

GEO 410: BIOGEOGRAPHY (3 credit hours)
FALL SEMESTER 2011
LSCB 18, WEDNESDAY, 6:00-8:40 PM

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Office hours: Mon. & Tues., 1:30-4:00 PM; Wed., 5:00-6:00 PM;
or by appointment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Analysis of spatial patterns of life on Earth. Biogeography emphasizes the influence of the physical environment, paleogeography and the past and possible future climate change on the biomes and biogeographic realms. Pre-requisite: successful completion of the Introduction to Physical Geography sequence (GEO 101 and 102) or special permission from the instructor is required.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

GEO 410 covers the spatial distributions of plants and animals and the underlying causes of those distributions. Students develop an understanding of the physical factors (climate, plate tectonics, sea level changes, glaciation, and land and sea bridges/barriers) and of the biological factors (succession, dispersal, migration, speciation, extinction, evolution, and competition) that have contributed to large-scale geographic patterns of life on earth. This course covers the above ecological concepts as needed to provide students with a basic understanding of how biological processes affect spatial distributions. It is not intended to be an advanced biology course.

COURSE CONTENT:

Weeks 1-2:	Taxonomy, variation in the physical environment, limiting factors, life forms
Weeks 3-5:	Biomes
Weeks 6-7:	Disturbance, paleogeography, climate change
Weeks 8-9:	Dispersal, colonization, Exam 1
Weeks 10:	Invasive exotics, speciation, disjunctions
Weeks 11-12:	Extinction, biogeographic realms, island biogeography
Weeks 13-14:	Biodiversity, conservation
Week 15:	Student presentations

TEXT

MacDonald, G. 2003. Biogeography: Introduction to Space, Time and Life. John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

CHANGES

The class schedule may be changed if necessary, but students will receive at least 48 hours notice if possible. Students will be contacted via jaguar1.usouthal.edu email

ATTENDANCE AND CLASSROOM POLICY

Attendance - Students are expected to attend and to be on time for ALL classes. Your attendance grade is the number of classes you attend divided by the total number of classes. Problems should be discussed with the instructor PRIOR to missing class.

Behavior - No smoking or eating is allowed during class. You are encouraged to share your ideas and opinions, and you are expected to treat your classmates and professor with courtesy and respect. The student conduct code is specified in *The Lowdown* under USA Policies, “Code of Student Conduct” and “Academic Disruption Policy”. Note that sleeping in class or talking in class when you should be listening are considered academic disruption.

Academic misconduct - The penalty for cheating is a zero on the assignment in question

MAKEUP EXAMS

Makeup exams must be scheduled as soon as the student returns to class. Makeup exams will be primarily discussion type questions.

EXAMS AND GRADING POLICY

Exams are mostly discussion type questions. I do NOT give multiple choice or true false exams in upper level classes. Most of the exam comes from the material covered in class, and it includes any text chapters indicated or readings assigned in class. Although not totally comprehensive, each exam will incorporate some questions taken directly from the previous exams.

Short paper/presentation on assigned biome	12%
Exam 1	20%
Short paper/presentation on invasive exotic	13%
Final exam	25%
Oral presentation of term paper	5%
Written term paper	15%
Attendance and participation	10%

Final grade is based on the following scale: 100 to 90 = A; 89 to 80 = B; 79 to 70 = C; 69 to 60 = D; below 60 = F.

DISABILITIES

The University of South Alabama provides reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals with disabilities. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, students with bona fide disabilities will be afforded reasonable accommodation. The Office of Special Student Services will certify a disability and advise faculty members of reasonable accommodations. If you have a specific disability that qualifies you for academic accommodations, please notify me and provide certification from Disability Services (Office of Special Student Services). The Office of Special Student Services is directed by Ms. Andrea Agnew and is currently located at 5828 Old Shell Road at the corner of Jaguar Drive and Old Shell. The phone number is (251) 460-7212.