



El Camino College
COURSE OUTLINE OF RECORD – Official

Course Acronym:	GEOG
Course Number:	7
Descriptive Title:	Geography of California
Division:	Natural Sciences
Department:	Geography
Course Disciplines:	Geography
Catalog Description:	This course is a systematic study of California's unique and diverse physical environments and associated landforms, climates, and ecological communities. The course presents an overview of human settlement patterns, economic activities, and cultural aspects, with an emphasis on physical environment-human occupancy relationships.
Prerequisite:	
Co-requisite:	
Recommended Preparation:	Eligibility for ENGL C1000 or equivalent
Enrollment Limitation:	
Hours Lecture (per week):	3
Hours Laboratory (per week):	0
Outside Study Hours:	6
Total Course Hours:	54
Course Units:	3
Grading Method:	Letter Grade only
Credit Status:	Credit, degree applicable
Transfer CSU:	Yes
Effective Date:	Prior to July 1992
Transfer UC:	Yes
Effective Date:	prior to fall 1992
General Education: ECC	Area 2C - Social and Behavioral Science
Term:	
Other:	
CSU GE:	Area D - Social Sciences
Term:	
Other:	

IGETC:	Area 4 - Social and Behavioral Sciences
Term:	
Other:	
CalGETC:	
Term:	
Other:	
Student Learning Outcomes:	SLO #1 Basic Knowledge Students can identify the salient features of the basic concepts of physical geography. (This includes the ability to recall the definitions of the specialized vocabulary of physical geography.) SLO #2 Relationship with Their Environment Students recognize and can accurately articulate how their physical environment affects humans' lives and how human activities affect their physical environment. SLO #3 Nature of Science Students can identify the key elements of the scientific method (hypotheses, tests, observations, conclusions/interpretation of observations) in popular accounts of scientific research in magazines, newspapers, etc.
Course Objectives:	1. Identify the location of major cities and natural features on an unlabeled map of California. 2. Compare and contrast the densely populated regions of California and explain the relationship between population distribution and natural environment. 3. Explain the physical processes which influence California's climate patterns, and distinguish the climatic variations within the state. 4. Describe the biomes of California and recognize them while in the field. 5. Compare and contrast California's major water features and evaluate the supplies to estimate potential problems in the future. 6. Describe the historical periods of California's development and compare and contrast each period's effects on the current geographical characteristics of California (ethnicity, economy, city locations). 7. Compare and contrast the geographical regions of California and analyze the relationships among the natural environment, urbanization, and economy. 8. Inventory the unique qualities of California's protected areas (national parks, state parks and reserves) and assess the problems faced by these areas. 9. Assess the contemporary challenges faced by the people and environments of California and propose plans for addressing these challenges.
Major Topics:	I. Introduction to California (1 hour, lecture) A. Geographic Situation B. Political Divisions II. Population (1 hour, lecture) A. Distribution and Migration

- B. Ethnicity

III. Geology (2 hours, lecture)

- A. Soils
- B. Landforms

IV. Climate (3 hours, lecture)

- A. Influencing Factors
- B. Climate Types

V. Natural Vegetation (2 hours, lecture)

- A. Regional Characteristics
- B. Adaptations

VI. Water Supply (3 hours, lecture)

- A. Lakes and Rivers
- B. Redistribution of Water Resources

VII. Historical Geography (4 hours, lecture)

- A. Pre-European Era
- B. Spanish and Mexican Periods
- C. American Period

VIII. Northeast California (2 hours, lecture)

- A. Landscape Analysis and Settlements
- B. Economic Activities

IX. Sierra Nevada (5 hours, lecture)

- A. Landscape Analysis
- B. Economic Activities
- C. Transportation Routes

X. Trans-Sierra (3 hours, lecture)

- A. Landscape Analysis and Towns
- B. Economic Activities

XI. Southern Cascades (2 hours, lecture)

- A. Landscape Analysis and Towns
- B. Economic Activities

XII. Northwest California (4 hours, lecture)

- A. Landscape Analysis and Towns

	B. Economic Activities XIII. San Francisco Bay Area (3 hours, lecture) A. Landscape Analysis and Settlements B. Economic Activities XIV. Central Coast (4 hours, lecture) A. Landscape Analysis and Towns B. Economic Activities XV. Central Valley (3 hours, lecture) A. Landscape Analysis and Towns B. Agricultural Activity XVI. Mojave Desert (3 hours, lecture) A. Landscape Analysis and Towns B. Economic Activities XVII. Colorado Desert (3 hours, lecture) A. Landscape Analysis and Settlements B. Economic Activities XVIII. Southern California (6 hours, lecture) A. Landscape Analysis and Places B. Economic Activities
Total Lecture Hours:	54
Total Laboratory Hours:	0
Total Hours:	54
A.1. Primary Methods of Evaluation (Part 1 - CCN courses only):	
A.2. Primary Method of Evaluation (Part 2 - all courses; choose one):	1) Substantial writing assignments
Typical Assignment Using Primary Method of Evaluation:	In a one-page, typed, double-spaced essay, analyze a current news article which discusses current news about migration, ethnicity or population growth in the state, and assess the political, economic, and/or environmental effect on California.

Critical Thinking Assignment 1:	Study 3 maps of California (agriculture, terrain, and population distribution), and in a 1-2 page essay evaluate the types of agricultural activities in the state based on natural environment and distance to population centers. Examine the patterns and judge the relative importance of each factor.
Critical Thinking Assignment 2:	Choose either the Santa Ana winds or the El Nino phenomenon and explain the physical processes in a 2-page essay that includes a discussion of the environmental and economic impacts on California, and propose a plan to ameliorate the effects of future Santa Ana conditions or El Nino events. Provide a diagram to support your explanation.
Other Evaluation Methods:	Completion, Essay Exams, Matching Items, Multiple Choice, Objective Exam, Quizzes, Term or Other Papers, Written Homework
Instructional Methods:	Guest Speakers, Lecture, Multimedia presentations
If other:	
Work Outside of Class:	Problem solving activity, Required reading, Study, Written work (such as essay/composition/report/analysis/research)
If Other:	
Up-To-Date Representative Texts:	William A. Selby. Rediscovering the Golden State - California Geography. John Wiley & Sons, 2019. (Discipline Standard)
Alternative Texts:	
Required Supplementary Readings:	
Other Required Materials:	California (map), Automobile Club of Southern California.
Requisite:	
Category:	
Requisite course(s): List both prerequisites and corequisites in this box.	
Requisite and Matching skill(s): Bold the requisite skill. List the corresponding course objective under each skill(s).	
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course objective under each skill(s).	
Requisite Skill:	Eligibility of ENGL C1000 or equivalent
Requisite Skill and Matching skill(s): Bold the requisite skill. List the corresponding course objective under each skill(s). If applicable	This course involves reading college level textbooks, developing written projects, and answering essay questions. A student's success in this class will be enhanced if they have these skills. Students need well-developed reading skills in order to understand and interpret information in their textbooks and writing skills to develop essays and projects. Summarize, analyze, evaluate, and synthesize college-level texts. Write a well-reasoned, well-supported expository essay that demonstrates application of the academic writing process
Enrollment Limitations and Category:	
Enrollment Limitations Impact:	
Course Created by:	Ron Hoffman
Date:	04/01/1987
Original Board Approval Date:	
Last Reviewed and/or Revised by:	Julienne Gard
Date:	10/22/2025
Last Board Approval Date:	01/21/2026
Effective Term:	FA 2026