

GEOG 592: Field Geography of Western Colorado (3 credits)
Course Syllabus, Summer 2009

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Course Website: <http://geography.unco.edu/department/coursepages.html>
then choose Geog 592

Course Description

You engage in the fundamentals of geography field research, focused on the natural and human geography of the Grand Valley in Western Colorado. Asking geographic questions, identifying the kinds of data needed from the field, planning for field work, working in teams, making field observations and recording data in field journals is central to the course. Basic and advanced skills are included to address both physical and human geography. This includes the use of specialized equipment, maps, data storage devices, and more practical skills in transporting data and samples back to laboratories. You also learn how to refine questions in the field, inspired by on-site observations. Refining data collection can also take place in the field. Course is appropriate for teachers at all grade levels and has no prerequisites.

Course Objectives

- Understand the role of field work in geographic inquiry
- Connect field observations and data to established concepts in geography
- Practice acquiring, organizing, and interpreting geographic data
- Select and design appropriate instruments and plans to collect field data tied to specific geographic questions
- Bridge geographic concepts to field environments

Outline of Course Content

- 1) Introduction: how does field work tie into geographic inquiry?
 - a) Asking geographic questions and identifying the kinds and sources of data to address the questions
 - b) Importance of field work, field-truthing, and connections to spatial learning, attitudes about learning, durability of experiential learning
 - c) Physical and human geography field work
 - d) Quantitative and qualitative field work

- 2) Investigation: Topic Identification and Exploration
 - a) Specific geographic question for study: This course begins by examining the physical geography of exotic rivers in a desert landscape. A transition is made to human use and management of water in an arid climate.
 - b) Data sources and access in the field; equipment needs
 - c) Skills and data recording (techniques practice, journal keeping)
 - d) Teamwork, team design, task assignments, field efficiency

- 3) Field Time: Data Collection, Recording, Field Analysis
 - a) Supervised time to continue data collection, overcoming field problems
 - b) Seminar: asking and refining geographic field questions
 - c) Post Field Time: Data Transport, Storage, Processing

Required Readings (readings included on a CD or the course website)

Geography Education Standards Project. 1994. *Geography for Life: The National Geography Standards*. Washington DC: Geography Education Standards Project.

Lounsbury, J.F., and Aldrich, F.T. 1986. *Introduction to Geographic Field Methods and Techniques, 2nd Edition*. Columbus, OH: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company.

The Water Report, Issue 36. February 2007. Portland OR: The Water Report and Portland Insider. Distributed with permission.

Water Fact Sheet, National Water-Quality Assessment Program—Upper Colorado River Basin. US Geological Survey, 1994.

Course Requirements

- 1) Complete pre-field trip readings (40 points) and review map sectionals in preparation for the initial meeting.

- 2) Two field quizzes (40 points total) check skills introduced and practiced in class.

- 3) Field Journal (40 points) with complete sets of observations, maps, sketches, and organized data tables.

- 4) Participation (80 points) in all field exercises and class meetings.
- 5) A short final exam (100 points) is then administered at the end of the trip that reviews the readings and knowledge of the field plan and the materials covered in course.

- 6) Submission of Final Project (200 points): Field trips are ideal experiences that generate good teaching ideas for the classroom. The trick is to take ideas from the field and convert them into learning experiences in a classroom or class lab. You develop an annotated OUTLINE of an original, **publishable** instructional unit that is grade-appropriate at K-12. You can focus the unit on the physical environment or in

the realm of human/environment interaction. The outline would identify a coordinated set of lessons, all supporting materials, and guidance for teachers. Each lesson in the outline must include educational objectives, an evaluation matrix, time needed, materials, instructional procedures, geographic questions, data, worksheets, maps, evaluation instruments, and a complete set of references and suggested reading list. During the field trip, you discuss your outline in the formative stages, introduce sample activities and concepts, and critically evaluate the problems you may face in developing the unit.

This outline is due (by email attachment) by the end of the day, Friday, July 20, 2009.

Grading

The course requirements described above total 500 points. Letter grades would be assigned based on points earned.

A: 450 points or more

B: 400-449 points

C: 350-399 points

D: 300-349 points

F: below 300 points

Note: This course is part of a Graduate Certificate in Geography Education. As such, a grade of B or higher is required to satisfy the Certificate requirements.

Disability Support Services

Students who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the Disability Support Services (970) 351-2289 as soon as possible to ensure that accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.

Honor Code

All members of the University of Northern Colorado community are entrusted with the responsibility to uphold and promote five fundamental values: Honesty, Trust, Respect, Fairness, and Responsibility. These core elements foster an atmosphere, inside and outside of the classroom, which serves as a foundation and guides the UNC community's academic, professional, and personal growth.

Endorsement of these core elements by students, faculty, administration, and trustees strengthens the integrity and value of our academic climate.

UNC's Policies

UNC's policies and recommendations for academic misconduct will be followed.

For additional information, please see the Dean of Student's website, Student

Handbook link <http://www.unco.edu/dos/handbook/index.html>