

GEO 225 Welcome Letter
Introduction to Geographic Information Systems
Summer 2019 crn 51032

Instructor: Feride Schroeder

Contact Information

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Course meetings: This is a six week course that runs from June 17th to July 26th. The class meets online only.

Office location: TBD

Office hours: online on Canvas M and W 10:00 am – 11:00 pm and by appointment

Phone: I do not maintain a phone on campus. Urgent messages can be left with the Division Assistant at x3230.

Prerequisites

There are no course prerequisites, but you should have a strong familiarity with Windows and preferably some experience with Microsoft Excel or other spreadsheet program. There will be tutorials available on Canvas if you have no previous experience with Excel. This course requires you to have computer literacy, so if you have limited experience working with computers and especially Windows, you may struggle in this course.

Course Description

Introduces the concepts, techniques, and tools of a Geographic Information System (GIS), including data acquisition, management, manipulation, spatial analysis, and cartographic output. Emphasizes training in the use of technology and software to provide students with skills and a conceptual base on which they can build further expertise in GIS. Includes exercises using GIS as a tool for solving real-world problems across a wide spectrum of disciplines. Focuses on development of spatial reasoning skills with applications in fields such as natural hazards, environmental assessment, and resource management.

Student Learning Outcomes and Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, you should be able to do the following:

1. Describe a common application of geospatial technology for decision support including appropriate hardware, software and data.
2. Use appropriate cartographic principles to create a map for an application.
3. Recognize basic map coordinate systems and map scales.
4. Identify, locate, evaluate and prepare data for a geospatial application.
5. Describe how remote sensing and geographic positioning systems (GPS) data can be used in geospatial technology applications.
6. Create a geospatial database for use in a GIS.
7. Build and analyze spatial data structures including raster and vector data models.
8. Demonstrate that they can think critically and spatially to identify problems and propose solutions by producing an appropriate output (map, report, presentation) for an application area.

Canvas and Online Learning Information

The lectures and other required materials for this course will be administered through the Canvas Learning Management System (LMS). The course will be available starting Sunday, June 16th. Canvas will be used to administer lectures, take quizzes, submit lab assignments, participate in discussions, download course data, find web resources, check your grades, attend online office hours, and chat with the instructor and other students on a message board. If you need assistance logging into Canvas, go to the Cuesta Distance Education website for this quick reference guide: [Canvas Quick Reference Guide link](#). Your learning environment is best accessed from a desktop or laptop computer, using Firefox or Chrome. Please review the [browser requirements and minimum computer specifications](#). Additional information will be provided for you on the Canvas site for this course.

Online learning is not for everyone; some people may not be able to manage a course that does not meet face to face to learn. Online learning requires lots of planning and self-pacing so that you may be successful in my course. Since I will be covering a large amount of material in 6 weeks, I would highly recommend treating this course like a regular lecture course, and keeping up with lectures and quizzes. Please do not be tempted to skip a few days of lectures and expect to catch up easily. You may want to consider taking this self-assessment to determine if you are a good candidate for an online course. Go to the [Online Readiness Resources](#) to take this self-assessment. There are many resources that were designed to help you understand the basis for an online class and the skills necessary for success.

Exams

There will be two midterm exams that will need to be scheduled with the instructor or via a proctor. The instructor will offer the midterms during the lab meeting the week of the exam or by appointment. The exams must be scheduled at least one week before the exam date. The exams cannot be taken online.

Instructor Contact Expectations

Regular and effective instructor contact will be met through weekly discussions, announcements, timely feedback on assignments, email, and virtual office hours. I expect to interact with you at least twice a week online, in addition to our face-to-face laboratory section. I will respond to emails sent during the regular work week (M – F) within 24 hours. All assignments and assessments will be graded and returned to you with feedback within a few days. Grading rubrics will be provided for all assignments and the final project. (What is a rubric? Click [here](#) to find out more.)

Course materials

Required textbook (available in the bookstore):

- GIS Fundamentals, by Paul Bolstad, 5th edition

Required software (available from Cuesta College):

ESRI ArcGIS 10.6 or higher – available in the laboratory classroom and campus Open Computer Labs engineering computers (both SLO and NCC).

A flash drive to store your data and assignments. I recommend a minimum of 4 GB of storage.

The software site license for Cuesta College provides student versions of the software for you to install on your personal computers. The software is meant to run on the Windows operating system. It is possible to install the software on a Mac OS, but only after setting up a dual boot environment to run Windows. Your instructor can provide you with assistance if you choose to attempt an installation on a Mac.

Contact your instructor as soon as possible if you would like to obtain a one year site license. If you would like to load the ArcGIS software on your computer, you can check your system's compatibility on the ESRI website: [ArcGIS system requirements link](#). It is important that your computer has the storage and processing speed as outlined in the system requirements.

Technical support

If you are having difficulty viewing the course or logging in, it may be because you are not using the correct url: <https://cuesta.instructure.com/> or you are using your phone or using an unsupported browser. I do not recommend using the smart phone application except to check grades and due dates due to limited functionality. Cuesta students are encouraged to direct all Canvas technical support inquiries to support@my.cuesta.edu. If you are having issues with Canvas outside of normal working hours, you can contact the Canvas Support Hotline at (877) 921-7680 or click on the help button on the Canvas Navigation to report a problem.

Accommodations

If you need any special accommodations for a disability, please contact the instructor as soon as possible. Students are also encouraged to contact Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSPS) in the High Tech Learning Center on the first floor of the 3300 building), by phone at (805) 591-3148 or email at dspinfo@cuesta.edu as soon as possible to better ensure such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion. More information is available on the website at [Cuesta College DSPS website link](#).

College and Course policies

The College defines cheating as taking an examination or performing an assigned, evaluated task in a dishonest way, such as by having improper access to answers or submitting work that is not your own ([Cuesta College Academic Honesty statement link](#)). I take this matter very seriously. Students caught being academically dishonest may receive a failing grade on the assignments in question, be dropped from the class, or be failed in the course. Beyond this, the student may be subject to disciplinary action as determined by the Vice President of Student Services or designee.

Although I do not take attendance in this course, your participation will be monitored on Canvas and through work completed during the laboratory period. If you have not logged onto Canvas by the add deadline, you will be dropped from the course. In addition, if you miss more than 3 laboratory periods, you may be dropped from the course. After the withdrawal with a "W" deadline, and you are no longer participating in the course, you must drop the course on your own or you will receive a failing grade.

For those students trying to add the course, please refer to the college waitlist procedure and instructions. It is important that you are checking your myCuesta email daily so you do not miss your enrollment opportunity. See [Cuesta's waitlist procedure and instructions](#).

