GEOG 60D: GEOGRAPHY FIELD STUDIES: HUMAN & URBAN SYSTEMS

Foothill College Course Outline of Record

Heading	Value
Effective Term:	Fall 2026
Units:	1.5
Hours:	1 lecture, 1.5 laboratory per week (30 total per quarter) This course does not meet a full 12 weeks.
Advisory:	GEOG 1 and GEOG 2.
Degree & Credit Status:	Degree-Applicable Credit Course
Foothill GE:	Non-GE
Transferable:	CSU
Grade Type:	Letter Grade (Request for Pass/No Pass)
Repeatability:	Not Repeatable

Student Learning Outcomes

- Apply the major concepts of human and physical geography to study areas identifying patterns and processes
- Discuss human-environment relationships occurring at study areas
- Use tools of geography, including maps, graphs and/or Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to describe spatial patterns, to analyze and interpret data, and draw valid conclusions
- Synthesize collected data, interpret results, and communicate conclusions to a broad audience

Description

Examine how human societies adapt to their environments, shape patterns of settlement, and drive regional development. The course explores the dynamic relationship between culture, place, and environment, highlighting how human-environment interactions shape landscapes, and how societies can adapt, organize, and pursue sustainable development. Field studies involve using the tools and perspective of geography to observe, measure, and evaluate the landscape. This includes the ability to describe and interpret spatial patterns, the ability to collect and analyze spatial and non-spatial data, and the ability to draw valid conclusions as to the processes responsible for those patterns. This course will have elements of both human and physical geography and a focus on human-environment relations.

Course Objectives

The student will be able to:

1. Read topographic, thematic, and reference maps of the region
2. Use GPS and GIS technology for navigation and data collection
3. Identify urban geographic landscapes
4. Collect and document field data in an urban setting
5. Relate observations to urban geographic processes

Course Content

1. Basic concepts and terms required for geographic studies
   a. Pattern and process, including spatial and temporal perspectives
      i. Describe the field of geography
      ii. Diffusion, distance, spatial interaction, and accessibility
      iii. Scale, boundaries, and borders
      iv. Interdependence and systems theory related to humans and the environment
      v. Quantitative and qualitative methodologies
   b. Spatial analysis related to reading and interpreting maps and graphs
      i. Identify locations using the geographic grid
      ii. Identify physical and cultural features using map symbols
      iii. Identify landforms using contour lines on a topographic quadrangle
      iv. Plot locations using GPS
      v. Use Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for mapping and basic spatial analysis
2. Basics of field methods, surveying, and data collection
   a. Identify environmental data related to urbanization and development, such as recycling, urban ecosystem restoration, and climate change adaptations
   b. Cultural data
      i. Identify urban settlement patterns
      ii. Identify regional architecture and its influences
      iii. Identify ethnic influences in the urban landscape
      iv. Identify primary, secondary, and tertiary urban land uses
3. Analyze data and storytelling related to human-environment phenomena
   a. Conduct research on a topic related to humans and their environment
   b. Use of library and internet resources
   c. Use of ArcGIS, QGIS, Excel, and/or other data analysis tools
   d. Development and implementation of project design
   e. Synthesis and presentation of information for public or classroom display
   f. Peer critiques of research presentations

Lab Content

Students will perform data collection, such as surveying and field methods, using geographic techniques. Students will analyze their data and create a small project on their chosen topic related to class content. Lab field trips will focus on human and urban systems.

Special Facilities and/or Equipment

Students need internet access to access the course's Learning Management System and computers to use data analysis software, such as GIS or a spreadsheet.

Method(s) of Evaluation

Methods of Evaluation may include but are not limited to the following:

Completion of fieldwork
Field records or journals

Projects or reports

Method(s) of Instruction

Methods of Instruction may include but are not limited to the following:

Lecture
Discussion
Field work
Oral presentations
Demonstrations
Field trips

Representative Text(s) and Other Materials

Selby, William. Rediscovering The Golden State. 2018.

Although this text is older than five years, it remains relevant to the field, as it covers both the physical and human geography of California and connects the two. No equivalent text is available for California.

Types and/or Examples of Required Reading, Writing, and Outside of Class Assignments

1. Students will keep a field journal and engage in data collection and analysis.
2. Students will be required to complete background reading assignments related to laboratory topics.
3. Students will create a short presentation on a geographic topic of their choice and share their research with the class.

Discipline(s)

Geography