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# **GEOG 3760 : SPECIAL TOPICS IN GEOGRAPHY CANADA'S NATURAL ENVIRONMENTS AND LANDSCAPES**

## **CONTACTING YOUR INSTRUCTOR**

Your instructor for this course is available to assist you in learning the course material. If you need to assistance, you can contact your instructor. Details on how to contact your instructor can be found in the Introduction Letter found on the course site in the Learning Management System (i.e. D2L).

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## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Physiographic regions are areas on the Earth that share common topographic and natural features. By definition, Canada has six distinct physiographic regions. This course will examine the basic processes operating within each of these regions (including climate, hydrology, pedology (soil study), geology and/or biology) as well as how these processes together create the natural environments and landforms found within each region.

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## **COURSE GOALS**

This course aims to increase the understanding of the various natural environments and physiographic regions found within Canada, by highlighting the landforms and processes that create these unique features and regions. Specifically, the goals of the course are to:

- demonstrate a spatial understanding of Canada's natural environments at a number of different scales (i.e. local, regional, time scales);
- describe the associations between climate, soils, vegetation and geology and how they produce distinct regions in Canada
- critically interpret information from a variety of sources (i.e. peer-reviewed publications, web-based information, etc.) and in a variety of formats, (textual, graphical, cartographic formats);
- communicate in writing the basic properties of each physiographic region, as well as the similarities and differences between regions; and,
- demonstrate a number of academic skills required for upper-level university courses, including active listening, note taking, studying, reading, and test-taking.

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## **COURSE MATERIAL**

## Recommended:

deBlij, H.J., P.O. Muller, R.S. Williams, C.T. Conrad and P. Long. 2009. *Physical Geography: The Global Environment - Canadian Version* (2nd edition). New York: Oxford University Press.

Other introductory physical geography textbooks can be used instead of deBlij et al. (2009) such as: Christopherson, R.W. and G.H. Birkeland. 2014. *Geosystems: An Introduction to Physical Geography* (9th edition). New Jersey: Pearson Education Inc. Strahler, A. and O.W. Archibold. 2011. *Physical Geography: Science and Systems of the Human Environment – Canadian Version* (5th edition). Wiley and Sons.

Additional reading material will be assigned for each individual module. This reading material will consist of written documents, as well as websites that highlight a specific aspect of a physiographic region. A list of course materials can be found in the instructional content for each module.

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## COURSE OVERVIEW

### Modules

This course is divided into seven modules, including the Introduction to the Course section. Each of the remaining modules focuses on one of the six physiographic regions in Canada; exploring their physical processes and the landforms that are created from those processes.

#### *Module 1: Introduction to Course*

This module will introduce the course, including an explanation of terms used extensively in the course, as well as course goals, organization and assessment tools.

#### *Module 2: Western Cordillera*

This physiographic region lies on the western edge of Canada and encompasses British Columbia and the Yukon, as well as parts of Alberta and the Northwest Territories. Its main natural landscape is a mountain system, including mountain ranges, valleys and plains.

#### *Module 3: Interior Plains*

The Interior Plains region is dominated by flat-lying landscape and is found east of the Western Cordillera. It includes most of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, as well as southern areas of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut.

#### *Module 4: The Arctic North*

This region lies north of the treeline in the three territories of Canada, and also includes northern regions of Quebec and Newfoundland/Labrador. Glaciations, bedrock outcrops, and low-lying vegetation dominate this physiographic region.

#### *Module 5: The Canadian Shield and Hudson Bay Lowlands*

The Canadian Shield is the largest physiographic region in Canada, extending west from

Newfoundland/Labrador to parts of Alberta and north into the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. A diversity of landscape features and vegetation, including the boreal forest and mixed wood forest, dominate this region.

#### *Module 6: Great Lakes – St. Lawrence Lowlands*

This region is centered around the Great Lakes and is the smallest physiographic region in Canada. Plain-like areas dominate this region that was once covered by large expanses of glaciers during the Pleistocene period.

#### *Module 7: The Appalachians*

The Appalachian region lies on the eastern edge of Canada and extends from southern Quebec to Atlantic Canada. This region is generally a level surface that was produced by long periods of erosion.

Each of the modules focusing on a specific physiographic unit (modules 2-6) will be further divided into four units. The first unit will examine the geology and the topography of the region, unit 2 will discuss the climate and glaciers both historical and current within the region, the third unit will describe the soils, flora and fauna by examining the ecozones with the region; and finally the fourth unit will discuss the physiographic region in a human context by examining the natural resources and national parks within the region.

### Learning Activities

During this course students are asked to participate in a number of learning activities. These activities are designed to help in their understanding of the different unique natural environments in Canada. These specific activities include:

Viewing PowerPoint slideshows with audio

Reading instructional content, including “Where is John”, focus box, and other supplementary information

Reading assigned course material (including publications and websites)

Watching assigned online videos

Demonstrating your learning through a variety of assessments, including quizzes, assignments and a final exam

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### **ASSESSMENT AND GRADING**

#### Distribution of Marks

Evaluation	Percentage
Quiz (6 total)	30%
Module Summaries (6 total)	15%

## Online Quizzes

Students are required to complete 6 quizzes throughout the year. Each quiz will focus on an individual module (excluding Module 1) and will be composed of 20 questions. These questions will be in multiple-choice and/or true-false format. Students will have 30 minutes to complete the quiz once started, and each quiz will be available for a 24 hour period from 12:00 AM to 11:59 PM CST.

## Module Summaries

Each student is required to produce a module summary for each physiographic region (6 summaries in total – Modules 2-7). These summaries should highlight the major processes and landforms found in each region, and can be used as a review tool for the final exam. Summaries should be in the student's own words and not a copy of the instructional material presented (or a copy of other student's work). Each summary has a maximum length of 3 pages (double-spaced, 12-point font, 2.5 cm margins).

## Assignments

Students will be required to complete two assignments for this course. One of the assignments will focus on the first three modules, and the other on the second three modules. Each assignment is composed of two parts; a paper prospectus and a research paper. The paper prospectus is a brief, structured, first draft plan of the paper. It should have the various sections of the paper highlighted (i.e. introduction, conclusion, body, etc.), as well as the main points to be addressed in each section. The objective of the prospectus is to ensure that the student is on track with the research paper. The prospectus can be done in point-form and should be no longer than 1000 words (double-spaced, 12-point font, 2.5 cm margins). It should be handed in no later than a month prior to the submission of the research paper. (See the Schedule section for due dates.) Note: Students will receive a grade of zero for the research paper if a prospectus has not been submitted prior to the deadline for the paper.

For the research paper, students will choose the question/statement to be addressed. The research paper should be in essay format (with introduction, body, conclusion, references) and no longer than 2500 words (double-spaced, 12-point font, 2.5 cm margins). Peer-reviewed journal articles and/or government documents must be used as primary sources; websites and magazines can be used as secondary sources. Encyclopedias, including Wikipedia, should not be used as references. In addition, figures (i.e. graphs and photos) and maps should be included to help illustrate any significant point being made in the paper. These visual aids fall outside the page limits for the research paper and should be properly referenced in the document. Referencing style (for facts presented in the paper, as well as any visual aids) must follow the MLA or APA format. More information on these style guides can be found at: <http://libguides.lib.umanitoba.ca/browse.php> (under the Style Guide section). The paper will be graded based on the structure, arguments made, and supporting information presented for those arguments, as well as the supplementary information. Marking rubrics will be available on the Learning Management System for this course.

## Final Exam

The final exam includes a multiple-choice/true-false section and a short answer section and may include questions on content from every module. This exam will be scheduled through

the Registrar's Office.

Note: The final exam will be conducted at the University of Manitoba, Fort Garry campus or at an alternate location off-campus. **All students must declare an exam location.** The Registrar's Office is responsible for scheduling the final exam. Once finalized, the exam date and time information will be posted on the University of Manitoba Exam site.

### Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Percentage Range	Description
A+	90-100	Exceptional
A	80-89.9	Excellent
B+	75-79.9	Very Good
B	70-74.9	Good
C+	65-69.9	Satisfactory
C	60-64.9	Adequate
D	50-59.9	Marginal
F	0-49.9	Failure

**Note:** All final grades are subject to departmental review.

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## **COURSE POLICIES**

### Plagiarism and Cheating

Plagiarism is a serious academic offense and it will not be tolerated. It is intellectual theft and is punishable by a grade of zero on the assignment, a grade of zero in the course, or more severe academic penalties. Additional information regarding plagiarism is posted on the course site. Plagiarism includes copying phrases, sentences, paragraphs, pictures, illustrations, maps, etc., from any source, including books, web pages, magazines, articles, radio, television or cinema, etc., and presenting it in your own work without acknowledging the original author.

Acknowledgment of words requires that you indicate the quoted material with quotation marks or blocked paragraphs and a reference to the original source. Recognition of images requires

a source note and reference in a caption or in the text. A related academic offense is handing in a paper or assignment you prepared for another course, or submitting a paper you bought or had someone else write. However, it is not an academic offense to have someone else read and edit your work. Indeed, having other people read drafts of papers is an accepted part of academic work.

You should acquaint yourself with the University's policy on plagiarism, cheating, and examination impersonation. Note: These policies are also located in your Distance and Online Education Student Handbook or you may refer to Student Affairs at <http://www.umanitoba.ca/student>. Commonly, the penalty for ANY FORM OF CHEATING is a grade of F on the assignment and/or a final grade of F in the course. Please familiarize yourself with the University policy on academic dishonesty.

### Late Assignments and Module Summaries

Assignments and summaries must be submitted by the deadline. A penalty of 10% per 24 hours will be given to late assignments/summaries unless the student has obtained approval in advance of the deadline. Extensions may be given only for medical or compassionate reasons.

### Late Quizzes

A student will be able to make-up a missed quiz for either medical or compassionate reasons (i.e. death of an immediate family member). Notification must be provided to the instructor within 24 hours of the quiz deadline.

### Questions/Comments

If you have any questions regarding the course/assignment content, please feel free to post your questions using the communication tools in the course website. The instructor will check the discussion forum on a regular basis and will try to address your questions. If you have a personal issue (i.e., grade on an assignment, deadline extension, etc.), please email or phone the instructor.

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## **DISTANCE AND ONLINE EDUCATION (DE) STUDENT RESOURCES**

In your course website there are links for the following:

- Contacting Distance and Online Education Staff
- Distance and Online Student Handbook
- Distance and Online Education Website

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

<b>Content specialist:</b>	John Iacozza
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	<p>Department of Environment and Geography          Clayton H. Riddell Faculty of Environment, Earth, and Resources          University of Manitoba</p>
	<p>Dr. John Iacozza is a Senior Instructor with the Department of Environment and Geography. He specializes in physical geography, including the Arctic system and geomatics. In addition to this course, he teaches a number of courses in physical geography and techniques, including Introduction to Physical Geography, Thematic Cartography, Remote Sensing and Introduction to Climate Change and Its Causes. He has also been elected as Fellow of the Royal Canadian Geographical Society.</p> <p>Dr. Iacozza obtained his undergraduate degree at McMaster's University and Masters degree at the University of Manitoba, both in physical geography. He recently completed his PhD, focusing on snow-covered sea ice as related to polar bear habitat in the Canadian Arctic. His current research interests continue his PhD research, and include climate change impacts on snow-covered sea ice and habitat relationships in the Arctic regions. He has also participated in a number of field projects in the Canadian Arctic over the last 15 years.</p>
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