

# **Introduction to Geographic Information Systems (GEOG 2037)**

# **Course Syllabus**

## **Online Canvas Course 3.0 credits**

## **Spring 2020**

**Course: Introduction to Geographic Information Systems**

**Instructor: Rusti Liner**

**Email:** [**rliner@rpcc.edu**](mailto:rliner@rpcc.edu)

**Office hours: Virtual office hours by appointment**

**Format: 100% Online Canvas Course**

**Pre-Requisite:** None

**OER Text**: No textbook purchase required (OER materials provided within the course)

**Supplemental Resources:** Various assigned articles, internet links, and YouTube videos

**Course Objectives**: This course surveys basic themes geographic information systems as well as introducing thestudent to the importance of location, map use and spatial analysis. Strong computer skills are recommended to efficiently manipulate the required data reports and hands-on weekly assignments. Students will also learn about relational databases, how to collect geographic data and how to input that data into a GIS software program for output.

**Disaster Preparedness:**

Smart Notice is the campus emergency notification system

SmartNotice is our campus emergency notification system that strives to aid in the safety of the campus community. SmartNotice alerts you in the event of an emergency on or around-campus, and it is used to notify you of any campus closures. The range of communication mechanisms includes voice, email and text messaging. Students, faculty and staff are not automatically registered into the SmartNotice system. PLEASE REGISTER YOURSELF: [RPCC website](http://www.rpcc.edu/) “In the event of disaster, the RPCC Preparedness Plan will take priority over the timeline in this syllabus. The summary of key points for the plan is available on the University website and by printed literature.”

***The River Parishes Community College a member of the Louisiana Community & Technical College System Accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, or age in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following contacts located at 925 W. Edenborne Pkwy, Gonzales, LA – 225-743-8500 have been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies:***

***Julian Surla – Title IX Coordinator (jsurla@rpcc.edu)***

***Shalither Cushenberry – Section 504 Coordinator (scushenberry@rpcc.edu)***

**Corresponding Outcomes to the Course Objectives:**

At the completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Describe important historical events and people in the development of modern geography
2. Locate and retrieve data relevant to the terms, concepts and timelines covered in the course materials
3. Communicate effectively in oral and/or written English
4. Articulate chapter topics or terms and demonstrate critical thinking
5. Utilize library/information and internet resources

# **Course Materials**

* All course materials will be made available online in Canvas in the modules where they will be used.
* No textbooks or other materials need to be purchased for this course.
* Textbooks: We will be using selected readings throughout the course and they will be provided within each weekly assignment. These articles are open educational resources, meaning that they are free.

# **General Course Policies**

**Communications**: Check RPCC Canvas course and email daily. This is required to pass the course. Instructor Liner will respond to email messages within 24 hours. Please be sure to use your student RPCC email account. For help signing in for the first time or any general student email account questions use this link: [Campus Email.](https://www.rpcc.edu/campus-email/)  Correspondence received from gmail, yahoo, or any other non-educational account will be automatically deleted. Also use appropriate professional content standards such as a subject line, salutation, and closing. Try to avoid slang or text language and always use proper spelling and grammar.

**Class Format:** Each week, your assignments will be posted online via Canvas. All assignments are due by midnight everySunday on the week of the assignment. Late assignments are not accepted. Only one exception to this rule applies to the discussion board posts. Every week you must post a total of three (3) discussion board posts. The first post is always due by Friday at midnight and the remaining two (2) posts will be due by Sunday at midnight.

**Technology:** All students are expected to have reliable access to computers with Internet access (DSL or better), either at home, on campus, or elsewhere. Have a back-up plan. Failure to insure that appropriate technology is available is ***not*** an acceptable excuse for not completing work.

Canvas does have mobile apps for both Android and iOS platforms; however, not all features of Canvas function as expected in the apps or appear in the same position as on a computer. You **should not** rely on your smartphone as your only device to complete the course. See the Canvas Guides for help using the apps.

Any computer or other device used to complete an online course should meet the minimum Canvas requirements, which can be found in the guide [Basic Computer Specifications for Canvas](https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10721). Students must also use an Internet browser that is compatible with Canvas. Information regarding compatible browsers can be found in [Canvas Compatible Browsers](https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10720). Firefox or Chrome are the most recommended browsers.

Speakers or headphones are required for Canvas Conferences. Webcams are optional, in case you wish to join conferences via live video display.

All students are expected to have some experience using computers and relevant applications including but not limited to Word and PowerPoint, as well as familiarity with other electronic file types (e.g., PDFs). Students using Apple products must have MS Word installed or be able to convert Apple’s Pages files to RTF or PDF file formats for upload to Canvas.

**Google Earth Pro** is an online application that can be used on any public or private computer by simply clicking on the software link provided within the assignments. No installation is required. It runs from Google’s servers and should not be installed on RPCC computers.

**Discussion Board Rubric and Requirements:** The discussion board rubric is an important part of your onlineexperience. Each discussion board is worth 100 percentage points and follows a 10-point scale as does the final grades. In order to receive the full percentage points for each week, students must follow this rubric explicitly. Read and follow the rules below along with the table.

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1. Each week’s **first** post is due by Friday at midnight. The following **two** posts are due by Sunday at midnight. If you only post one of the three required posts, then you will receive 1/3 of the points. If you miss the deadlines, you also lose percentage points. Late posts will not be accepted.

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1. Your first post must fully answer the discussion board topic and have original content. Length should be a minimum of three to five sentences with correct spelling and grammar. Your final two posts must respond to a classmate’s post and have a minimum of three to five sentences.

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1. Do not use slang, abbreviations, text language, etc. in your posts since this is an official college assignment, not a chat room. You can chat with or email your classmates in a different forum.

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1. Be consistent and concise with your posts. A lengthy post will not receive an “A” just because it is long and thoughtful. It must appropriately answer the discussion topic. Three to five sentences should cover any topic that we discuss.

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1. Free discussion, inquiry, and expression are encouraged online in Discussion Board posts and via email exchanges, blogs, etc., but please exercise proper internet etiquette. In general, be respectful of one another and refrain from using derogatory terms or insults. We all have opinions and we should not expect to agree with every opinion given.

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| 90 -100  “A” | Timely discussion contributions. Comments are meaningful and show preparedness which reflects course readings. In-depth thought and contributions which add to the overall learning of the other individuals in the course. Demonstrates courtesy and respect to others. |
| 80 – 89  “B” | Timely discussion contributions. However, overall contribution is lacking in that readings are only sometimes incorporated into the discussions and postings do not always reflect questions posed or topics described. Individual participated in all but ONE of the discussion forums. Demonstrates courtesy and respect to others. |
| 70 – 79  “C” | Timely discussion contributions. However, overall contribution is lacking in that readings are only sometimes incorporated into the discussions and postings do not always reflect questions posed or topics described. Individual participated in all but ONE of the discussion forums. Demonstrates courtesy and respect to others. |
| 60 - 69  “D” | Overall contributions not meaningful – type of comments for example '*good idea' or* '*I agree’*. Very little evidence of having read course materials or giving any in-depth thought to the reading. Failed to participate in at least 2 discussions during the posting period. |
| 69 or below  “D – F” | Participation is erratic or non-existent. Little or no evidence of having read course materials and preparing for the discussion. Failed to participate in at least 3 discussions during the posting period. |

**Accessibility, Data Privacy and Support**

The tables provided in the [RPCC Software Policies and Support Resources Page](https://gorpcc.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Software-Policies-and-Support.pdf), list the available accessibility policies or statements, privacy policies, and support or help guides for various online products that may be used in your courses, whether face-to-face, hybrid, or online. Download access, where appropriate, is also included. These policies are also located on the left menu option, “Software Policies” in the course navigation menu in Canvas.

**Academic Integrity**

Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity.Behavior that violates these standards is not acceptable. Examples are the use of unauthorized material, communication with fellow students during an examination, attempting to benefit from the work of another student and similar behavior that defeats the intent of an examination. Cheating on examinations, plagiarism, and improper acknowledgement of sources in essays and the use of a single essay or paper in more than one course without permission are considered very serious offenses and shall be grounds for disciplinary action as outlined in the current *General Catalogue*.

Please realize that any student caught cheating, preparing work for another student, plagiarizing, or aiding in academic dishonesty will receive a zero for the work in question and/or receive a failing grade for the course. Students agree by taking this course, all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity to Safe Assign for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Safe Assign reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers.

# **Grading**

Grading for this course will be on a 10-point scale.

90-100 A

80-89 B

70-79 C

60-69 D

0-59 F

Grades from this course will come from assignments, discussion board posts, quizzes and exams. The scores earned in this course will result in the final grade. At the end of the semester your grade will be computed and that is the grade that you will receive. There are no curves or adjustments to final grades if you are on the borderline between grades. Grades for assignments will be posted within 48 hours of submission and comments will be provided in the Canvas assignment page as necessary to help each student improve on future submissions. Individual email messages are also utilized to communicate directly with students to help improve outcomes. All grades are in percentages, not points.

**Evaluation:**

Assignments (16) = 25%

Discussion Board Posts (14) = 25%

Quizzes (7) = 25%

Exams (2) = 25%

**Total** = 100%

To compute your overall course grade, average all scores in each category. Then use the following course formula to compute the final grade.

**Assignments + Discussion Board Posts + Quizzes + Exams/4 = Final grade**

**Extra Credit: No extra credit will be assigned for any reason**. Please do not ask for extra credit work atthe end of the semester, especially when classes or assignments have been missed.

**Attendance:** TheRPCC Attendance Policy states “all students are expected to regularly and punctually attend the classes in which they are enrolled.” As an online course, there are no regular class meetings. Instead, attendance is measured by activity in Canvas. Students are expected to login to Canvas at least twice a week on different days to access content and complete online assignments and activities. It is strongly recommended that students start each module well before due dates to ensure timely completion of the module activities and to allow for unexpected technical issues.

**No Show Policy**

RPCC defines a “No Show” student as one who has completed all the necessary requirements for registration in the College but has not attended a face-to-face class or completed at least one academically related activity in a hybrid or **online class** during the time specified by the Registrar each semester. All students reported by an instructor as a “No show” will be dropped from the course.

**Withdrawal from Courses**

Withdrawal from a course occurs when a student desires to withdraw from one or more courses, but is still enrolled in at least one course. Students are allowed to officially withdraw from a course by logging into their online LoLA account and officially dropping the course(s) from their schedule by the deadlines published in the Academic Calendar. Students will not receive a grade (W or letter) nor credit for a course that is dropped on or before the “Last Day to Resign/Withdraw from Classes without a W Grade,” as published in the Academic Calendar. Students will receive a grade of “W” if the course(s) is dropped after the “Last Day to Resign/Withdraw from Classes without a W Grade.” Students who discontinue attending class without dropping the course in LoLA by the stated deadlines are subject to receiving a grade of “F” posted on their RPCC academic record. All withdrawals are final upon submission.

# **Academic Support and Services**

RPCC provides a wide array of academic support services and resources to our students. Please visit the Student Services page for a more detailed listing of these resources.

[Studen](https://www.rpcc.edu/student-services/)t Services

[Academic](https://www.rpcc.edu/student-services/course-scheduling-orientation-and-advising/academic-advising/) Services

**Non-Discrimination Policy**

RPCC assures equal opportunity for all qualified persons in the admission to, participation in, or employment in the programs and activities of the university. The university is committed to the policy of compliance with federal laws and regulations concerning non-discrimination on the basis of race, religion, gender, national origin, disability, marital status, sexual preference, or veteran’s status.

**Student Disability Policy**

RPCC is committed to full compliance with all laws regarding equal opportunity for students with disabilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other applicable federal, state and local laws. The Office of Academic Affairs will respond to any requests for reasonable and appropriate accommodations in a timely and effective manner. All disabilities require documentation from the student. All university practices and activities are conducted on a nondiscriminatory and confidential basis. “At River Parishes Community College, the Office of Counseling Services (OCS), coordinates accommodations for eligible students with disabilities. These accommodations are provided to ensure that all students have access to the College’s services and programs. For more information please view [RPCC website](http://www.rpcc.edu/)

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|  | COURSE CALENDAR (subject to change) |  |
| Date | **Chapter Topic** |  |
| Week 1 | Course Orientation and Syllabus Quiz |  |
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| Week 2 | Module 1: Introduction to Geographic Information Systems |  |
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| Week 3 | Module 2: Spatial Data Models |  |
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| Week 4 | Module 2: Spatial Data Models (Labs) |  |
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| Week 5 | Module 3: Understanding Coordinate Systems |  |
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| Week 6 | Module 3: Understanding Coordinate Systems (Labs) |  |
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| Week 7 | Module 4: Displaying Geospatial Data |  |
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| Week 8 | Module 4: Displaying Geospatial Data (Labs) |  |
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| Week 9 | Module 5: Creating Geospatial Data |  |
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| Week 10 | Module 5: Creating Geospatial Data (Labs) |  |
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| Week 11 | Module 6: Understanding Remote Sensing and Analysis |  |
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| Week 12 | Module 6: Understanding Remote Sensing and Analysis (Labs) |  |
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| Week 13 | Module 7: Basic Geospatial Analysis Techniques |  |
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| Week 14 | Module 7: Basic Geospatial Analysis Techniques (Labs) |  |
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| Week 15 | Finals Review Week |  |
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| Week 16 | Finals |  |
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