

GEOG 392: Field Geography in Western Colorado (3 credits)
Course Syllabus, Summer 2009

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Course Website: <http://geography.unco.edu/department/coursepages.html> then choose Gunnison or Colorado River Trips.

Special Note for 2009: If you must reach me for an urgent reason, you may call my cell phone (303-520-1242). The Thursday before our river trip, I will be en route to Grand Junction and will have my cell with me, but may not have access to email.

Course Description and Prerequisites

You engage in the fundamentals of geography field research, focused on the natural geography of rivers 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 environmental 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. Introductory Physical Geography or physical science is recommended.

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 environmental 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. All aspects of the operational environment are reviewed.
 - 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 and class lecture notes provided on course website)

Suggested Additional Reading:

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

Course Requirements

- 1) Complete pre-field trip readings (40 points) and review map sectionals in preparation for the initial meeting. A short exam (100 points) is administered on the river trip that reviews the readings and knowledge of the field plan and tests your ability to apply skills to new problems.

- 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.

AND

Projects. There are three related projects that contribute to the grade for this course:

1. **Individual Project 1:** Find one Tammy that you can reasonably cut down with a partner. Cut it as close as possible to the ground (we have permission from the Federal Bureau of Land Management to do this AWAY from designated camping areas). Cut it again to remove two disks about 1 inch thick. Give one disk to your partner, then continue this assignment alone. Use coarse sandpaper to smooth one surface. Use finer sandpaper to finish the smoothing. Use a magnifying lens. Start at the center and count the tree rings until you reach the bark. The outer most rings are most recent. Make a list of the years the tree was alive in your journal. Add notes next to the rings that show either unusually large amount of growth or unusually small amount of growth. Compare your sample data to the ring data distributed in

- class. On one side of a page, discuss your sample, comparing it to data you have and to other samples collected by classmates. (80 points)
2. **Team Project:** Calculate the amount of water going by our campsite (in cubic feet per second). Use any and all methods reviewed in class as well as your own ideas. (80 points)
 3. **Team Project:** For a stream designated along our route, your team will work to identify the Level II classification with cross-sectional measurements, longitudinal profile, and plan-form measurements. (40 points)

Course Grade

The course grade is based on a point system, with a total of 500 points possible to earn during the course. It is your responsibility to keep track of all points you earn. Your grade is based on the total points you accumulate on all exams, quizzes, exercises, and activities, according to this scale:

Grade	Grade Points	Percentage	Minimum on a 500 Point Scale
A	4	93-100%	465
A-	3.67	90-92.99%	450
B+	3.33	87-89.99%	435
B	3	83-86.99%	415
B-	2.67	80-82.99%	400
C+	2.33	77-79.99%	385
C	2	73-76.99%	365
C-	1.67	70-72.99%	350
D+	1.33	67-69.99%	335
D	1	63-66.99%	315
D-	0.67	60-62.99%	300
F	0	Below 60%	<300

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>