

Welcome Letter - Getting Started:

Geography 131 – Principles of Physical Geography

Hello Geography 131 On-line Student,

****The course syllabus will be made available to you on the first day of the semester.****

****This welcome letter contains all textbook information.****

****Read the course syllabus thoroughly to learn all necessary course information.****

Welcome to GEOG 131: Principles of Physical Geography. This course is 100% on-line.

My name is Dr. Tarek A. Joseph, and I am the Professor for this course. The best ways to communicate with me are via e-mail (tjoseph@henryford.ucompass.com) or by posting a question on the course discussion board called "Student's Corner." It is not necessary to visit HFCC's campus to complete this course.

An on-line course requires a certain level of commitment and self-discipline from you, the learner. To succeed you must participate in the course on a regular basis. Put time aside each week, just as you would if you were attending classes on campus, to attend your on-line course and complete the necessary work. It is very difficult to do well if you fall behind.

If you are not sure you're ready for the commitment of an on-line course take the self-test on the HFCC Ucompass login page: <http://henryford.ucompass.com>. Click "**Is on-line for you?**" to learn if your learning style and self-discipline is suited for on-line learning.

There are certain technical requirements for success in this course. You are responsible for the necessary hardware and software, as well as the ability to competently use both. You must have access to a computer with a CD-ROM drive. You must also be able to access the Internet. To ensure that your computer is ready for on-line learning click "**Required Technology**" on the Ucompass login page: <http://henryford.ucompass.com>. The **Technology Analysis** at the bottom of the page will evaluate your computer to make sure you have the necessary software applications to access the course content. If you do not have the correct version of an application there is a link to a free upgrade page.

Should you need technical support with your Ucompass course, click the **Tech Support** link on the Ucompass login page. Call the support numbers listed or submit your question or concern via e-mail and you will receive a timely response.

How Your On-line Course Works

The web address for your on-line course is: <http://henryford.ucompass.com>. **You will not have access to your on-line course until the first day of regular classes for the semester.**

Log into Ucompass using your **WebAdvisor username** and the four-digit **mmdd of your birth** as your password (if your birthday is July 4, for example, your password would be 0704). If you do not know your WebAdvisor username, find it through the HFCC website <http://www.hfcc.edu>. Click the blue **WebAdvisor** box, then click the link for **Students** and follow the prompts to display your username.

☞ If you have trouble with your username or password, contact the HFCC Help Desk, either via e-mail at helpdesk@hfcc.edu or by telephone at (313) 845-6345.

Each time you enter the course you will see the **Announcements** page. Review this page regularly for new course information. Also be sure to check your Ucompass e-mail account on a regular basis for any important information.

Each week you will have access to a new assignment in the form of a weekly packet in the **Course Materials** section of your course. This packet will contain instructions for completing weekly assignments. Weekly assignments will include: 1) readings from both textbooks (weekly assignments); 2) discussion board posts (three during the semester); 3) quizzes (one per week); 4) AGP essays (three during the semester); and 5) exams (three during the semester). You will have from Monday to Sunday to complete and submit weekly assignments. Each Monday morning you will have access to the new weekly packet and all assignments within that packet are due to be submitted by 3:00 p.m. EST on Sunday afternoons.

It is your responsibility to keep up with the readings and the course work, as you will not be able to submit late assignments.

Course Textbooks

There are **two required** books for this course. Carefully note the following information, including sub-titles and edition numbers.

Before purchasing these textbooks read the following three suggestions!

Joseph, Tarek. A. *Geography: People, Places, and Patterns, Third Edition.* Kendall/Hunt Publishing Co: Dubuque, 2010. ISBN: 978-0-7575-7205-0 (note: purchase only **NEW copies)**

Christopherson, Robert W. *Elemental Geosystems, Sixth Edition.* Prentice Hall: Upper Saddle River, NJ, 2010. ISBN: 978-0-3215-9521-8 (note: purchase new or used copies)

Suggestions/helpful information regarding books:

1. **Joseph book:** Purchase only **new** copies of the third edition of the Joseph book. Used copies and previous editions have outdated information and often have assignment pages missing. You will not be able to complete the required assignments in this course if the Joseph book has missing assignment pages.

2. **Christopherson book:** Either new or used copies of the sixth edition of the Christopherson book are acceptable (again, purchase only **new** copies of the third edition of the Joseph book).
3. I strongly recommend purchasing these books directly from HFCC's bookstore (<http://collegestore.hfcc.edu>). This will ensure that you receive the correct books. Additionally, some students who have bought the books from on-line sources have not received them until weeks into the course.

E-mail communication: Once the semester begins, **use only your course-specific UCompass e-mail account for all e-mail correspondence.** Do not use "outside" e-mail accounts (gmail, yahoo, hotmail, etc.) to communicate with me. For all course related correspondence use only my ucompass e-mail address: tjoseph@henryford.ucompass.com.

Communication is essential in an on-line course. Contact me with any questions or concerns you have (tjoseph@henryford.ucompass.com). If your question is of a general nature, make use of the "Student's Corner" discussion board to post it.

This letter provides you with basic information needed to get started in this course. **It is imperative that you read the course syllabus thoroughly to be aware of all necessary course information.** I strongly recommend **printing the course syllabus** and keeping it on hand when you are doing coursework. The course syllabus will be made available to you on the first day of class.

Again, welcome to Geography 131: Principles of Physical Geography! I look forward to a great semester.

Best Wishes,

Dr. Tarek A. Joseph

Department of Geography

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