

**San Jose State University / Geography  
GEOG 140-01 (47649), The United States, Fall 2016 Online  
Course – this course will be totally ran on the Canvas  
System**

**Contact Information**

**Instructor:** Dr. Thomas M. Orf; PhD – University of Kentucky  
**Office Location:** 118 WSQ Hall (although I do not officially have an office on campus since this class is ran online- This is the location of the geography department office).  
**Telephone:** (925-424-1304) - My off campus telephone number  
**Email:** [tmo812002@yahoo.com](mailto:tmo812002@yahoo.com) (preferred)  
[thomas.orf@sjsu.edu](mailto:thomas.orf@sjsu.edu) (alternative)

It is easier to get me via email than by phone, but you are free to leave messages either way. I check my email on a daily basis

**Office Hours:** 9:30 – 11:00 TR (by email or telephone listed above)  
**Class Days/Time:** Online  
**Classroom:** Online through Canvas  
**GE/SJSU Studies Category:** Social Science – Comparative Systems – D2

**Online course:** This class is totally administered online through the Canvas system. You need access to canvas as well as the internet. You must also have access to google earth.

**Course Description:** Geography of the U.S. emphasizing the continuing changes of America's places and regions. Themes include environmental, culture, economic, and social geographies at community, regional and national scales.  
Prerequisite: Upper division standing or instructor consent.

## **Course Goals and Learning Objectives:**

The purpose of this class is to provide a framework for understanding the United States from a geographic perspective. Readings assignments will focus on three related themes. The first is location and explanation of key elements in the United State's physical and human geography. Physical geography includes the geophysical and biological processes that give character to the world's natural environments. Human geography includes all those processes and materials people use to build a world for themselves and to distinguish themselves in groups. This includes economic, social, and political issues, particularly as these effect land use, settlement, and the organization of space.

The second theme of the course is assessing the impacts of people, families, communities, and their institutions on natural environments from local, regional and global perspectives. And the third theme is gaining an understanding of the diversity of economic development on a local, national and regional basis. Readings and Assignments will often be directed toward contemporary events and effect the United States as a whole.

The main focus of this class will be to examine the United States regionally. This means that we will focus on different areas of the country one at a time instead of dealing with the United States as a whole. The reason for this regional approach is due to the huge diversity that exists in different parts of the United States both physically and culturally. By examining from a regional perspective, we will be able to emphasize these differences while seeing how they all fit into a bigger puzzle called the United States of America.

### **GE LEARNING OUTCOMES (GELOs)**

Upon successful completion of the course, students shall be able to identify and analyze the social dimension of society as a context for human life, the processes of social change and social continuity, the role of human agency in those social processes, and the forces that engender social cohesion and fragmentation. Students will be able to:

GELO 1: place contemporary developments in cultural, historical, environmental, and spatial contexts; (this will be achieved by successfully completing the Google earth assignments as well as the individual assignments for each chapter).

GELO 2: identify the dynamics of ethnic, cultural, gender/sexual, age-based, class, regional, national, transnational, and global identities and the similarities, differences, linkages, and interactions between them; (this will be achieved by successfully completing the Google earth assignments as well as the individual assignments for each chapter). and

GELO 3: evaluate social science information, draw on different points of view, and formulate applications appropriate to contemporary social issues; (this will be achieved by successfully completing the individual assignments for each chapter).

GELO 4: compare and contrast two or more ethnic groups, cultures, regions, nations, or social systems. (this will be achieved by successfully completing the Google earth assignments as well as the individual assignments for each chapter).

**COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES (CLOs):**

- 1) To describe the physical characteristics of the United States by use of a regional approach.
- 2) To describe the cultural characteristics of the United States by use of a regional approach.
- 3) To differentiate the economic, social, and other cultural characteristics that occurs across different places of the United States
- 4) To discuss current events as they pertain to the US Geography and its place in the global market.

My overall goal for you is for you to get a better appreciation of Geography of United States both culturally and physically.

**TEXTBOOK:**

The text for the course is “Regional Landscapes of the United States and Canada” 7<sup>th</sup> edition by Birdsall et al (2009), John Wiley, Publishers. ISBN: 978-0-470-09826-4. During the course you will also need to consult an atlas from time to time. If your home library does not have one, Goode's World Atlas is available in paperback at most bookstores, however, you are free to use any type of Atlas that you choose. There are many atlas programs also available online.

Students will also need access to Google Earth, which offers satellite and air photo views of much of the world. Please follow your readings with explorations of the region on Google Earth.

## CLASS REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS (WITH DEADLINES)

Assignments and quizzes are listed as follows on the following chart (Each will be explained after this chart):

Course Outline	
Dates	Activities / Assignments
August 24	Class Begins; Read Greensheet and information on Canvas
Sept. 12	Chapter One Questions Due
Sept. 12-13	Chapter One Quiz Available
Sept. 19	First Google Earth Assignment Due
Sept. 19	Chapter Two Questions Due
Sept.19	Coal's Future in the United States Paper Due
Sept. 19-20	Chapter Two Quiz Available
Sept. 26	Chapter Three Questions Due
Sept. 26-27	Chapter 3 Quiz Available.
Oct. 3	Chapter 4 questions due
Oct. 3	New York City Google Earth Assignment Due
Oct. 3-4	Chapter 4 Quiz Available
Oct. 6	Chapter 5 Questions Due
Oct. 6-7	Chapter 5 Quiz Available
Oct.10	Chapter 8 Questions Due
Oct. 10	Appalachian Paper Due
Oct. 10-11	Chapter 8 Quiz Available
Oct. 17	Chapter 9 Questions Due
Oct. 17-18	Chapter 9 Quiz Available
Oct. 24	Chapter 10 Questions Due
Oct. 24	New Orleans Google Earth Assignment
Oct. 24-25	Chapter 10 Quiz Available
Oct. 31	Chapter 11 Questions Due
Oct. 31 – Nov 1	Chapter 11 Quiz Available
Nov. 7	Chapter 12 Questions Due
Nov. 7	Great Plains Google Earth Assignment
Nov. 7-8	Chapter 12 Quiz Available
Nov 14	Chapter 13 Questions Due
Nov. 14-15	Chapter 13 Quiz Available
Nov. 21	Chapter 14 Questions Due
Nov. 21-22	Chapter 14 Quiz Available
Nov. 28	Chapter 15 Questions Due

Nov. 28	California Drought Paper Due
Nov. 28-29	Chapter 15 Quiz Available
Dec. 5	Chapter 16 Questions Due
Dec. 5-6	Chapter 16 Quiz Available
Dec. 14	Chapter 18 Questions Due
Dec. 14	Hawaii Google Earth Assignment Due
Dec. 14-15	Chapter 18 Quiz Available

Evaluation will be made by total points from all the assignments and quizzes listed above. The total number of points for the course is 580 points. Thus, the grades will be divided as follows:

522-580 pts. – A  
464-521 pts. – B  
406-463 pts. – C  
348-405 pts. – D  
0 – 347 pts. - F

I do not do plus or minus grades, just the regular A, B, C, D, or F.

The assignments will be listed in Canvas under the content areas. These assignments must be completed by the due date and submitted through Canvas. They may be turned in late, but there will be a 5 point deduction for the chapter HW assignments and a 10 point deduction for Google earth assignments and the Coal, Appalachia and California drought paper for every day they are late. Late assignments will not be able to be submitted via Canvas but by email. All files must be submitted in word or as an rtf file or Pdf file.

The chapter HW questions are found at the end of the chapters (These are linked to all four of the GELO outcomes as discussed earlier). Those questions with answers are to be typed and submitted by the deadline to Canvas. The questions are short answer essay. Be very careful though that these questions are not necessarily the ones you will get on the quizzes. .

The Google Earth assignments will have you plan a trip using Google Earth (These are linked to GELOs 1, 2, and 4 listed above). What will happen is I will give you a highway within a country, or a city or landform which I have selected in advance that you have to follow. You will give me a trip of what to expect along the way similar to what you would do if you would be planning a trip across our country. I want you to use Google Earth to complete these assignments although you may use other sources in addition. In

the end, a one or two page narrative of what would happen along this trip is the requirement for each of these assignments. Include photos as well would be a major plus. These assignments will be discussed in more detail later on in this green sheet.

The other paper assignments given (Appalachia, Coal and California Drought – linked to GELO 3 listed above) will be one or two page narrative which will be opinions based on information presented in the unit. In other words, you will be given a topic that is controversial and you will be asked to take a stand and use facts to back up your stand. Again, more details will be given in the contents sections of Canvas.

Here is a list of “out of bounds” things that will result in a zero on any assignment or quiz.

- 1) Cut and paste anything for your assignments from other people or the Internet. All the work must be your own. Using cut and paste is considered cheating.
- 2) Having someone else take your exam or quiz or turn in your assignment
- 3) Totally missing a quiz
- 4) Plagiarism of any type

Forgetting to turn in any assignment is also not advised.

## **CLASSROOM PROTOCOL**

- Policies:
1. Students must turn in all assignments and take quizzes on the date assigned. No make-ups will be given unless you are in a hospital long term, on jury duty or have military deployment. Late assignments can be turned in late in a 5 point deduction per day for the chapter HW questions or 10 points per day for the Google earth assignments and three papers assigned in class.
  2. Extra credit is only given on the last Google earth assignment (Hawaii).
  3. Cheating will not be tolerated. Such action will result in a zero on that particular assignment or exam and possible further disciplinary action.
  4. If you are having trouble with a concept or class procedure, please make every effort to contact me via email or phone. Also, please let me know of any special accommodations that may be required.

## **UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

**“University Policies:** Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs **maintains university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc.”** You may find all syllabus related University Policies

and resources information listed on GUP's Syllabus Information web page at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo>