

Course Information

Course Number: GEOG 450
Course Title: Field Geography
Section: 100
Time: MTRF 08:00-12:00
Location: O&M 206 or CSA 302 (classroom)
(<https://aggiemap.tamu.edu/?bldg=0443>)
Location: Brazos County (field/lab)
Credit Hours: 3

Instructor Details

Instructor: Erik Prout
Office: CSA 301-C (<https://aggiemap.tamu.edu/map/d?bldg=0517>)
Phone: 458-3379
E-Mail: geographyprof@tamu.edu
Office Hours: TR 12:00 immediately after Class/Field

GTA: Mohammad Hasan
Office: TBA
E-Mail: @tamu.edu
Office Hours: TBA

Course Description

The “Field” is heard all the time, but what does it mean? Geographers throughout the years have gone into the field to collect data, or sometimes it seems that we go into the field to remain geographers. The field is a special place that academic and professional geographers alike associate with being in direct contact (observation or other senses) with the people, places, and phenomena that we want to discern patterns and meanings from; in other words, we are looking and engaging with the real world or planet we purport to be studying. Field geography is a unique course that compliments the geography curriculum by engaging students in real world situations. Students have an opportunity to apply their knowledge of previously learned concepts and ideas, and students are introduced to the equipment, terminology, and techniques of working in the field. The successful outcome of this course, which is my goal, is to (1) increase your understanding of the field as geographers use the term, (2) introduce students to the procedures and equipment that are used to record and utilize field data, (3) facilitate your interest and knowledge of direct observation to appreciate the cultural and ecological diversity of our local environments.

Course Prerequisites

Fifteen hours of geography coursework or equivalent is required.

Therefore, most students registered for this course should be officially listed as upper-level geography, environment studies, GIST, & environmental geoscience majors or minors. Ideally, students should have successfully completed the introductory courses (201 and 203 with lab) as well as a regional course (202, 301 or 305). There is much leeway, but permission of instructor is required for all other students. Contact academic advisor for registration details.

Course Learning Outcomes

The following learning objectives will be demonstrated; students will be able to

- (1) list and elaborate different field techniques;
- (2) communicate field data into maps, tables, graphs, and narration;
- (3) design a simple field data collection activity.

Textbook and/or Resource Materials

The following resources will be REQUIRED to successfully pass this course.

1. *Access to internet/web:*
Canvas (and official email)
2. Readings will be provided on Canvas
3. Field equipment will be provided to those attending in person.
4. Equipment and supplies associated with field notes.
5. Field attire appropriate to weather and environment

ATTENDANCE: Attendance is a key factor in academic performance and becomes a crucial component to your success during the semester. Attendance is required for this course. Unexcused absences will count against you, and all absences will be taken into consideration when determining participation. Take special note of when we are scheduled to be in the field; expect to be busy until 12:00PM and how unreasonable it is to make other plans immediately afterwards (e.g. work, dates, or classes).

Grading Policy

I use a total point scheme for grading. Every evaluation or activity has a set value of points, and the final grade is determined from the total number of points accumulated. The main categories of where the points derive from:

Project Reports (various values / approx. 16 x 50) 800

Project Reports: the majority of the points will from the write-ups you produce from the individual exercises and field activities. The exact number and precise value depends on the

schedule and how difficult each project becomes.

Field Participation (roll—attendance) 100

Field Participation is attendance on field days (beginning, middle, end, and when I take roll) and contribution (dirty hands and muddy boots).

Class Participation (presentations; readings & quizzes) 100

Class Participation includes presentations, classroom attendance, and your preparation (reading, discussion, and quizzes).

Grade based on 1000 total points

900-1000 = A 800-899.99 = B 700-799.99 = C 600-699.99 = D 0-599.99 = F

Late Work Policy

Excused absences are by university policy! Any examination date or due-date missed is a tentative zero (see schedule). Exam day emergencies require immediate notification (a phone call or email to me, the Department of Geography, or an appropriate university official) and written verification of emergency promptly to my office. General deductions are 10% per unexcused day late.

Course Schedule

Everything is Tentative (weather, etc.): updates will be announced in class and/or official email.

Week / Date Topic (location)

Week 1

T 5/27 First day of summer semester, and first class meeting
Syllabus & other handouts.(classroom);
ADA Activity (campus)
Excel and graphing Exercise 2 (lab on own)

W 5/28 — *no class (schedule)*

R 5/29 Northgate: observation & counting exercise (#3)

F 5/30 Location / GPS Exercise (#4); (Admin Bldg; campus)

Week 2

M 6/2 Random temperature / GPS;

T 6/3 Surveying 1 (Ex.#5); O&M basement/equipment; campus

R 6/5 Downtown Bryan introduction/mini tour (explore downtown exercise)
Landscape & qualitative methods (handout & landscape ex. directions)

F 6/6 Vegetation survey / Explore Lick Creek Park (bring GPS)

Week 3

M 6/9 Vegetation Central Texas (classroom & map room)

T 6/10 Vegetation Sampling Ex. (Lick Creek Park)

R 6/12 Surveying 2a; (Burton Creek Park)

F 6/13 Surveying 2b; (on own GIS mapping)

Week 4

M 6/16 Fluvial geomorphology 1; Sanborn maps: (classroom / TBA)

T 6/17 Urban CBD delimitation; (Downtown Bryan)

R 6/19 — *no class*

F 6/20 Fluvial geomorphology 2: (Brazos Center)

Week 5

M 6/23 Religion/cemetery Ex. (Bryan City / Steep Hollow)

T 6/24 Water Infiltration Ex. (TBD / location?)

R 6/26 Independent Projects (field groups)

F 6/27 flex day (*reschedule rainout days*)

Week 6

M 6/30 (*Flex Day and/or group updates*)

T 7/1 [final exam schedule] Presentations (classroom)

ALL GRADED WORK DUE

Group Projects: *Understanding Northgate: continuity and change of the Landscape*

Backup exercises: *Windshield Geographies*

Traditionally Delivered Course – This is not a typical course in that students and instructors are engaged in field activities. This is not an online or remote course, and we will only use those delivery methods if the university declares that the pandemic situation requires it. We will still do outdoor activities and collect data as individuals if we cannot meet in person.

Technology Support – Use university support services for Canvas and Howdy, and use Geoscience Help for any issues with GIS labs, etc.

University Policies

The TAMU Faculty Senate established the wording of these policies.

Attendance Policy

The university views class attendance and participation as an individual student responsibility. Students are expected to attend class and to complete all assignments.

Please refer to [Student Rule 7](#) in its entirety for information about excused absences, including definitions, and related documentation and timelines.

Makeup Work Policy

Students will be excused from attending class on the day of a graded activity or when attendance contributes to a student's grade, for the reasons stated in Student Rule 7, or other reason deemed appropriate by the instructor.

Please refer to [Student Rule 7](#) in its entirety for information about makeup work, including definitions, and related documentation and timelines.

Absences related to Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 may necessitate a period of more than 30 days for make-up work, and the timeframe for make-up work should be agreed upon by the student and instructor" ([Student Rule 7, Section 7.4.1](#)).

"The instructor is under no obligation to provide an opportunity for the student to make up work missed because of an unexcused absence" ([Student Rule 7, Section 7.4.2](#)).

Students who request an excused absence are expected to uphold the Aggie Honor Code and Student Conduct Code. (See [Student Rule 24](#).)

Academic Integrity Statement and Policy

"An Aggie does not lie, cheat or steal, or tolerate those who do."

"Texas A&M University students are responsible for authenticating all work submitted to an instructor. If asked, students must be able to produce proof that the item submitted is indeed the work of that student. Students must keep appropriate records at all times. The inability to authenticate one's work, should the instructor request it, may be sufficient grounds to initiate an academic misconduct case" ([Section 20.1.2.3, Student Rule 20](#)).

Texas A&M at College Station

You can learn more about the Aggie Honor System Office Rules and Procedures, academic integrity, and your rights and responsibilities at aggiehonor.tamu.edu.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Policy

Texas A&M University is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. If you experience barriers to your education due to a disability or think you may have a disability, please contact the Disability Resources office on your campus (resources listed below). Disabilities may include, but are not limited to attentional, learning, mental health, sensory, physical, or chronic health conditions. All students are encouraged to discuss their disability related needs with Disability Resources and their instructors as soon as possible.

Texas A&M at College Station

Disability Resources is located in the Student Services Building or at (979) 845-1637 or visit disability.tamu.edu.

Title IX and Statement on Limits to Confidentiality

Texas A&M University is committed to fostering a learning environment that is safe and productive for all. University policies and federal and state laws prohibit gender-based discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, sexual exploitation, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking.

With the exception of some medical and mental health providers, all university employees (including full and part-time faculty, staff, paid graduate assistants, student workers, etc.) are Mandatory Reporters and must report to the Title IX Office if the employee experiences, observes, or becomes aware of an incident that meets the following conditions (see [University Rule 08.01.01.M1](#)):

- The incident is reasonably believed to be discrimination or harassment.
- The incident is alleged to have been committed by or against a person who, at the time of the incident, was (1) a student enrolled at the University or (2) an employee of the University.

Mandatory Reporters must file a report regardless of how the information comes to their attention – including but not limited to face-to-face conversations, a written class assignment or paper, class discussion, email, text, or social media post. Although Mandatory Reporters must file a report, in most instances, a person who is subjected to the alleged conduct will be able to control how the report is handled, including whether or not to pursue a formal investigation. The University's goal is to make sure you are aware of the range of options available to you and to ensure access to the resources you need.

Texas A&M at College Station

Students wishing to discuss concerns in a confidential setting are encouraged to make an appointment with [Counseling and Psychological Services](#) (CAPS).

Students can learn more about filing a report, accessing supportive resources, and navigating the Title IX investigation and resolution process on the University's [Title IX webpage](#).

Statement on Mental Health and Wellness

Texas A&M University recognizes that mental health and wellness are critical factors that influence a student's academic success and overall wellbeing. Students are encouraged to engage in healthy self-care by utilizing available resources and services on your campus

Texas A&M College Station

Students who need someone to talk to can contact Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS) or call the TAMU Helpline (979-845-2700) from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. weekdays and 24 hours on weekends. 24-hour emergency help is also available through the National Suicide Prevention Hotline (800-273-8255) or at suicidepreventionlifeline.org.

Campus-Specific, College, and Departmental Policies**Statement on the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**

FERPA is a federal law designed to protect the privacy of educational records by limiting access to these records, to establish the right of students to inspect and review their educational records and to provide guidelines for the correction of inaccurate and misleading data through informal and formal hearings. Currently enrolled students wishing to withhold any or all directory information items may do so by going to howdy.tamu.edu and clicking on the "Directory Hold Information" link in the Student Records channel on the MyRecord tab. The complete [FERPA Notice to Students](#) and the student records policy is available on the Office of the Registrar webpage.

Items that can never be identified as public information are a student's social security number, citizenship, gender, grades, GPR or class schedule. All efforts will be made in this class to protect your privacy and to ensure confidential treatment of information associated with or generated by your participation in the class.

College of Arts and Sciences and Department of Geography

No additional policies added.

Field Policies

Field Methods require us to be in a field environment. Prepare for the worst weather, expect nature to be unexpectant, and assess your personal safety at all times. Do not step on snakes or pick up scorpions, etc. Be mindful how others may see us working in the field—interacting with classmates and general population, approach other people cautiously with respect in case they may not want interaction. Be mindful that pandemic rules could change in response to public health dynamics.

Conducive learning environment is foremost: late arrivals and early departures should be extreme situations; disruptive behavior of any sort is wrong. You must minimize the distractions especially unnecessary noise because it interferes with others ability to hear me. Cell phones should be silenced in the field. Good manners and appropriate dress in the field is required. Long pants and hiking shoes/boots are advised for certain field activities; bring water, snacks, sun block, and bug spray as necessary.