Geography 572  
Geography of the Natural Environment  
Fall 2015  
Dr. Jennifer Brewer  
(subject to updates after August 1, 2015)

-Course Objectives-
This course introduces “physical geography,” broadly defined. Because the discipline of geography is unusual in encompassing biophysical sciences, social sciences, and humanities, this course takes a biophysical focus, but keeps human-environment dynamics also in mind. We will take a process approach, learning not only terms and definitions, but causal relationships.

Upon completion of this course, students should:

- Understand how geography is different from other biophysical sciences
- Utilize systems thinking to identify mutually causal relationships across biophysical variables
- Demonstrate familiarity with key processes and terms relating to weather, climate, atmosphere, landforms, water resources, rivers, oceans, soils, coasts, biodiversity, agriculture, and natural resources
- Analyze environmental problems from an integrated and process-based perspective

-Required Text-

The majority of our course content appears in this textbook, especially in the first half or more of the course. Not all material covered in class will be in the textbook, however, and not all textbook material will be covered in our course. We will cover some additional material in lecture, perhaps with additional readings, especially toward the end of the semester. When in doubt about what will be covered on tests, rely on the lecture content – both slides and any additional notes or activities.

-Course Topics-
Topics will be covered in roughly the order listed, but the content or schedule may change.

Unit 1 – Introduction and the Energy-Atmosphere System
Unit 2 – Water, Weather and Climate Systems
Unit 3 – Earth-Atmosphere Interface
Unit 4 – Soils, Ecosystems, and Biomes -- plus Human Environment Relations
-Class Policies-

My office hours and contacts:
My office is 102B Huddleston Hall. Enter through the Geography office on the east end of the building. Office hours TBD. If your issue is time-sensitive, don’t hesitate to make an appointment, during office hours or not.

My e-mail is jennifer.brewer@unh.edu. Please begin your message subject line with “GEOG 572.” I get many e-mails, many of which are important, many of which are not. You want me to notice yours as class-related so I open it promptly. I often answer within a few hours, but if you don’t hear back within 48 hours, feel free to re-send.

Attendance:
In this class, as in most others, there is a clear correlation between attendance and grades. I may occasionally take attendance, conduct in-class assignments or pop quizzes, or verbally announce changes to the course schedule, assignments, or tests. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to check with other students to find out what you missed, and ask to borrow notes. If you do not attend class, you should not expect a good grade, or expect me to make you aware of any changes in content or scheduling.

I rarely allow make-ups of missed tests, or missed in-class or homework assignments. Don’t ask unless you have a significant conflict or problem, and have documentation/evidence to support your request. I expect to receive any such requests as far in advance as possible.

I strongly recommend that in the first few days of class, you get to know a few people in class, and exchange contact information, in case you need to borrow notes, ask for missed information, or help each other to study. This may require talking to people you don’t know, which may feel intimidating, but is among the skill set of most successful working professionals. On the other hand, if someone asks you for more than a couple days of notes, you can certainly refuse, unless there seem to be extenuating circumstances.

Courtesy:
If you do not intend to participate fully and actively in your own learning, and help create a supportive learning atmosphere for other students, you do not belong in this class. Arriving late and getting up to leave early without prior explanation and apology are rude and are unacceptable; such behavior can be distracting to the instructor and students. The following distracting activities are not appropriate during in this class and will not be tolerated: sleeping, inappropriate talking/socializing, reading non-class materials, voice or text use of digital devices such as cell phones, music players, laptops, or other distractions.

It is my job to provide you with college level educational content, not to talk aloud to myself while you check messages or surf the internet. Old fashioned pen or pencil and paper are less distracting to yourself, to me, and to others. For these reasons, I do not allow use of laptops or
other electronic devices during class, not even silently for note taking -- **unless you sign a release** that commits to sitting in the front row and using it only for taking notes. That release is available on Blackboard if you wish to sign it and e-mail it to me.

**I do not allow audio/video recording or taking pictures of class without my permission.** In the rare event that you need to keep your cell on for some emergency purpose (such as a family health matter), let me know and put it in silent mode.

**Grading:**
Tests total 80% of your grade. While the unit tests are not intended to be cumulative, the content of early units may provide the foundation for later units. In other words, each unit test covers only the material in that unit, but you will understand it better if you understood the prior units.

The remaining 20% of your grade is based on any in-class or homework assignments. Some of these assignments will be graded, some will be credit/no credit/partial credit. Some may be weighted more heavily than others. I reserve the right to schedule unannounced in-class exercises.

I reserve the right to curve grading scales, either up or down, though the latter is rare.

**Investing in your own learning:**
If you aren’t quite getting the grades you’d like, you are not alone! Many of us struggle at some point with test anxiety, note taking, organizing our time/thoughts/priorities, or just feeling overwhelmed. Do NOT hesitate to ask for help at the Center for Academic Resources [www.cfar.unh.edu](http://www.cfar.unh.edu). They offer free academic support via one-on-one mentoring, small group workshops and resources for subject area tutoring. Stop by Smith Hall, room 201, during drop-in hours, Monday-Thursday, 11:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. or call 603-862-3698 to schedule an appointment.

If you encounter words in lecture that you don’t understand, I strongly suggest that you ask what they mean and/or jot them down to look up in a dictionary. If you encounter words in assigned reading that you don’t understand, look them up in a dictionary. Building your vocabulary is a lifelong skill and asset that will serve you well as a student, on the job market, and in the workplace. If you use a hard copy dictionary for this purpose, especially a large one, you can also see other words related to the one you are looking up, and other new words. This provides more context for the word you are looking up, and helps grow your vocabulary more quickly, compared to using online sources.

**Note taking:**
Taking notes is a basic skill for life and learning. Research shows that taking notes by hand instead of electronically improves learning outcomes. The following websites have some tips for
notetaking, but most people find they have to develop their own individualized approach and style. 
http://education.exeter.ac.uk/dll/studyskills/note_taking_skills.htm
http://www.palgrave.com/skills4study/studyskills/reading/notes.asp
http://academic.cuesta.edu/acasupp/as/208.HTM

Blackboard:
I use Blackboard to post additional readings, assignments, and grades, and to collect out-of-class assignments. If you encounter difficulties with Blackboard, it is best to contact the IT Service Desk http://it.unh.edu/index.cfm?ID=AF65A729-D567-BF1C-C7B097B99B4D357A. They answer phones M-F 7:30am to 5:00pm at 603-862-4242. There are also online Blackboard help resources at http://it.unh.edu/index.cfm?ID=BC300798-FF56-F6B6-938B3F5D83A03E89. These folks are more familiar with the intricacies and glitches of Blackboard software than I am, and may be more immediately available.

Academic integrity:
Students in this class are bound to the university policy on academic honesty http://www.unh.edu/vpsas/handbook/academic-honesty. Violation of this policy may result in course failure. The policy applies to all assignments, including any extra credit options. I take these issues seriously and will take action when warranted. Students who have cheated, plagiarized, lied, or misrepresented the truth in my classes later wished they hadn’t.

If you have ANY questions about whether something constitutes an academic integrity violation, ASK. I view such issues through the lens of fairness and respect, considering the considerable effort put forth by most instructors and students. If you violate this policy, you lower the value of all our academic diplomas, of this university as a commons for social learning, and the larger civic merit of higher education. That is a long term social cost, not just an individual character flaw.

Equity and accessibility:
If you have a special need or disability, even a minor one, and if you desire appropriate accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services to provide me with the necessary documentation http://www.unh.edu/disabilityservices/

Students in this class are expected to conform with university policies on discrimination and harassment http://unh.edu/vpsas/handbook/affirmative-action-and-equity-policies

Unforeseen emergencies:
If some unforeseen emergency conflicts with our class meeting or exams, such as a weather event or public health or safety issue, you can expect general information to be provided by the university. In such an event, you may also receive an e-mail from me with follow-up information about any necessary rescheduling, so you’ll want to be attentive for any such e-mail communications.