

Geographic Concepts and Skills for Teachers
Online Course Syllabus
EDU 507/GEOS 507

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Course Description: This course is designed for experienced social studies, earth science, and geoscience teachers. The course will provide up-to-date geographic content, information, and related geographic skills associated with geography core content for the P-12 classroom.

Rationale: This course was designed to provide a knowledge and application base for research related to the teaching of geography. The course was designed to accommodate P-12 teachers and geographers in the Master's Level program.

Prerequisites: Graduate Standing

Students should possess computer application skills including (but not limited to) internet, word processing, and presentation computer skills.

Required Texts:

Gersmehl, P. (2005). *Teaching Geography*. New York: The Guilford Press.

de Blij, H. (2005). *Why geography matters: Three challenges facing America*. New York: Oxford Press.

Davis, D.E. (2003). *GIS for everyone*. Redlands, CA: ESRI. {NOTE: This book is provided free to you by the Kentucky Geographic Alliance. You will receive this book when you come to campus for a GIS training. The date will be determined by class consensus}

Recommended Texts:

Geography for Life (1994). Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Research & Exploration: Author.

Path Toward World Literacy: A Standards-Based guide to K-12 Geography (1994).

Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society: Author.

Course Objectives and Outcomes:

Students will be able to:

- Provide background for an adequate understanding of essential skills and concepts associated with geography core content for P-12 teachers
- Model or illustrate sound activities, strategies, and representations to communicate specific geography content to students, including connections to the real world
- Analyze issues and problems to better understand how humans have interacted with their environment
- Create student assessments aligned with geography core content appropriate for students' developmental levels in the P-12 classroom

- Use technology for academic thinking, discussion, and data analysis
- Investigate how geographic factors influence climate, culture, population, settlement, the economy, and world events
- Plan for activities applying geography to situations outside the classroom

Communication: Students **MUST** have access to Blackboard to participate in this course. The majority of the course content, communication with the instructor and other class members, and the ability to complete and submit course requirements will be conducted via Blackboard. Students must utilize the WKU email account provided by the university to receive communication from the instructor. Students must make certain their technology is compatible with the WKU technology and working during all requirements of this online class. In addition, students must take *personal responsibility* for submitting tests and assignments by the dates due. This includes overcoming technical issues.

Academic Offenses

(Taken from the Western Kentucky University student handbook at <http://www.wku.edu/Dept/Support/StuAffairs/StuLife/handbook/P1Policy/14AcademicOffenses.htm>)

The maintenance of academic integrity is of fundamental importance to the University. Thus it should be clearly understood that acts of plagiarism or any other form of cheating will not be tolerated and that anyone committing such acts risks punishment of a serious nature.

Academic Dishonesty - Students who commit any act of academic dishonesty may receive from the instructor a failing grade in that portion of the course work in which the act is detected or a failing grade in a course without possibility of withdrawal. The faculty member may also present the case to the Office of Student Life for disciplinary sanctions. A student who believes a faculty member has dealt unfairly with him/her in a course involving academic dishonesty may seek relief through the Student Complaint Procedure.

Plagiarism - To represent written work taken from another source as one's own is plagiarism. Plagiarism is a serious offense. The academic work of a student must be his/her own. One must give any author credit for source material borrowed from him/her. To lift content directly from a source without giving credit is a flagrant act. To present a borrowed passage without reference to the source after having changed a few words is also plagiarism.

Cheating - No student shall receive or give assistance not authorized by the instructor in taking an examination or in the preparation of an essay, laboratory report, problem assignment or other project which is submitted for purposes of grade determination.

Diversity

The instructor of this class and the Department of Curriculum and Instruction recognizes the diverse nature of the student body at Western Kentucky University. The instructor and department intend to present educational experiences that do not hinder anyone by way of verbiage, actions, or written communication. Any person that recognizes an incident that is a breach of this mission should contact the instructor.

Disabilities Act

In compliance with university policy, students with disabilities who require academic and/or auxiliary accommodations for this course must contact the Office for Student

Disability Services in Downing University Center, A-200. The phone number is 270 745 5004. Please DO NOT request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a letter of accommodation from the Office for Student Disability Services.

Course Topics: The following topics may be addressed:

Five Themes of Geography

- Location
- Place
- Human/Environment Interaction
- Movement
- Region

Skills in Geography

- Asking Geographic Questions
- Acquiring Geographic Information
- Organizing geographic Information
- Analyzing Geographic Information
- Answering Geographic Questions

Use of Geographic Tools

- Interpretation and Creation of Maps
- Technology in Geography

Human/Environment Relations

- Reasons for and Consequences of Human Modification
- Resources and Limitations
- Natural Hazards
- Population Growth
- Global Interdependence
- Environmental Education

Geography Standards

- Six Elements of Geography

Teaching Geography

- Assessment

KERA Elements Addressed:

- Curriculum
- Assessment and Accountability
- Professional Development

Types of Instruction

The instructor will offer multi-media lecture and information to guide students through the concepts and skills to be learned in this course via the World Wide Web through a variety of assignments, exams, and learning activities. The instructor will serve as a coach and resource as students participate in group assignments, individual research and projects, and as students participate in exploratory learning. Most instruction will be delivered via the class text book and instructor offered MS PowerPoint presentations. Additional readings and methodologies of delivering instruction might be utilized. Assignments and information will be posted on the class Blackboard website. Assignments will be submitted to the instructor via the class Blackboard "Assignments" tool.

Exams

All exams will be delivered via Blackboard. If technology problems arise, students should contact the WKU Help Desk at <http://www.wku.edu/infotech/> or 270.745.7000. Students should keep a copy of all electronic communications with the WKU Help Desk so this may be relayed to the instructor if necessary. Remember, the instructor has no control of the technology used to deliver a class via the WKU servers and Blackboard. All exams will be considered open-book. Students are expected to *not* work together on tests. Time limitations will be applied and enforced.

Class Policies

1. Students who chose to take a class via the World Wide Web accept a higher level of responsibility. They must exercise a higher level of self-motivation to read and search for information. Further, students in web-based classes must be more diligent concerning assignment and exam deadlines. Email and Announcements on Blackboard should be checked daily. This policy probably addresses the most frequent problems students confront in an online class.
2. Students in a web-delivered class accept the responsibility for making certain their computer and internet technology is compatible with WKU's online instructional delivery. Further, students take responsibility their technology is working correctly (and with the WKU technology) at the time of exams and assignments. Students should NOT wait until the final day (or hours) to take an exam or submit an assignment in case a technical problem occurs. Upon discovery of a problem, the student should contact the WKU Help Desk at <http://www.wku.edu/infotech/> or 270.745.7000 to ascertain if the problem is with WKU technology or the student's. Further, the student should email the instructor during the time of the test or assignment to inform the instructor of the actions being taken. Students should keep a copy of all electronic communications with the WKU Help Desk so this may be relayed to the instructor if necessary. Note: these actions do NOT shift responsibility away from the student.
3. Web-base delivery brings concerns of ethics. Students in these classes should exercise a high degree of academic honesty in completing assignments and participating in evaluations. Each student should make certain that all work submitted is their own and give credit to authors when their words are used.
4. The responsibility of turning in assignments and completing exams rest with each student. A student's responsibility does NOT end with a mouse click when sending an assignment, exam or message. The student's responsibility ends when the submission has been received (in the correct format) by the instructor. The instructor has no control over the technology used in delivering this course. If you have problems with technology please contact the WKU Help Desk at <http://www.wku.edu/infotech/> or 270.745.7000. Maintain a record of all correspondence with the WKU Help Desk.
6. All assignments will be completed in MS Word and submitted via the "Assignments" tool in Blackboard unless otherwise directed by the class instructor.

Evaluation and Grade Assignment: Grading in EDU 507/GEOG 507 is based on a point system. **The total points accumulated determine the final grade.**

Tentative Point Values	
May be adapted by the instructor as needed	
Student Homepage	10 points
“Snowball” Introductory Discussion Board	5 points
Scavenger Hunt	5 points
Online Discussions	5 entries at 20 points each = 100 points
Transparency Activities	5 activities at 5 pts each = 25 points
Live Chats	2 chats at 25 points each = 50 points
Field Journal	50 points
Worksheets	10 worksheets at 10 pts each = 100 points
Quizzes	30 points
Final Exam	50 points
Professionalism	25 points
Total Points	450 points

Grade	Points
A	418-450
B	382-417
C	346-381
D	315-345
F	314 or below

Course Assignments:

- **Professionalism:** Due dates will be observed. Posting assignments late or not at all will result in a loss of professionalism points as well as a loss of points for the specific assignment. The student is to post only original work and is expected to work independently on discussion boards and quizzes during the online course. Respect for the view of each member of the learning community and the use of professional standards when communicating with the instructor or other class members is expected and will be adhered to throughout participation in this online course. The student will make every effort to be a contributing member of the EDU 507/GEOG 507 online learning community in order to experience optimal educational and professional growth.
- **Student Home page, Snowball Discussion and Scavenger Hunt:** Students will follow guidelines to create a Homepage on Blackboard. Students will then follow guidelines to participate in an online discussion to get to know class members. A scavenger hunt is provided for students to get to know the syllabus and calendar.
- **Field Journal:** Students will keep a detailed field journal (with photographs and maps) from a geography-related field trip. The date of the field trip will be determined by class consensus. Guidelines and further instructions will be provided. **This assignment is a Critical Performance and must be uploaded into the Electronic Portfolio by all WKU education students.**

- **Transparency Activities:** Students will use the transparency guidelines in the textbook and choose from activities (5 of 10 choices) to complete that relate to the transparencies. Further guidelines will be posted on Blackboard.
- **Worksheets:** Students will answer questions from readings and the PowerPoint to complete worksheets within each weekly module. Students will only choose 10 worksheets to complete. Students may NOT upload more than 10 worksheets for grading purposes, however, it is recommended that students work all worksheets to prepare for quizzes and the final exam.
- **Online Discussion Questions:** Students will read assigned chapters in *Why Geography Matters* and answer each of the sets of questions posted on the Discussion link in Blackboard. Students must respond to the instructor and at least one other participant for each assigned discussion. Twenty points will be assigned to each discussion: 15 pts for the answer to the question and 5 pts for the response to a peer.
- **Live Chats:** Students will participate in two of three live chats concerning readings from the textbook. Chats can be accessed through the Communication Tool on Blackboard.
- **Quizzes/Final Exam:** Two quizzes and a final exam will be given in which the student will apply, synthesize, and evaluate the content taught during the course.

Critical Performance:

In compliance with the standards of the College of Education, Western Kentucky University students enrolled in the education program must upload a critical performance into the electronic portfolio. For this course, the field journal is the assigned critical performance which demonstrates proficiency in content (Standard VIII of the Kentucky Teacher Performance Assessment). This assignment is not to be uploaded until the class instructor has given permission to the student. The assignments must be typed in Microsoft Word or Word Perfect. Microsoft Works will **not** upload to the university's electronic portfolio. The web address for the electronic portfolio system is: <http://edtech2.wku.edu/portfolio/>. Final grades for individual candidates will not be forwarded to the Registrar until this requirement has been met.

Supplementary Texts:

Bednarz, R. & Peterson, J. (eds.). (1995). *A decade of reform in geographic education: Inventory and prospect*. Indiana, PA: National Council for Geographic Education.

Butt, G. (2001). *The continuum guide to geography education*. New York: Continuum International Publishing Group.

Douglass, M. (1999). *The history, psychology, and pedagogy of geographic literacy*. Westport, CT: Praeger Paperback.

Fisher, C. (2000). *Issues in geography teaching*. New York: RoutledgeFalmer.

Kent, A. (2001). *Reflective practice in geography teaching*. Sage Publications, Ltd.

Monmonier, M. (1996). *How to lie with maps* (2nd ed). Chicago: The Chicago Press.

O'Mahony, K. (2002). *Geography and education: Through the souls of our feet* (2nd ed.). Seattle, WA: EduCare Press.

Palmer, J. (2005). *Environmental education in the 21st century: Theory, practice, progress, and promise*. New York: RoutledgeFalmer.

Salzman, J. & Barton, H. T., Jr. (2003). *Environmental law and policy*, New York: Foundation Press.

Sharma, M. & Elbow, G. (2000). *Using internet primary sources to teach critical thinking skills in geography*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Sobel, D. (1998). *Mapmaking with children: Sense of place education for the elementary years*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Sobel, D. (1996). *Longitude: The true story of a lone genius who solved the greatest scientific problem of his time*. New York: Penguin Books.

Schaffer, F. (2003). *Teaching the five themes of geography, grades 5 and up*. Grand Rapids, MI: Frank Schaffer Publications.

Schaffer, F. (2001). *Everyday geography*. Grand Rapids, MI: Frank Schaffer Publications.

Key Journals:

Social Studies and the Young Learner published by the National Council for Social Studies

Social Education published by the National Council for Social Studies

Journal of Geography published by the National Council for Geographic Education

Focus on Geography published by the American Geographical Society

The Geography Teacher published by the National Council for Geographic Education

Professional Geographer published by the Association of American Geographers

Journal of Geography in Higher Education published by Routledge

Websites:

Kentucky Department of Education <http://www.kde.state.ky.us>

Kentucky Geographic Alliance <http://www.ngsednet.org>

National Council for Geographic Education <http://www.ncge.org>

National Geographic Society <http://www.nationalgeographic.com>

Association of American Geographers <http://www.aag.org/>

American Geographical Society <http://www.amergeog.org/>

National Council for Social Studies <http://www.ncss.org>