RARITAN VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE
ACADEMIC COURSE OUTLINE

GEOG – 101 INTRODUCTION TO PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY

I. Basic Course Information

A. Course Number and Title: GEOG 101
Introduction to Physical Geography

B. Date of Proposal or Revision: Spring 2007

C. Sponsoring Department: Humanities, Social Sciences & Education

D. Semester Credit Hours: 3 credits

E. Weekly Contact Hours: 3 Lecture: 3
Laboratory: 0

F. Prerequisites: None

G. Laboratory Fees: N/A

II. Catalog Description

The course examines the processes which shape the physical and biological landscape with which humans interact. Also, special emphasis is placed upon the role in which humans affect this landscape.

III. Statement of Course Need

The course is one of two general introductory courses in geography and is one of two standard courses in the field of geography.

IV. Place of Course in College Curriculum

- This course fulfills a social science elective in General Education.
- Can be used as a free elective.

Course transferability: This course should transfer as a social science course and as part of the General Education curriculum.

V. Outline of Course Content

A. The Earth as a Planet
B. The Global Energy Balance
C. Air Temperature and Circulation
D. Weather
E. Global Climates
F. Global Biogeography
G. The Physical Earth
H. Forces Shaping the Earth
    a. Plate Tectonics
    b. Volcanoes
    c. Weathering and Mass Wasting
    d. Landforms Made by Water
    e. Landforms Made by Waves and Wind
    f. Landforms Made by
    g. Glaciers
I. Human Impact Upon the Earth

VI. Educational Goals and Learning Outcomes

Educational Goals

Students will:

1. use the information provided by different disciplines to understand better the processes which shape the earth and its physical and biological landscape (GE 4)
2. use computation skills to assess the age of different geologic strata, fossils and/or geographic processes. (GE 7)
3. recognize the ethical issues concerning the preservation of life of all forms (GE 5)
4. provide explanations for the presence of specific common features such as warmer climates in the far Northwest Europe and northwest North America, dry zones in the Southwestern portions of South America and Africa. The issue is simply patterns and process (GE 1)
5. determine what evidence may be needed to evaluate different theories (GE 1)

Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to:

1. Cite the major characteristics that provide energy to earth as a system
2. Cite the reasons how energy is distributed across the earth
3. Describe the processes which shape climatic patterns in different regions around the world
4. Cite three dating techniques that are used by physical geographers and explain the circumstances in which they may be used
5. Describe the age of the earth and the its important to understanding geographic processes

6. Discuss the mechanisms that cause plate tectonics and their influence upon the earth's landscape
7. Cite the ways in which oceans including waves shape the landscape
8. Cite the ways in which glaciers form and shape the landscape
9. Discuss the significance of volcanism as it relates to human activities and as a means of shaping the landscape.
10. Cite the reasons why volcanism appears certain areas such as "The Ring of Fire"
11. Cite the relationship between biogeography and climate including the biogeography of the oceans
12. Cite the influence of weathering, erosion and mass wasting on the landscape
13. Cite at least one major influence that humans have had on:
    a. Climate
    b. The Oceans
    c. Biogeography
    d. Soils
    e. Rivers
14. Describe the earth as an integrated system of processes and its relationship to forces and events external to the earth

VII. Modes of Teaching and Learning

The primary formats, modes, and methods for teaching and learning may include:

- lecture/discussion
- individual or small-group exercises
- independent study
- field visits
- film

VIII. Papers, Examinations, and other Assessment Instruments

Assessment methods used may be:

- class participation
- written examinations

IX. Grade Determinants

In order to evaluate achievement of the goals and outcomes listed above, possible grade determinants may include:

- active participation in class discussions
- three examinations
- map quiz
- laboratory exercises

X. Texts and Materials

Sample of a specific text that may be used:

Strahler and Strahler Introducing Physical Geography, Wiley, New York
ISBN 0-471-66969-5

XI. Resources

- Library for reserve materials
- Computer access for visual; examination of fossils and contemporary primates
- Field visits to zoo and/or museum
- Guest speakers from various disciplines and community services

Revised 1/29/07