classes; department office open)  
Mar 31: Last day to drop a second term half course without academic penalty  
Apr 4: Winter classes end  
Apr 5 - 6: Study days  
Apr 7 - 30: Winter examination period