GEOG 592: Field Geography of Western Colorado (3 credits)
Course Syllabus, Summer 2015

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Course Description
You engage in the fundamentals of geography field research, focused on the natural and human geography of the Grand Valley in Western Colorado. Asking geographic questions, identifying the kinds of data needed from the field, planning for field work, working in teams, making field observations and recording data in field journals is central to the course. Basic and advanced skills are included to address both physical and human geography. This includes the use of specialized equipment, maps, data storage devices, and more practical skills in transporting data and samples back to laboratories. You also learn how to refine questions in the field, inspired by on-site observations. Refining data collection can also take place in the field. Course is appropriate for teachers at all grade levels and has no prerequisites.

Course Objectives
• Understand the role of field work in geographic inquiry
• Connect field observations and data to established concepts in geography
• Practice acquiring, organizing, and interpreting geographic data
• Select and design appropriate instruments and plans to collect field data tied to specific geographic questions
• Bridge geographic concepts to field environments

Outline of Course Content
1) Introduction: how does field work tie into geographic inquiry?
   a) Asking geographic questions and identifying the kinds and sources of data to address the questions
   b) Importance of field work, field-truthing, and connections to spatial learning, attitudes about learning, durability of experiential learning
   c) Physical and human geography field work
   d) Quantitative and qualitative field work
2) Investigation: Topic Identification and Exploration
   a) Specific geographic question for study: This course begins by examining the physical geography of exotic rivers in a desert landscape. A transition is made to human use and management of water in an arid climate. The final section of the course examines the human landscape in Grand Junction, Colorado.
      a) Data sources and access in the field; equipment needs
      b) Skills and data recording (techniques practice, journal keeping)
      c) Teamwork, team design, task assignments, field efficiency

3) Field Time: Data Collection, Recording, Field Analysis
   a) Supervised time to continue data collection, overcoming field problems
   b) Seminar: asking and refining geographic field questions
   c) Post Field Time: Data Transport, Storage, Processing

Required Readings (readings included on Blackboard)


Course Requirements

1) Complete pre-field trip readings (40 points) and review map sectionals in preparation for the initial meeting.

2) Two field quizzes (40 points total) check skills introduced and practiced in class.

3) Field Journal (40 points) with complete sets of observations, maps, sketches, and organized data tables.

4) Participation (80 points) in all field exercises and class meetings.

5) A short final exam (100 points) is then administered at the end of the trip that reviews the readings and knowledge of the field plan and the materials covered in course.

6) Submission of Final Project (200 points): Field trips are ideal experiences that generate good
teaching ideas for the classroom. The trick is to take ideas from the field and convert them into learning experiences in a classroom or class lab. You develop an annotated OUTLINE of an original, publishable instructional unit that is grade-appropriate at K-12 or community college. You can focus the unit on the physical environment, the human environment, or in the realm of human/environment interaction. The outline would identify a coordinated set of lessons, all supporting materials, and guidance for teachers. Each lesson in the outline must include educational objectives, an evaluation matrix, time needed, materials, instructional procedures, geographic questions, data, worksheets, maps, evaluation instruments, and a complete set of references and suggested reading list. During the field trips, you discuss your outline in the formative stages, introduce sample activities and concepts, and critically evaluate the problems you may face in developing the unit.

This outline is due (by email attachment) by the end of the day, September 15, 2014.

Grading
The course requirements described above total 500 points. Letter grades would be assigned based on points earned.
- A: 450 points or more
- B: 400-449 points
- C: 350-399 points
- D: 300-349 points
- F: below 300 points

Note: This course is part of a Graduate Certificate in Geography Education. As such, a grade of B or higher is required to satisfy the Certificate requirements.

Disability Accommodation Statement
Any student requesting disability accommodation for this class must inform the instructor giving appropriate notice. Students are encouraged to contact the Disability Support Services at (970) 351-2289 to certify documentation of disability and to ensure that accommodations are implemented in a timely manner.