**Course Syllabus for Geography 341 (Spring 2015)**

**Weather and Society**

**Tuesday and Thursday 3:00 pm – 4:15 pm**

**281 Phillips Hall**

Instructor:

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Office Hours:

First let me say that you are not restricted to my office hours to come see me about help or any questions you may have. I am often around the office doing some type of work. If you want to set up an appointment, the best thing to do is email. **If you do email me to set up an appointment, or for any other reason, be sure to place GEOG 341 in the subject line. If you do not do this, chances are I will miss your message and may not get back with you.**

**Here are my posted office hours:**

Monday – 1:00-2:00 (pm)

Tuesday – 10:00am-11:00am

Required Text:

* *Severe and Hazardous Weather,* Robert M. Rauber, John E. Walsh, and Donna Charlevoix. (Available as Rental at Bookstore)
* *Field Guide to Weather*, (Recent Edition suffices) National Audubon Society. (Must purchase)

Course Objectives:

This course is aimed at providing you, the student, a theoretical and applied understanding of weather and its interactions with society. While the course is taught at an intermediate level, no background is needed besides a keen interest in the physical world, particularly those weather events that constantly affect us. My first and primary goal is to make each of you capable observers of weather events. Basically, when the course is through, I want you to be able to make your own weather forecasts based on your own observations. This could be from interpreting cloud patterns or being able to read a surface weather map – not the school day forecast on the weather channel. And then there’s the society component. My second goal with this aspect is to make you aware that meteorology and society tie into one another. To understand how weather and society interact, you will need to know a bit about climate. I want you to understand the basics of climate as well as the current climate change issues that currently face us. We will also get into the issues facing our society in regard to climate change, historically, presently, and into the future.

Course Objectives (cont):

Overall, the objective of this course is to instill within you, the student, with the following skills:

* Being able establish and critically conceptualize the influence meteorological events have on the society we live in
* Being able to distinguish the differences and relationships between the study of weather vs. climate
* Being able to interpret and thoroughly analyze meteorological and climatological data.
* Becoming familiar with and applying geographic information science to geography in an applied sense; eg using ARCGIS
* Construct a personal, scientific journal based on observation of weather phenomena

Tests, Quizzes, Assignments, and Grades

* There are no tests in this class, but expect at least one quiz a week.
* The majority of the material on the quizzes will come from my lectures, and lectures are primarily based upon the text.
* I often combine lecture with lab. Expect content from your labs on the quizzes. Use your labs to help study for quizzes.
* The text is the basis of the course schedule, and I base my lectures upon. Therefore, it is extremely important to keep up with your textbook readings.
* The assigned readings are also very important, and will show up on your tests.
* If we watch a movie in class, don’t think of this as nap time, I do ask basic questions from the movies.
* The pod you are sitting at will be established as your group, so please do not rotate around.
  + I will establish your pod groups by the second class meeting, so make sure you are comfortable with your group.
  + If you wish to switch pods/groups, please inform me.
* To keep the material fresh in your minds, we will also have several short, in-class quizzes.
  + You will take the quizzes as a group, which is the pod you sit at
* Most of your assignments can be completed within the lab time. I will use this time to go over the lab assignment with you, but may not cover all the associated questions. You are expected to complete what we don’t cover outside of class time.
  + Most labs have a tutorial with them to demonstrate how to use the software with the lab. You will need to draw upon content from your book and lecture to complete a significant portion of the critical though questions however.
* You will be participating in a weather photo contest at the end of the semester. If you don’t have a digital camera, you can check cameras out from the library for use. If you have a digital camera, or a smart phone, then feel free to take as many pictures as you want. In the contest, you will be submitting two images. The contest has three categories:
  + Best overall
  + Best Severe Weather
  + Best Story
* If in lab, you feel I am going too fast, please stop me so you understand the concept at hand.
* Do not try to turn in papers late. Papers are due at the time posted on D2L. If you don’t get them in by that time, D2L will not accept them.
  + Do not submit documents other than those that can be opened by Microsoft Software.
  + If you do use something like Word Perfect to complete an assignment, make sure you save it in a format that is compatible with MS word
* You will be expected to maintain a **daily weather observation journal**. I will cover this in more detail in class and below.
* About two weeks into the semester, we will all have enough meteorological skills to be able to interpret a surface weather map. We will begin class each day with a **daily weather briefing** presented by individuals in a given order.
* **We will be going outside to make observations quite often. Be sure to show up with proper attire to do so. You should be taking a notebook and pencils with you as well.**

Here is a break down of the percentage points\*:

* Quizzes = 40%
* Class Assignments = 25%
* Weather Briefings/Weather Discussion = 10%
* Journal Project = 25%

Web based Journal Project (Via Blogger.com):

* You should be recording weather observations at least once a day by the end of the first week. The weather observations should include the following:
  + Precipitation (if any) and type
  + Sky Conditions
    - With a quantitative description of cloud cover types
    - A quantitative estimate of cloud cover
  + Wind Conditions
    - Direction
    - Speed
  + Other Pertinent Observations
* I don’t expect anyone to be a pro (or even amateur) observer from day one on. Instead, *I would like to see your observations evolve with better jargon and terminology over time.*
* I want to see completeness in the journal and the final report, yet nothing that rambles on forever with unnecessary material. For example, some days may just be sunny all day. Recording that is was basically sunny all day, along with some temp and other supplementary info is fine. However, if there are days with some wild weather involved, I expect those changes to be noted.
  + If there is an interesting weather pattern, you should include a surface map of that event in your journal
  + Each journal entry should:
    - (1) Report conditions
    - (2) Assess previous forecast made
    - (3) Forecast weather for the following day based upon observations.
* There is no special time to record these events. Most people make journal entries at the end of the day. However, you may wish to record the previous days events in the morning. Or you may wish to record little notes throughout the day. All of these methods are fine.
* I will be assessing the blogs at some point during mid-semester to make sure everyone is on track. I may also ask you to open your blog during your weather briefing to ensure you are on track.
  + Maintaining a daily blog is the best way to ensure a high grade on your final blog project. Students often drop one or more letter marks due to poor blog performance.
  + A synopsis of weather throughout the semester, this should be compared to climate as much as possible.
  + A discussion of notable weather events during the semester.
  + Photos that reflect observations from your weather journal that are referred to in your text.
  + A section that covers your sources and methods of data collection.
* The final blog/website should include the following pages:
  + Weather Blog
  + Data Analysis (Final quantification of semesters weather; this is the page where you post lots of the lab material you created during the semester).To save you time, I will often ask that you post material to the images page as you create it in lab. Your data analysis should also contain:
    - Graphs illustrating ALL of the data you gathered.
    - Climatological graphs from several sources surrounding the area
    - Analytical graphs comparing climate data with you weather data
    - Text supporting your graphics
  + Pertinent Links (your favorite links with an explanation of each link and why you like it)
  + Images/Tutorial: This can contain images that help to educate others on weather. You can educate people on clouds, or interpret weather maps. This should teach yourself and others about weather.
    - Keep in mind that you need to take pictures for the weather photo contest, so here could be an area to post them before picking the two you want to submit.
* Final Project grading procedure:

o   This will be discussed further in class but the following criteria  are examined used when grading your final project:

1.     Is it unique? (An ‘A’ project does not mean just fulfilling all the requirements)

2.     Is it neat? (Is this something the person spent a good amount of time on)

3.     Spelling?

4.     Use of Grammar?

5.     Does it flow? (Does the structure make sense and can the reader follow it?)

o   Generally, you can expect me to apply points that would relate to the letter grades below based on the following:

1.      (A) Excellent (exceptional, particularly insightful, sophisticated, original)

2.      (B) Good (the material is covered well but in a conventional manner)

3.      (C) Fair (adequate but flawed by errors, inconsistent logic, irrelevance)

4.      (D) Poor (shows a significant lack of understanding of the issue at hand, many errors)

5.      (F) Failure (no evidence of understanding of the issue at hand)

o   The final research project grade is 20% of your final grade. This final project grade is also broken down by certain requirements and due dates related to the project. Below is a break-down of the 20%:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Description** | **Number of points (out of 20%)** |
| Getting blogsite (blogger.com) set up on time | 1 |
| Mid-semester assessment | 5 |
| Posting a weather journal entry every day | 4 |
| Demonstrating knowledge of weather phenomena, and where to obtain information on weather (links) | 5 |
| Grammar and Spelling | 3 |
| Thorough and personal aspect | 2 |
|  |  |

Desire to Lean (D2L) and Notes

* The SLIDES from my Power Points will be posted on the W drive, and perhaps later onto D2L. The format is in PowerPoint and it is your responsibility to find a computer with PowerPoint if you want to download them and print them out. I will not post them as txt file nor will I print out the notes for you under any conditions.
* The Geography department maintains its own server, which we designate as the Q drive when mapped as a network drive. You can access the Q drive from campus by mapping to the Q drive. Here is how you map it: \\ geog.servers.uwec.edu\geog$
* Lectures are then within: Q:\StudentCoursework\JHupy\Coursedata\341\_weatherandsociety\geog341lectures
* A folder for you to store your materials is located within Studentfolders: Q:\StudentCoursework\JHupy\Studentfolders\2155.GEOG.341.001
  + Note: This material is deleted after one year. Therefore, if you wish to keep any of your data, it is important that you back it up to an external storage device shortly after the semester ends.
* From off campus, you can access the drive with a VPN connection, or you can engage in remote desktop access. For help with doing either of these, visit the LTS website:
  + This link helps with establishing a VPN connection <http://www.uwec.edu/Help/drives/vpn.htm>
  + This link is really cool and shows you how to access general access lab software from a computer off campus: <http://www.uwec.edu/Help/campus/Lab-Virtualization.htm>
* Do not rely on Q drive posted lectures for complete content. There will be plenty of instances that I state content for the test and it is not on these slides.
  + **In sum, and I cannot stress this enough, pay attention to what I’m saying and write it down.** 
    - **Do not ignore slides with graphs, maps, images, etc. This is often some of the most important material that many test questions are based upon**
  + Material you go over in lab is test material as well. In fact, expect a good deal of test material to come from lab material.
* I will also post links for material related to assignments and lectures, such as an article, on the W drive and D2L site.

**Rules**

* First of all, let me say that I hate rules. However, I have come to find, based on past experiences that I need to lay down a ground work of rules.
* Rule # 1 (and the most important, related to all others). **Respect me like you expect me to respect you.** Here is how this works. I am not out to get you - I am here to teach. I do not sit around thinking of how best to make your life miserable. In fact, I sit around thinking, ‘how best can I prepare you for the real world while providing you with ample education’. I expect you to think along the same lines. The following rules relate to this #1 rule:
* ‘Ruining it for everyone’ rule: This rule is really just a rewording of the previous rule, but I had to put it in because sometimes the first rule just doesn’t resonate. Basically, this rule says don’t try to find loopholes in the rules to see where you can exploit rules for a lack of lucid content. In sum, if what you are doing seems wrong, then it probably is.
* Do not try to turn in papers late. Papers are due at the time posted on D2L. If you don’t get them in by that time, D2L will not accept them in the designated dropbox; you will need to submit in the late box. (See below).
  + If, by chance, you are late with an assignment, you will need to submit to the late/resubmitted. Please attach a note related to the conditions of the submission. That is, were you gone or sick, or did you just forget. I generally don’t get to grading late items until the end of the semester.
  + DO NOT EMAIL ME YOUR ASSIGNMENTS!
* Do not submit documents other than those that can be opened by Microsoft Software.
  + If you do use something like Word Perfect to complete an assignment, make sure you save it in a format that is compatible with MS word.
  + If you have problems converting the format, please print/save the document as a PDF and submit it in that format.
* Do not go over the allotted time for quizzes and/or tests. If you are given a time to answer a question in a classroom quiz, that is the time you have to answer. Tests are administered on D2L. You are expected to complete them in the time provided. I will set a time period the test can be taken within, and also a time limit for you to take that test. The computer is set to only accept tests that are completed within those guidelines. Usually the time period to take an exam is from 8am to 8pm, and a 50 question test is given 60 minutes to take. I do this to ensure academic honesty within the digital realm.
  + Failure to submit tests on time will result in a zero on that exam, not points answered within the given exam period. Once again, this is done to ensure that test taking is fair and academic dishonest kept to a minimum.
* Do not talk while I or others are talking. This is a class that requires your undivided attention. Carrying on conversations concerning other topics is highly frowned upon.
* NO CELL PHONES IN CLASS. We have all had our moment when we forget to turn off the phone and it rings in class – fine. What I don’t want to see is this as a repeated instance. I really don’t want to see you answer it. I especially don’t want to see you make a call for, example setting up a tee time at the golf course – even if this is before class. You can do that outside of the classroom. Not only is this rude to others, but it is extremely disrespectful to me since you are in there to learn, not set up appointments.
* NO TEXTING IN CLASS. This rule pretty much takes place of the previous one, since nobody ever even uses a phone anymore, it seems. If I see you texting, I will call you out, and potentially will ask you to leave depending on the circumstances.
* NO WEB MATERIAL SHOULD EVER BE UP ON YOUR SCREEN THAT IS NOT PERTINENT TO THE CLASS.
  + This means I do not want to see ESPN.com, Facebook, or whatever material it is up on your screens – ever. The lab is not there for your entertainment, it is for you to learn.
  + If I see you with these materials up in class, I will ask you to turn them off. I also reserve the right to ask you to leave the room as you are obviously not there to learn.
* THE ‘LIKE’ RULE. Over the past few years I have come to notice that the word ‘like’ has invaded the English language with the same success as Asian carp in the Mississippi River. I am not a stickler for grammar, nor do I attest to have a perfect grasp of the English language, but I’d really like to minimize usage of this word. I’m not going to ban this word, but plan on me calling you out when you use it.
* THE LAPTOP RULE. I do allow laptops in class, but not during group related activities. In addition, I do reserve the right to see what you have going with that laptop. I really don’t care what you are looking at, but others around you can be distracted. Therefore, if I see you with a laptop, and you appear to be distracting others, I will ask to see your notes.
* DON’T BE AN OVERPOLITE MIDWESTERNER RULE: This rule allows you to speak up in class. If you see a problem in the schedule, the lecture, or the lab, please let me know. This is a class where the content changes constantly because not only does weather change a lot, but so does the technology used to follow it. I need to change the labs every semester, so there will be inevitable errors. Please let me know when you find issues so I can fix these immediately.