

**GEOGRAPHY 302: GEOGRAPHY OF ALASKA**  
**Summer 2019 July 1-August 9 MTWR 2:00-3:50 3 Credits Reichardt 203**

**Instructor:** Benjamin Christian

**Office:** 324 Reichardt (Geosciences Adjuncts)

**Office Hours:** By appointment (please email instructor to arrange meetings)

**Email:** [bdchristian@alaska.edu](mailto:bdchristian@alaska.edu)

**Course Description:** This course is an issues-oriented, interdisciplinary study of Alaska. We will explore Alaska's natural environment, environmental issues, place-based and environmental identities, patterns of land-use and occupancy, and economic, social, and political development, among a host of other topics. Our goal will be to understand how these factors interact to form the underpinnings of historic and current events in Alaska and the broader region(s) it is part of. The course will be structured around two main themes: 1) climate and landscape change, and 2) environmental identities and resource-use conflicts. Class periods will be a mixture of lecture, seminar-style discussion, and field trips/activities.

**Course Objectives:**

- To be able to recognize the broad **patterns** of Alaska's physical and human geography.
- To understand the specific **processes** behind those patterns.
- To know the location and understand the significance of Alaska's most important **places**.
- To understand how Alaska's **people** interact with Alaska's environments.
- To interrogate, analyze, and understand Alaska's most pressing geographic **problems**.

**Textbooks:**

Haycox, Stephen. *Frigid Embrace: Politics, Economics and Environment in Alaska*. Corvallis, Oregon: University of Oregon Press, 2002.

Lord, Nancy. *Early Warming: Crisis and Response in the Climate-Changed North*. Berkeley: Counterpoint, 2011.

**Other Course Materials:**

**Google Earth Pro:** We will be using Google Earth Pro throughout the semester to explore and analyze places, regions, and geospatial data. You should download Google Earth Pro (<https://www.google.com/earth/desktop/>) to the computer you use to complete your coursework as soon as possible and begin to familiarize yourself with its features and capabilities.

**Blackboard (classes.alaska.edu):** Course documents, lecture slides, supplemental readings, assignment descriptions, KML files, and other course materials will be posted to Blackboard, and you will submit your discussion board response to Blackboard. You will have access to Blackboard via your UA-generated webmail account.

## Assignments & Grading:

**Attendance & Participation:** Each class period will feature a variety of active learning exercises and activities. These may include (but are not limited to) field trips, Q&A sessions with guest lecturers, case studies, discussions, debates, media analysis, labs, and Google Earth/map exercises. Your **active** and **informed** participation in these activities and exercises is required. **Participation points are worth 15% of your final grade.**

**Discussion Board:** You will write brief responses to specific discussion prompts before most class periods. Your discussion board responses will cover the seminar readings (Lord and Haycox) and/or in-class activities, field trips etc. Discussion board responses will help you prepare for in-class discussion and critically reflect on other activities and learning experiences. **Discussion board responses are worth 15% of your final grade.**

**Climate Change Poster Presentation:** In lieu of a midterm exam, we will have a conference style poster session wherein each student will present on a specific topic related to climate change in Alaska. You will be provided with a list of possible topics to choose from. Funding will be provided for poster printing. **The poster presentation is worth 25% of your final grade.**

**Resource Conflict Powerpoint Presentation:** Each student will deliver a 20 minute Powerpoint presentation on a specific land or resource-use conflict in Alaska (past or present). As part of the assignment, you will also lead a short Q&A session/discussion on the topic. A list of potential topics will be provided. **The resource conflict presentation is worth 25% of your final grade.**

**Map Exam:** The final exam will consist of map identification/labeling questions. You will be asked to correctly identify and label specific places, physical features, regions, etc. on a series of blank maps of Alaska. **The map exam is worth 20% of your final grade.**

Assignment	Max Points	Percentage of Final Grade
Attendance & Participation	75	15%
Discussion Board	75	15%
Poster Presentation	125	25%
Resource Presentation	125	25%
Map Exam	100	20%

### Grading Scale

A+ = 98% - 100%	A = 93% - 97%	A- = 90% - 92%
B+ = 88% - 89%	B = 83% - 87%	B- = 80% - 82%
C+ = 78% - 79%	C = 73% - 77%	C- = 70% - 72%
D+ = 68% - 69%	D = 63% - 67%	D- = 60% - 62% F = <60

**Field Trips:** We will be going on a number of field trips in the Fairbanks area. Each of the field trips will require students to be outside or underground for short periods of time and walk short distances. Bring water, snacks, appropriate clothing and footwear, and any other gear or accessories you think you might need to stay happy, healthy, and comfortable. Field trips will take place regardless of weather.

### **Academic Misconduct Policy**

Copying, plagiarism, and/or other academic misconduct at any time during the semester will not be tolerated. Students caught in any of these activities will be removed from the course, will receive an F, and will likely face additional punishment from the University, up to and including expulsion. The University's policy on academic misconduct can be found in the UAF catalog under "Students' Rights and Responsibilities" and at [www.uaf.edu/catalog/current/academics/regs3.html](http://www.uaf.edu/catalog/current/academics/regs3.html).

**Avoiding Plagiarism:** Here is a handy reference explaining plagiarism and all of its forms and aspects: <https://www.plagiarism.org/article/what-is-plagiarism>. Please take some time to review the relevant sections of this website. Note that failure to understand what plagiarism is will not be considered a valid excuse for committing an act of plagiarism. *Ignorance of the law is no excuse.*

**A Note on Reading & Writing:** This is an upper-division college-level course with upper-division college-level expectations. You **MUST** be able to read and write at a college-level in order to succeed in this class. If you have any concerns about your reading-comprehension and/or writing skills, you should strongly consider postponing your enrollment in this course and taking one of UAF's Developmental English courses instead. Please see me privately if you have any questions or concerns about this requirement.

### **Students with Disabilities**

UAF is obligated to provide accommodation only to the known limitations of an otherwise qualified student who has a disability. Please identify yourself to UAF Disability Services by applying for accommodations. To be considered for UAF Disability Services accommodations, individuals must be **enrolled for at least one credit** as a UAF student. For more information contact Disability Services at [uaf-disabilityservices@alaska.edu](mailto:uaf-disabilityservices@alaska.edu), 474-5655 or by TTY at 474-1827.

### **Getting Help:**

Geography is a challenging subject. My job is to help you understand the material, so don't hesitate to seek additional assistance if necessary. Stop by during office hours, send me an email, or schedule a meeting. I will be pleased to help you any way I can (within reason, of course). Be aware that **YOU** are ultimately responsible for mastering the material, however.

## **Title IX**

The University of Alaska Board of Regents have clearly stated in BOR policy that discrimination, harassment and violence will not be tolerated on any campus of the University of Alaska. If you believe you are experiencing discrimination or any form of harassment, including sexual harassment/misconduct/assault, you are encouraged to report that behavior. If you disclose sexual harassment or sexual violence to faculty members or university employees, they must notify the UAF Title IX coordinator about the basic facts of the incident. Your choices for disclosure include:

1. You may confidentially disclose and access confidential counseling by contacting the UAF Health and Counseling Center at 474-7043.
2. You can get support and file a Title IX report by contacting the UAF Title IX coordinator at 474-7599.
3. You may file a criminal complaint by contacting the UAF Police Department at 474-7721.