GEOG 1290 A02: Introduction to Physical Geography

Winter 2026 - Syllabus
(Subject to Change)

Traditional Territories Acknowledgement

The University of Manitoba campuses and research spaces are located on original lands of Anishinaabeg, Ininiwak, Anisininewuk, Dakota Oyate, Dene and Inuit, and on the National Homeland of the Red River Métis.

UM recognizes that the Treaties signed on these lands are a lifelong, enduring relationship, and we are dedicated to upholding their spirit and intent. We acknowledge the harms and mistakes of the past and the present. With this understanding, we commit to supporting Indigenous excellence through active Reconciliation, meaningful change, and the creation of an environment where everyone can thrive. Our collaboration with Indigenous communities is grounded in respect and reciprocity and this guides how we move forward as an institution.

University of Manitoba's Traditional Territories Acknowledgement

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COURSE DETAILS

Course Title & Number:	Introduction to Physical Geography - GEOG 1290 A02 (CRN: 50879)
Class Day & Time:	M/W/F: 10:30 AM to 11:20 AM
Location	118 St. John's College
Number of Credit Hours:	3 Credit Hours
Pre-Requisites:	None

INSTRUCTOR CONTACT INFORMATION

Instructor	Dr. Wilson (Pronouns: she/her/hers)
Email	Janna.wilson@umanitoba.ca - Use course code & section (GEOG 1290 A02) in email subject line. - Allow at least **48-hours** for response (weekdays only).
Appointments	Use the online Appointment Booking page.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

U of M Course Calendar Description

The *Undergraduate Calendar* of The University of Manitoba describes GEOG 1290 Introduction to Physical Geography as follows:

> (Formerly 053.129) This course studies aspects of our physical environment: climate, landforms, soils and vegetation. Not to be held with GEOG 1291 or GEOG 1200 or GEOG 1201.
> **Course Attributes:** Science requirement for BA, University 1 Course, Ukrn Cdn Herit Studies

There are no prerequisites for this 3-credit-hour course. Its 3-credit-hour companion course is GEOG 1280, Introduction to Human Geography, and most students taking first-year geography, whether through distance and online education or on-campus, take both GEOG 1280 and GEOG 1290.

General Course Description

Physical geographers study the spatial and temporal variations of Earth's living and non-living physical systems. This course uses a systems approach to study the interactions of Earth's Spheres, including the atmosphere, lithosphere, hydrosphere, and the biosphere. The interrelationships and human interactions within and between these Spheres are examined through a geographic lens. Geographic tools will be used to study: Earth-Sun geometry, the layered atmosphere, global energy systems, atmospheric circulation and moisture, cyclonic weather systems, the Earth's interior and crust, tectonic processes and landforms, weathering and mass wasting, soils, groundwater and karst, fluvial systems, and glacial systems.

COURSE GOALS

1. Inspire curiosity in physical geography and to challenge students to think critically about the world around *them* using a geographic lens framework: What is where? Why there? Why Care?
2. To use a systems approach to study the dominant natural and anthropogenic processes that change over space and time within and between Earth's spheres: atmosphere, lithosphere, hydrosphere, and biosphere.
3. Develop basic information literacy, academic writing, and research skills by summarizing and paraphrasing information from credible sources, writing in an academic tone, and referencing credible sources using in-text citations/corresponding references using modified APA format.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Learning objectives and accompanying key terms, concepts, and topics are available on UM Learn in the Learning Objectives (LO) Table.

COURSE TEXTBOOK

Hess, D., Finch, R., & Tasa, D. G. (2022). *McKnight's Physical Geography: A Landscape Appreciation*, (13th ed.). Pearson. **ISBN:** 9780135800256

Available at the U of M bookstore ($78.50), VitalSource, Pearson

COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

The University of Manitoba (U of M) only uses official U of M emails for communications (U of M Student Email Policy). Email is the primary way in which the instructor and university community communicates with students. As such, you are required to consult your email on a regular basis. Students are responsible for ensuring their email works and that they can access it. In some instances, failure to consult and reply to emails in a timely fashion could have serious ramifications depending on the nature of the email.

- **All emails must be SENT from your U of M account,** or they will not be returned (see
- Allow at least **48-hours** for response (weekdays only).
- All communications must be professional, respectful, courteous, and include:
  - GEOG 1290 A02 in the email subject heading
  - a salutation (i.e. Dear, Hello, Good Morning, etc.)
  - Your full name.

VOLUNTARY WITHDRAWAL (VW) DEADLINE

The last day to withdraw without a refund is March 19, 2026. Students who do not drop this course by the VW deadline will be assigned a final grade. See the Registrar's Office web page for more information.

COURSE ASSESSMENTS

Quizzes and tests				
Assessment	**Value**	**Due Date**	**Material Covered**	**Additional details**
Syllabus Quiz	0	NA	Syllabus	≥80% to access "Weekly Course Content" folder
Test # I	25%	Wed., Feb. 11	Sections ~A-F (subject to change)	~50 questions (50 minutes) (in-person, closed book)
Test # II	25%	Wed., Mar. 18	Primarily Sections ~G-I (subject to change) - 10-15% may of questions may come from Sections A-F	~50 questions (50 minutes) (in-person closed book)

Final Exam			
	Value	**Due Date**	**Additional Details**
Final Exam	50%	TBD	- Cumulative final exam (~120 questions in 2 hours) - To be scheduled by the Registrar's Office during the Final Exam Period (Apr. 11 – 25, 2026) - Final Exams – Registrar's Office

Grade Distribution			
A+: ≥ 90% (Exceptional)	**B+:** 75 -79% (V. Good)	**C+:** 65 - 69% (Satisfactory)	**D:** 50 - 59% (Marginal)
A: 80 - 89% (Excellent)	**B:** 70 - 74% (Good)	**C:** 60 - 64% (Adequate)	**F:** ≤ 49% (Failure)

Notes:

- All final grades are subject to departmental review and approval.
- The grades will be rounded to one decimal point using standard rounding conventions, and the grade cut-offs will be strictly observed. For example, a grade of 69.94 rounds to 69.9 and is a C+; a grade of 69.95 rounds to 70.0 and is a B
- The course is not "graded on a curve".
- You **CANNOT** submit additional assignments to improve or "bump" your grade.

Grades will not be increased or "bumped" on request unless there is a valid reason such as a calculation error.

COURSE SCHEDULE

The course schedule is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor and/or based on the learning needs of the students but such changes are subject to Section 2.8 of ROASS.

Week		Material/Section Covered	
Week 1 (Jan. 6-9)	**W**	Course & syllabus overview	
		COMPLETE Syllabus Quiz: ≥80% to access "Weekly Course Content" folder	
	F	Section A. Introduction to Physical Geography	
Week 2 (Jan. 12-16)	**M**	Section A. Introduction to Physical Geography	
	W	Section B. Physical Geography & Spatial Inquiry	
	F	Section B. Physical Geography & Spatial Inquiry	
Week 3 (Jan. 19-23)	**M**	Section C. Earth-Sun Geometry	
	W	Section D. Earth's Atmosphere	
	F	Section D. Earth's Atmosphere	
Week 4 (Jan. 26-30)	**M**	Section E. Global Energy System	
	W	Section E. Global Energy System	
	F	Section E. Global Energy System	
Week 5 (Feb. 2- 6)	**M**	Section F. Atmospheric Circulation	
	W	Section F. Atmospheric Circulation	
	F	TBA	
Week 6 (Feb. 9 -13)	**M**	TBA	
	W	**Test # 1 -** Wed., Feb. 11, covers sections ~ A-F (in-class)	
	F	Section G. Oceanography	
Winter Term Break – Feb. 16 - 20, 2026 - NO CLASSES			
Week 7 (Feb. 23-27)	**M**	Section H. Atmospheric Moisture & Precipitation	
	W	Section H. Atmospheric Moisture & Precipitation	
	F	Section H. Atmospheric Moisture & Precipitation	
Week 8 (Mar. 2-6)	**M**	Section I. Air Masses & Cyclonic Weather Systems	
	W	Section I. Air Masses & Cyclonic Weather Systems	
	F	Section I. Air Masses & Cyclonic Weather Systems	
Week 9 (Mar. 9-13)	**M**	Section J. Earth History & Earth Interior	
	W	Section J. Earth History & Earth Interior	
	F	TBA	
Week 10 (Mar. 16-20)	**M**	TBA	
	W	**Test #2 -** Wed., Mar. 18, in-class, primarily covers sections ~ G- I (in-class)	
	F	Section K. Tectonic Processes & Landforms	
Week 11 (Mar. 23-27)	**M**	Section K. Tectonic Processes & Landforms	
	W	Section K. Tectonic Processes & Landforms	
	F	Section L. Weathering & Mass Wasting	
Week 12 Mar. 30 – Apr. 3	**M**	Section L. Weathering & Mass Wasting	
	W	Section M. Soils	
	F	Section M. Soils	
Week 13 (Apr. 6-9)	**M**	Section N. Fluvial Systems	
	W	Section N. Fluvial Systems	
April 11- 25, 2026 - Final Exam period			

COURSE FORMAT

Lectures

Lectures will normally be delivered on-campus and students are expected to attend class and take notes. On occasion, live lectures may be delivered through Cisco Webex (accessed through the "Communications" tab in UM Learn) and/or pre-recorded lecture videos posted in the "Weekly Course Content" folder on UM Learn.

To be successful in this course, you must attend lecture, take comprehensive notes, read the course textbook, and read/view assigned material. The Learning Objectives (LO) tables can be used as a notetaking guide to determine what lecture and textbook information is important and testable on quizzes, tests, and the final exam. Whether you choose to read the textbook chapter before or after the lecture is your choice. When reading the textbook, you are encouraged to use a learning strategy such as the SQRRR Learning.

The PowerPoint (PPT) slides will be provided on UM Learn in a .pdf format (1 slide per page which can be printed as multiple slides per page) and text notes (rich text format: .rft) which can be opened in a word processing program such as Microsoft Word, Google Docs etc.

The PPT slides/text notes are NOT a substitute for attending class. Not all material delivered during lectures will be on the slides. As such, you must add in additional notes from the lecture and the assigned readings/viewing.

Weekly Time Commitment

On-campus courses during regular Fall academic term include 150 minutes (1 1/2 hours) of lecture per week over a period of 13 weeks. Each week you will need to attend lectures (on occasion watch pre-recorded PowerPoint presentations), read/view assigned material, study and learn the course material, and complete assignments.

Students are expected to study an additional 2-3 hours PER lecture hour). The number of additional study hours will depend on the week and student background/experience, and some weeks will require more (or less) than others.

University of Manitoba Health and Safety

The University of Manitoba is committed to maintaining a safe learning environment for all students, faculty, and staff. Should campus operations change because of health concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic or other campus-wide emergencies, it is possible that this course will move to a fully remote delivery format. Should the instructor be required to stay at home for an extended period and an alternate instructor not be available, the course may move temporarily to a remote delivery format.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Each student in this course is expected to abide by the University of Manitoba Academic Integrity principles. You must do your own work during quizzes, tests, assignments and the final exam. The use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) software is prohibited. Inappropriate collaborative behaviour and violation of other Academic Integrity principles (i.e. academic fraud, etc.) could lead to serious disciplinary action. Visit the Academic Calendar, Student Advocacy, and Academic Integrity web pages for more information and support.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

Expectations: I expect you to. . .

- Regularly consult the Course Syllabus, UM Learn course announcements, and your personal University of Manitoba (U of M) email account for important course updates.
- Adhere to university policies on Respectful Work and Learning Environment (RWLE) and Student Non-Academic Misconduct and Concerning Behaviour Procedures.
- Actively engage with course material and learning activities and take responsibility for your own learning.
  - Study course materials by reading the textbook and viewing any assigned lecture videos and making your own comprehensive personal notes using the Learning Objectives (LO) Table and PowerPoint slides and text notes as a guide.
  - Complete course assessments (assignments, quizzes, tests, final exam) following the timelines set in the course schedule.
  - Complete course assessments independently (closed-book quizzes/tests/final exam and assignments) with academic integrity and abide by university policies on plagiarism, cheating and exam personation
- Keep copies of all your course work until your grades are finalized and posted on Aurora.
- Backup your course notes. U of M students have access to 1 TB of OneDrive Storage through Office 365.
- Respect copyright.
- **Expectations Regarding Grading**: Students have seven (7) calendar days after grades have been posted in the UM Learn gradebook for quizzes/tests/assignments to discuss any grading concerns with the instructor. After seven (7) calendar days, **NO** changes will be made.

Expectations: You Can Expect Me to . . .

- Strive to create a welcoming, inclusive, and positive online classroom environment in which all students feel respected and heard.
- Treat you fairly and respectfully while supporting your vision of academic success.
- Follow policies regarding academic staff's responsibilities regarding students (ROASS).
- Act ethically and with academic integrity and adhere to and follow university policies on plagiarism, cheating, and exam personation.
- Identify and recommend on campus resources you might find helpful on an as-needed basis (such as the Academic Learning Centre (ALC), Student Accessibility Services (SAS), libraries, etc.).
- Respect confidentiality by protecting your personal information and adhering to University Policies on Information Access and Privacy and The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA & PHIA)

ASSESSMENTS

Tests & Final Exam Format

Tests (in-person)
Two (2) **closed-book in-person** tests**,** worth 50%, (2 tests x 25% = 50%) are to be completed in-person during the regular scheduled class and consists of 50-60 multiple-choice, multiple-select, and true/false type questions to be completed in 50 minutes.

Final Exam (in-person)

One (1) **closed-book** final exam worth 50% to be completed in-person during the exam period and will consist of approximately ~120 multiple-choice, true/false, multiple-select type questions. Unlike in-class tests, were the date and time have been specified, the final exam schedule (date and time) and time is set by the Registrar's Office and will be determined later in the term.
Students may be tested on the instructional content including lecture videos, corresponding textbook readings, as well as any assigned readings/videos and learning activities.

- Consult UM Learn "Quiz/Test/Final Exam Information" folder for more details
- Each quiz/test/final exam may be written only once regardless of the outcome.

Tests and Final Exam Academic Integrity

Tests and the final exam are all CLOSED-BOOK. This means **unauthorized materials are prohibited.**

"All other non-essential items must be placed under your desk and may not be accessed at ANY TIME during the exam. Examples of unauthorized materials include notes, texts or books; backpacks, bags, briefcases, purses; cell phones, smart watches or other unauthorized electronic devices. If you require an item, raise your hand and ask your invigilator if you may retrieve it."

- Final exams and Final Grades Policies and Procedures
- Consult Academic Integrity

ASSESSMENT FEEDBACK

Test Feedback

Multiple-choice, true/false, and multiple-select test questions will ***NOT*** be returned or posted on *UM Learn*. Problematic course material (identified as test questions in which ~40% or less of the class answered correctly) will be identified and posted on UM Learn normally within ten (10) days of the quiz/test date

Students are permitted to review their quiz/test provided they make an appointment via the online booking system to view the test in-person between seven (7) and fourteen (14) calendar days after the test date. There will be no other opportunities to review tests.

SELF-DECLARATION POLICY

If you are unable to complete an assessment (assignment, quiz, or test) due to a medical, compassionate, or extenuating circumstance, you may qualify for an assignment extension or makeup quiz/test. Medical notes are not required for the first request. However, professional documentation (ie. medical note) will be required for second and subsequent requests.

- Course Self-Declaration Policy on UM Learn
- U of M Self-Declaration Policy for Students
- Deferred tests will normally be scheduled 7 days after the original test date

MISSED/DEFERRED FINAL EXAM POLICY

A deferred examination is a privilege that may be granted to a student who is unexpectedly unable to write an examination as scheduled or a student who knows in advance that they are unable to write an examination at the scheduled time. Making a false or misleading claim may be considered an offence under the Student Discipline Bylaw.

- Consult the Missed/Deferred Final Exam Policy on UM Learn.

COURSE TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

- A device such as a modern computer, laptop, tablet and internet connection to access UM Learn
  - A computer with Windows 8, Windows 10, or Mac OS 10.11+ operating systems
  - Web browsers - use Chrome, Edge, Firefox, or Safari
  - speaker/headphone, microphone, and a good quality web camera
  - Test your computer to ensure compatibility with UM Learn (minimum bandwidth of 512 Kbps)
    - For assistance with UM Learn contact see Information and Services Technology
      - 123 Fletcher Argue Phone: 204-474-8600 Email: Servicedesk@umanitoba.ca

STUDENT ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES

See Student Accessibility Services (SAS) on UM Learn.

Students registered with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) who have approved extended-time exam accommodations are required to book all exams through the SAS online booking system.

Students who choose not to write with SAS, or who miss their SAS exam appointment, and subsequently require a deferred exam arranged by the instructor will write during the standard 50-minute deferred exam period. In these circumstances, extended time and individual room accommodations will not be available.

LEARNER SUPPORTS

See Learner Supports on UM Learn

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