Fall 2025 Syllabus

**GEOG 1710 – Earth Science**

*North Texas Now!* , University of North Texas

**Class meets Tuesdays** and **Thursdays** in room **214 FRLD**

from **9-10:20 a.m.** (Sec. 581) **OR 1-2:20 p.m.** (Sec. 591)

**Laboratory meets Thursday**, also in room 214

from **1-2:20 p.m.** (Sec. 585) **OR 2:30-3:20 p.m.** (Sec. 595)

Instructor: **Dr. Thomas DeWitt**

Biographical synopsis: MA, Boston Univ. – PhD Binghamton Univ. (SUNY) – Postdoc Univ. Kentucky –

Retired, Emeritus, Texas A&M Univ. – Currently Clinical Assoc. Prof., Univ. North Texas – Broadly

Published (54 items natural and social sciences) with approximately 9,000 citations ([link](https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=jFC_bCUAAAAJ&hl=en&oi=ao)).

Email: [**Thomas.DeWitt@UNT.edu**](mailto:Thomas.DeWitt@UNT.edu)

Office: 358 FRLD (Frisco Landing, UNT at Frisco)

Office hours: Email for Zoom or physical meeting.

**Textbook**

I am transitioning this semester to **open-source material**, which is the only requirement.

Please **download the e-text for both lecture and lab** from the course Canvas page under “Files”:

[GEOG 1710 E-text - Patrich (v. Fall 2023) Physical Geography.pdf](https://unt.instructure.com/courses/133606/files?preview=34122857)

[GEOG 1710 Lab Manual - Ray, et. al (2020) Physical Geography Lab Manual.docx](https://unt.instructure.com/courses/133606/files?preview=34123261)

You can and should use other supplementary materials like Wikipedia or additional open-source books.

**Broad Course Goals**

Principles and processes of physical geography. Broadly, this covers geography and geology relevant to physical aspects of the Earth and human interaction with them. For example, we will cover mapping, weather and climate, soil and vegetation, landforms, and minerology. We will integrate these topics with other disciplines and stress skill development of things such as creativity, scholarship, and problem-solving.

**Format, Structure, and Expectations**

We will make daily use of the UNT *Canvas* system, especially for course materials, web links, turning in assignments, and grade posting. Lecture slides will be uploaded onto *Canvas* just before or after each class. **There is a course page explicitly for GEOG course matter**. All three of your course instructors this semester **will also collaboratively use an NTN! Year 2 *Canvas* page** for Project-related material and assignments.

**Attendance/Absences**

Students are expected to be present at every meeting of this class. Only the instructor can excuse a student from a course requirement or responsibility. Unexcused absences will be noted and used in grading as described below.

When conflicts or absences are anticipated, such as for university sponsored activities and religious observations, inform the instructor of the situation as far in advance as possible and provide the regular documentation. For unanticipated or emergency absences when advance notification to an instructor is not possible, contact the instructor as soon as possible by email.

**Illness Impact on Attendance**

While attendance is expected as outlined above, it is important for all of us to be mindful of the health and safety of everyone in our community. **DO NOT come to campus with a 100.4°F (38°C)** or above temperature in the past 24 hours. Please be mindful of the health and safety of everyone in our community and let me know if you cannot come to class due to illness.

**While attendance is an important part of succeeding in this class, your own health, and those of others in the community, is more important.**

**Email Policy**

* You should email me if an emergency arises requiring you to miss your lecture or exam.
* When you email in any capacity, **make sure to use “GEOG 1710 - subject” in the subject line**. This will help me recognize and prioritize your communication.

**Grading**

Your overall GEOG 1710 grade will be composed of 60% of lecture, 25% of lab, and 15% of NTN! Project grades.

**LABS: You must be registered for a GEOG 1710 lab** - the lab is worth 25% of your final grade**.** Labs give you hands-on experience with earth science topics such as identifying rocks, using maps, surveying land and weather, etc.

**Lecture Grade breakdown**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Class attendance | Attendance neglecting excused and 1 unexcused absences | 15 % |
| Class participation | My assessment of participation and progression of skill | 15 % |
| In-class quizes | Average of quizzes with worst *n* (likely 2) dropped | 22 % |
| 2 in-class Exams | 100 pts each value each 20 of final grade | 2 \* 16% |
| 1 Final Exam | 100 pts value 20 % of final grade | 16 % |
| SPOT | Participating in course evaluation | 1. % |

• No make ups!(If you have a conflict, contact me as early as possible)

In-class Attendance:

* Starting from Week 2, attendance and in class assignments will be counted towards final grade.
* No make-up attendance. A perfect attendance score requires 90% of all classwork and attendance grades collected. Extensive time out for acceptable reasons must be documented and agreed upon by the instructor.
* Emergencies that result in your absence should be emailed with appropriate documentation as far as possible in advance.
* There is an allowance in the attendance as a grading criterion in this Spring 2023 semester as a response to infectious disease challenges, so please don’t force yourself to come to class if you don’t feel well, we all need to be conservative in this aspect and take full responsibility in terms of public health.

Reading Quizes:

* **Each week’s reading must be completed before the class in which quizzes are scheduled**.
* **Quizzes will be timed**. Typically, 10 minutes will be allowed.
* **Reading quizzes take place before lecture**, which means you must plan to be in class early to compensate for the potential for unplanned delays in transit to class.

2 In-class Exams

* Each contains approximately 55 questions (40-50 multiple choice, matching, True/False and some **free response and drawing**).
* Timed, you will have the whole class time, 80 minutes, to complete each exam.
* Exams must be taken face-to-face (not online or at home).

1 Final Exam

* The final exam will focus on the material of the last module after Exam 2. Several questions will link this module with ideas from earlier sections. Plan on about 90-100 questions, with increased emphasis on free-response synthesis relative to regular exams.
* You will have 120 minutes to complete the final exam.

Review sessions will typically be offered in the last class before each exam. You should pre-study for the exams before these sessions so you can discern questions beforehand and get them answered in the review sessions.

**Grade Posting**

Grades will be posted on *Canvas*. *You have 7 days after a grade has been posted to dispute an entry*. After the 7-day period, the grade stands as entered. Do not wait until the end of the semester to check your grades.

DO NOT rely on the *Canvas* grade calculation to check your current grade status. I will provide a grading spreadsheet with all potential entries and formulas for your GEOG 1710 grades.

**Letter Grade**

The grading scheme for our course is:

A: 89.5% - 100%

B: 79.5% - 89.5%

C: 69.5% - 79.5%

D: 59.5% - 69.5%

F: < 59.5%

# Make-up Work

You are responsible for managing your time and keeping up with the course. Attendance and participation opportunities **cannot** be made up. Students must provide ***advance*** notice **at least before 1 week** of exam dates and *documentation* for an absence to be considered excused. Exams CANNOT be made up for unexcused absences, or absences that occur without prior notification to the instructor.

Be organized and aware of all due dates, make-up work will not be allowed because you “forgot” to complete an assignment or prepare for quizzes or exams.

**SPOT**

The Student Perceptions of Teaching (SPOT) is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. It provides you a chance to reflect on the course and your feedback allows instructors to emphasize the better aspects of class and de-emphasize others in subsequent iterations.

To encourage your participation, **I will provide unsupervised class or lab time for you to do the survey**. You may complete the survey outside of this time instead, but busy students often neglect to do so. Thus, the structured time is a good time to be sure you do it and receive the 1 % lecture grade incentive.

The SPOT survey will be made available to you during weeks 13, 14 and 15. Students will receive an email from "UNT SPOT Course Evaluations via *IASystem* Notification" (no-reply@iasystem.org) with the survey link. Please retain this email in your UNT email inbox. Once you complete the survey, you will receive a confirmation email that the survey has been submitted. Please retain this confirmation for 30 days. For additional information, please visit the SPOT website (http://spot.unt.edu/) or email spot@unt.edu.

SPOT is an important part of your participation in this class. To encourage all students to do evaluations, I provide an extra credit point (1% of lecture/lab)for completing the course evaluation. Every student who completes a SPOT and submits the screen shot of the completion confirmation through Canvas link will receive **1 actual extra point** toward your overall lecture/lab grade. Just doing the evaluation without submitting your screenshot does not count. Please read the instructions in the Canvas link carefully.

**Diversity Statement**

I want to create a safe and positive learning environment that supports a diversity of thoughts, perspectives and experiences, and honor your identities (race, gender, class, sexuality, religion, ability, etc.). To help accomplish this:

* Let me know if you have a preferred name and/or set of pronouns.
* Don't hesitate to talk with me If you feel like your performance in the class is being impacted by your experiences outside of class. I can be a resource for you or direct you to needed resources.
* I (like many people) am still in the process of learning about diverse perspectives and identities. I encourage you to talk with me about personal issues that impact your performance in class or your comfort level with the classroom environment. My goal is to understand what I need to, to ensure everyone’s comfort with my classroom environment.

**Accessibility and Accommodations:**

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. If you seek accommodation, first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify your eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a letter of accommodation to be delivered to me to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in this course. You may request accommodation at any time; however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at http://www.unt.edu/oda. You may also contact them by phone on 940-565-4323.

**Class Disruptions** are defined as activities that distract the instructor or other students from the course content. Such activities include talking or whispering, cell phones ringing, tardiness or whispering about another tardy student, noisily preparing to leave the class prior to the end of the period, etc. As a college student, you are considered a responsible adult. Your enrollment indicates acceptance of the University of North Texas college code of student conduct. Disruptive students will be asked to leave the class. Repeat offenders may be withdrawn and reported to the Dean of Students Office (DOS).

**Cell Phones / Pagers**

Please silence all electronic communication devices during class time and do not text or browse the internet during class.

# Laptop / Notepad Computers

You are permitted to use a laptop during class to take notes and in brief instances to fact-check items relevant to a class topic, so long as you do not disturb your neighbors. Laptops may not be used during class time to email, browse the web, or any other activity not related to class. If you are using your laptop for one of these unauthorized activities, you will be asked to leave class.

**Academic Dishonesty:**

Academic integrity is one of the highest values that UNT holds. *Cheating* in this class is absolutely not tolerated. If you are caught you will be given a Zero for that assignment. Other measures including reporting to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities may be taken at my discretion.

According to the UNT catalog, "cheating" includes, but is not limited to: (a) use of any assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations not authorized by your instructor; (b) dependence upon resources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments; (c) the acquisition, without permission, of tests or other academic material belonging to a faculty or staff member of the university; (d) dual submission of a paper or project, or resubmission of a paper or project to a different class without express permission from the instructor(s); or (e) any other act designed to give a student an unfair advantage.

The term "plagiarism" includes but is not limited to: (a) the knowing or negligent use by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment; and (b) the knowing or negligent unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.

**Course Timeline and Due Dates\***

*\* Subject to change by the instructor as needed. Any updates will be posted on the course Canvas site.*

