

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

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Course Description: This course is designed for current or future 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 classrooms.

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. (2008). *Teaching Geography* (2nd ed.). New York: The Guilford Press.

Stilgoe, J. R. (1998). *Outside lies magic: Regaining history and awareness in everyday places*. New York: Walker and Company.

Times: Any times mentioned throughout the term are for the *Central Time Zone*.

Communication:

* Students **MUST** have access to and be familiar with 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. When emailing the instructor, the student should include the course number in the subject line of the email. Typically you should receive a response the same day.

* 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.

* If leaving a phone message, student should include a return phone number, name, and the course number. The Instructor should return your call within 24 hours. If not, please email the Instructor, as she could be away from her office. The instructor typically answers emails within 24 hours. If your email is not responded to immediately, it is possible that the instructor is out of the country and has limited access to email. The instructor will contact you as soon as possible. Assignments are graded daily and the instructor will leave feedback on Blackboard. You may submit assignments early, but points will be deducted from professionalism for late uploads.

***Please do not expect the Instructor to address your technology problems or send assignments by email without prior approval. Follow the instructions posted in the Class Policies section.**

Course Objectives and Outcomes: Students will be able to:

Objectives	Activities	Assessment
Model or illustrate sound activities, strategies, and representations to communicate specific geography content to students, including connections to the real world	Readings, Discussions, Transparency Activities	Worksheets
Analyze issues and problems to better understand how humans have interacted with their environment	Readings, Discussions, Field Journal	Worksheets, Quiz
Plan a leadership role to spread geographic literacy in Kentucky	Readings, Discussions, Worksheets	Leadership Project
Use technology for academic thinking, discussion, and data analysis	GIS Training, Readings, Discussions, design a city profile	Final Exam, GIS Student project; Transparency Activities
Investigate how geographic factors influence climate, culture, population, settlement, the economy, and world events	Readings, Discussions, Worksheets	Worksheets, Quiz
Plan for activities applying geography to situations outside the classroom	Readings, discussions, field experience	Worksheets, Quiz; Field Journal

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
- Strategies

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.

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. Remember, the instructor has no control of the technology used to deliver a class via the WKU servers and Blackboard. 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. All exams will be considered open-book. Students are expected to *not* work together on tests. Time limitations will be will be applied and enforced.
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. 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.

4. All assignments will be completed in MicroSoft Word and submitted via the "Assignments" tool in Blackboard unless otherwise directed by the class instructor.

Evaluation and Grade Assignment: Grading in EDU 507/GEOS 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	
Getting to Know You Blog Discussion	5 points
Scavenger Hunt	5 points
Online Discussions	5 entries at 10 points each = 50 points
Transparency Activities	4 activities at 5 pts each = 20 points
Live Chats	2 chats at 25 points each = 50 points
Field Journal*	75 points
Worksheets	12 worksheets at 10 pts each = 120 points
Final Exam	50 points
Professionalism	25 points
Total Points	400 points

*The Field Journal is a critical performance and must be uploaded into the electronic portfolio by all WKU education majors.

Grade	Points
A	368-400
B	340-367
C	312-339
D	280-311
F	279 and below

Course Assignments Descriptions:

- **Getting to Know You Discussion and Scavenger Hunt:** Students will go to the Tools Link and Blog Discussion link 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.
- **Online Discussion Questions:** Students will have assigned readings in the *Outside Lies Magic* book by Stilgoe 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.
- **Transparency Activities:** Students will use the transparency guidelines in the textbook and choose from activities to complete that relate to the transparencies. NOTE: Students will not create transparencies, only use them as guidance for their assignments. Further guidelines will be posted on Blackboard.
- **Live Chats:** Students will participate in two live chats concerning readings from the *Teaching Geography* book by Gersmehl. Chats can be accessed through the link on Blackboard. Half of the final exam questions relate to textbook readings.
- **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.

- **Worksheets:** Students will answer questions from readings and the PowerPoint to complete worksheets within each weekly module. The worksheets will serve as a type of formative assessment.
- **Final Exam:** A final exam will be given in which the student will apply, synthesize, and evaluate the content taught during the course.
- **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/GEOS 507 online learning community in order to experience optimal educational and professional growth.

***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 submitted as an rtf file or a pdf file. Student should be selective in the photos included with the field journal so that problems can be avoided with file sizes. 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.

Key Journals of Use to Geographers:

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 That Might Be Helpful:

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>