

**LAKE TAHOE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
GEG 106 01: CALIFORNIA GEOGRAPHY**



SPRING 2023, 4 Units
Meets: Online
Course Format: Distance Education (DE)
www.ltcc.edu/online

INSTRUCTOR CONTACT:

Heather L. Benson, Ph.D. (*she/her*)

Email: hlbenson@mail.ltcc.edu

Note: The preferred method of contact is by email or Canvas Inbox.

OFFICE HOURS:

Office Hours: By appointment

Please note that I am not on call 24/7. I will not respond to emails received between 8:00pm and 8:00am Monday-Friday, or on weekends and holidays.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course provides an overview of California's geography and how natural processes have influenced its history, economics, and cultural development. Emphasis is placed on understanding the connections between the state's human, historical, social, physical, and cultural landscapes. Historical geography will be studied, including historical boom and bust cycles, explosive population growth, and the reciprocal relationships between land and life.

This course fulfills a variety of G.E. degree requirements. Please feel free to investigate how this course can be used to fulfill one of the many [degrees offered at LTCC.](#)

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

The successful student will be able to:

1. Examine the physical processes which shape the natural environments of California.
2. Analyze the use of natural resources in the state, particularly the role of water in the development of both the economic and cultural landscapes of California.

3. Analyze the influence of varying cultural and ethnic groups in shaping California's cultural landscapes.
4. Examine the physical processes which shape the natural environments of California.
5. Evaluate the origins and development of agriculture and industry in California.
6. Compare patterns of urban development in the state and evaluate current and future trends.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Upon completion of this course, you will be able to:

1. Evaluate social, cultural, economic, and environmental issues in local and global contexts.
2. Demonstrate and communicate an awareness of the complex interconnectivity between course concepts.
3. Apply course concepts and critical thinking skills to identify issues, understand relationships, and solve problems.

REQUIRED TEXT & MATERIALS:

Selby, W. (2019). *Rediscovering the golden state: California geography, 4th edition*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

The textbook is available at the LTCC Bookstore, or it can be found online here (for purchase, rent, or download): <https://www.amazon.com/Rediscovering-Golden-State-California-Geography-ebook/dp/B07M59D7YJ>.

GRADING:

Your grade will be calculated on a 90/80/70/60 percentage scale based on 400 points:

- A 90 - 100% = 360 - 400 pts
- B 80 - 99% = 320 - 359 pts
- C 70 - 79% = 280 - 319 pts
- D 60 - 69% = 240 - 279 pts
- F 0 - 59% = 0 - 239 pts

Your performance will be evaluated through various activities, including discussion exercises, quizzes, and an individual project. The final grade is based on your cumulative points over the semester. A total of 400 points is possible, divided as shown:

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Discussion Exercises (4 @ 50 pts each) | = 200 pts |
| Quizzes (5 @ 20 pts each) | = 100 pts |
| Project | = 100 pts |
| TOTAL | = 400 pts |

Discussion Exercises: On the dates listed beneath the "SCHEDULE" heading, you will complete four discussion exercises (50 points each). Discussions are a critically important part of the course, and you must complete all of them. Discussions help to contextualize course material through interactive activities. You must post your discussion responses in Canvas in each week's Module. You must read and comment on at least one other student's discussion posts to receive full credit.

Quizzes: I will administer five quizzes (20 points each) through Canvas. Quizzes are open-book and include some combination of true/false and multiple-choice questions. Students will have 40 minutes to complete each quiz (20 questions, two minutes per question). Quiz questions are drawn from the lectures, discussion exercises, course readings, and videos. Reading the textbook and engaging in the course material are necessary to perform well on quizzes. There are NO MAKE-UPS without documented evidence of illness or another emergency. Please inform your instructor in advance if you have a scheduling conflict so we can make alternative arrangements.

Project: Photo essay (100 points). A detailed assignment sheet will be distributed for the final project during Week 6. This assignment will involve learning about and doing research as well as writing. To develop your skills, your instructor will provide additional readings on research and writing. Students must also submit a draft of the final paper to an English and Writing NetTutor to receive full credit: https://laketahoec.instructure.com/courses/5023/external_tools/244.

FEEDBACK/GRADING:

Generally, I will respond to you within 24 to 48 hours of receiving a message (except on weekends and holidays). In terms of your class assignments, I will return graded assignments within 1 to 2 weeks of receiving them. Please let me know if you have any questions about the feedback in this class.

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY:

Why I Teach: I teach to serve as a mentor, to share my enthusiasm for geography, to encourage lifelong learning, to improve geographic literacy, to demonstrate that creativity and fun are parts of education, and to make the world a better place through increased cultural understanding.

What I Teach: I teach students accountability and responsibility; critical, creative, and bold thinking; communication; questioning; and problem-solving in the field of geography.

How I Teach: I use a variety of instructional methods, including (but not limited to) actively engaging students, incorporating technology into lessons, and experiential learning. Experiential learning, or learning by doing (e.g., field excursions and service learning), provides students with more insight than merely reading a textbook or attending lectures.

How I Measure My Effectiveness: I frequently reflect on my techniques and do my best to remain up-to-date on new teaching methods and styles. If students are not receiving the message I am trying to convey, I ask them for feedback, seek advice from colleagues and mentors, and adjust my practice accordingly.

Dedication to Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (short): I actively explore ways to support individuals from historically underrepresented groups by seeking out scholarships, leadership, employment, and networking opportunities. Additionally, I teach courses that expose students to alternative worldviews. That includes ensuring that my course materials incorporate and promote a diverse mix of people, backgrounds, and perspectives—from the readings and media I select to the assignments I design. Classroom exposure is essential because it helps break down barriers and promotes understanding. Through this type of education, individuals can reassess their own prejudices and biases and effect a change within themselves. Once we have acquired the information necessary to see each person as an individual rather than through the eyes of a preconceived stereotype, we can begin this change on a personal level. As a result, resolution on the community and societal levels can occur. In my classroom, students are valued, respected, and encouraged to be their unique selves, no matter their visible or invisible differences. I am committed to fostering an environment where everyone has an equal opportunity to reach their full potential, where every idea and voice can be heard, and everybody belongs.

I promise to facilitate a meaningful learning environment in exchange for your time, effort, and respect. I will be present and prepared for lectures and discussions each week and will be available to answer questions about course material over email and video calls.

MODIFICATIONS TO SYLLABUS:

This syllabus is intended to guide the student on what may be covered during the quarter and will be followed as closely as possible. However, the instructor reserves the right to modify, supplement, and make changes as the course needs arise. Students will be informed of such changes so that they will be able to complete assignments successfully.

BEING PROACTIVE:

You must be proactive in class. Proactive is defined as "creating or controlling a situation by causing something to happen rather than responding to it after it has happened." This means that you should take charge of your education at the College. In terms of grades and assignments, you must also keep track of your progress and maintain a calendar of your class assignments and due dates. I am always available to help you better plan your successful pathway through this class, so reach out for assistance or suggestions.

- COURSE AND LTCC POLICIES -**LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:**

As we come together as an educational community, we acknowledge that we are gathered on the unceded territory of Lake Tahoe and honor the original inhabitants, the Washoe people. A land acknowledgment is a step toward recognizing Indigenous communities in the stewardship and protection of their cultural resources and homelands. We honor these ancestral grounds that we are collectively gathered upon and support the strength and forced resilience that all Indigenous people have shown worldwide.

SAS ACCOMMODATIONS:

Any registered student with a verifiable disability is eligible for Student Accessibility Services. The use of services is voluntary. Students do not necessarily need to have a disability to enroll in classes offered by the SAS. However, in order to receive academic accommodations, students must have a verifiable disability. Students can be assessed at the SAS. For more information, please visit the SAS site or visit the SAS office on campus: <https://www.ltcc.edu/campusresources/studentaccessibilityservices/>.

PERSONAL PRONOUNS AND PREFERRED NAME:

Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the quarter so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. LTCC uses Name Coach to assist in the accurate use and pronunciation of pronouns for all faculty, staff, and students. For more information and to sign-up for free, visit <https://cloud.name-coach.com>.

FACULTY STATEMENT ON TOLERANCE AND DIVERSITY:

The Lake Tahoe Community College Academic Senate promotes a positive learning environment and culture based on open-mindedness, critical thinking, inclusion, tolerance, equity, and respect. Free speech is at the core of our College, but we will not tolerate racist, sexist, homophobic, or any other forms of discriminatory language or behavior. Hate speech and other such language or behavior (as defined in Lake Tahoe Community College Board Policy 5500 — Standards of Student Conduct) will result in Disciplinary Sanctions/Actions, as stated in Administrative Procedure 5520 — Student Discipline Procedures.

TITLE IX:

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, etc. Lake Tahoe Community College provides a safe environment that supports learning and encourages all students to pursue their goals and successfully achieve them. This means the College does not tolerate sex discrimination—including sexual harassment and violence—and is committed to empowering all students and employees to take action to eliminate sex discrimination on campus and to know how to get help if sex discrimination occurs. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources at: http://www.ltcc.edu/campusresources/title_ix/index.php.

CONTENT WARNING:

In this course, we will discuss a variety of sensitive topics, including immigration, race/gender/ socioeconomic inequality, government, and politics. In addition, we will be examining issues and disturbing contexts that you may have personally experienced or know someone who has. Participating in class discussions, reading course materials, and completing course assignments may remind you of experiences that you, a friend, or a family member may have gone through. We must discuss these issues respectfully while recognizing that some of us may have experienced them and their adverse effects. If, at any point, you have concerns about class content or want to discuss your personal reactions, I encourage you to email me or contact me through email or Canvas Inbox, come to office hours, or schedule an appointment.

DRUG- AND ALCOHOL-FREE CLASSROOM:

The LTTC Catalog (as defined in Lake Tahoe Community College Board Policy 5500 — Standards of Student Conduct) states that disciplinary action will be imposed for drug, alcohol, or controlled substance use: "Unlawful possession, use, sale, offer to sell, or furnishing, or being under the influence of, any controlled substance listed in Chapter 2 (commencing with Section 11053) of Division 10 of the California Health and Safety Code, an alcoholic beverage, or an intoxicant of any kind; or unlawful possession of, or offering, arranging or negotiating the sale of any drug paraphernalia, as defined in California Health and Safety Code Section 11014.5." Although this course is taught online, please understand that drug, alcohol, or controlled substance use in this class is strictly prohibited.

SMOKING POLICY:

Although this course is delivered online, LTCC recognizes the serious health problems associated with smoking tobacco, other non-tobacco products, and smokeless tobacco. LTCC also recognizes that tobacco smoke poses a health risk to non-smokers. To protect students and staff from an unhealthy environment, the LTCC Board of Trustees approved a policy in 2014 that prohibits all smoking within buildings or facilities owned or leased by the District and designates marked areas on campus for smoking. Smoking is only permitted in designated areas indicated by Designated Smoking Area signage and in personal vehicles. All other smoking and tobacco use in and on the LTCC campus is prohibited.

Individuals who refuse to comply with the College's smoking policy will be subject to the appropriate processes. For the purposes of this policy, smoking means all uses of tobacco, including cigars, cigarettes, pipes, e-cigarettes, and chewing tobacco. The sale of tobacco products is also prohibited on college property. This new policy applies to all LTCC employees, students, vendors, visitors, and other persons who use the College's vehicles and facilities. Designated smoking areas may be found on this map: https://www.ltcc.edu/_resources/pdfs/campus_healthandsafety/smokingmap2.pdf.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AND PLAGIARISM POLICY:

LTCC has a very specific Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism Policy. This policy applies to this class in that all work submitted must be 100% your own, so please read the following policy and understand it in its entirety:

<https://ltcc.elumenapp.com/catalog/2022-2023/policies-procedures,student-conduct,standards-and-policies#mainContent>

In this class, any student violating the Lake Tahoe Community College Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism Policy will receive an automatic "F," and the matter will be turned over to the appropriate disciplinary committee. If you are uncertain about what constitutes plagiarism (passing off the work, ideas, or writing of another person as your own) or about your use of sources and citations, please see me. ***If you use it, cite it.*** For valuable tips and exercises to avoid plagiarism, see: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/owlprint/589/>

ONLINE CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR (NETIQUETTE):

By enrolling in this course at Lake Tahoe Community College, you agree to abide by the College's official Student Conduct Standards. For more information on LTCC's Student Conduct Standards, please visit: <https://ltcc.elumenapp.com/catalog/2022-2023/policies-procedures/student-conduct/standards-and-policies#mainContent>

All students who enroll in this class are expected to abide by the following rules in terms of acceptable behavior, conversation, and discourse in all areas of this Canvas class, including discussions:

- Be courteous and professional when communicating with your peers, instructor, and LTCC staff.
- Stay on-topic in course discussions. All of your assignments should be substantive and contribute additional insight.
- Check your communications for proper spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Avoid slang and text-speak.
- Always go the extra mile to demonstrate that you communicate appropriately and with integrity.
- Consider your tone. Tone comes across in our written communication, whether intended or not. Be thoughtful about how your written message will be interpreted by those who read it. Your attitude will come across in your written words, so consider this when crafting your messages.
- Maintain ethics and morals. Use the same professional and courteous approach in your online communications as you would if you were participating in a face-to-face academic setting.

By enrolling in this DE course at Lake Tahoe Community College, you agree to abide by the College's official Student Conduct Standards (BP 5500). For more information on LTCC's Student Conduct Standards, please visit:

<https://ltcc.elumenapp.com/catalog/2022-2023/policies-procedures/student-conduct/standards-and-policies#mainContent>

TECHNOLOGY POLICY:

By enrolling in this class, you agree that technology—including your inability to access a computer, Wi-Fi outages, computer problems, and other technological issues—will not be an excuse for missing a deadline or not turning in an assignment. You are responsible for completing work in the class by the assigned dates and times, regardless of technology issues. Only in cases of system-wide Canvas or LTCC technology outages—which, though rare, do occur—will I allow for make-up work. Please reach out to me so that we can discuss a plan to ensure your access to the technology needed to complete course assignments.

MAKE-UPS/LATE WORK POLICY:

An assignment turned in after the date on which it is due is considered "late" by one day. Each day an assignment is late thereafter, you will receive an additional 10% grade deduction. This means that an assignment turned in the day following the due date will be considered two days late, and a deduction of 20% will be imposed. If there are events that make it impossible for you to turn in assignments on time, please let me know, and I will determine how you will submit your assignment.

Weekly online engagement is mandatory. However, you may work at your own pace and on your own time. The lectures will build on assigned readings to illuminate each geographical topic. Slides, lectures, and supplemental videos will be posted on Canvas.

The last day to withdraw from the course with a "W" is Friday, May 26.

EXTRA CREDIT:

Although not guaranteed, sometimes situations arise that make excellent extra credit opportunities. If this should happen, you will be notified in class or on Canvas of any such opportunities.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES: ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION POLICY

- Attend all twelve weeks of class. Log in weekly and review course announcements, instructions, and assignments.
- Complete all required textbook readings and review the supplemental media.
- Complete all modules, quizzes, discussion exercises, and projects.
- Be prepared to participate by communicating with classmates during discussions. Communicating with other students is mandatory. Failure to interact will negatively affect your grade.
- Stay on top of due dates.
- Use your time wisely. Adopt good time management practices.
- If you must miss an assignment for any reason, notify your instructor in advance.
- If you have trouble with the material, do not hesitate to ask for help from your instructor. Make arrangements to speak with me if you need additional help or clarification.

- LTCC STUDENT RESOURCES -

LTCC:

In addition to enrolling in this class, you have many opportunities to engage with the wider LTCC community. Included are the many clubs, activities, offices, and people who make Lake Tahoe Community College a vibrant and nurturing community. Please visit the LTCC website for more information regarding the many opportunities available at the College: www.ltcc.edu.

SAFETY:

LTCC takes the health and safety of our students, staff, faculty, and campus visitors very seriously. LTCC partnered with Rave Mobile Safety to offer an emergency notification system, called LTCC Alert, which is capable of sending emergency texts and email messages to registrants. Please sign-up for alerts here: <https://www.ltcc.edu/campusresources/health-and-safety/alert-notification-system.php>

COLLEGE CLOSURES:

From time to time, Lake Tahoe Community College must close its doors due to emergencies, including power outages, smoke, and loss of power on campus. As the challenging COVID-19 pandemic and Caldor Fire of 2021 proved, unpredictable circumstances do impact the College's ability to keep its door open. In such situations, every form of communication will be used to notify students, and the local community, of the nature of the closure. The following page offers information about how closure decisions are made by the College leadership as well as how communication with students and the community takes place: <https://www.ltcc.edu/about/weather.php>.

FOOD AND HOUSING INSECURITY:

If you are experiencing food or housing insecurity, LTCC can help. Please contact the Equity Program for more information about food, housing, or other assistance. <http://www.ltcc.edu/campusresources/equity-outreach.php>

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS:

If you are experiencing undue personal and/or academic stress during the quarter that may be interfering with your ability to perform academically, LTCC offers a range of services to assist and support you. I am available to speak with you about stresses related to your work in my course, and I can assist you in connecting with other on- and off-campus professionals. If you are ever experiencing suicidal thoughts, please contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline by dialing 988 or LiveChat at <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org>. As well, LTCC offers free support for students with Timely Care. TimelyCare is a free 24/7 mental health and medical support provider for universities and colleges that focuses on students by giving them access to mental and medical healthcare services so they can thrive at school and in life. Students can access TimelyCare's services either by downloading the app or by logging into the TimelyCare website: <https://app.timelycare.com/auth/login>.

COUNSELING:

Lake Tahoe Community College counselors are trained to help students reach their educational and career goals by providing career and academic counseling, helping students to explore their options and select a major, and providing students with information to meet transfer and degree or certificate requirements. They also assist students with other issues that can impact their academic performance, such as anxiety and other mental health stressors. Please see the following information for more on LTCC Counseling, including current-quarter support for you: <https://www.ltcc.edu/campusresources/counseling.php>.

VETERANS SERVICES:

Lake Tahoe Community College is approved for certification of students eligible to receive educational assistance from the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA). Students eligible for DVA benefits must be enrolled in a program leading to a certificate, Associate of Arts degree, or classes appropriate for transfer. For more information, see <https://www.ltcc.edu/campusresources/veterans/>.

LIBRARY & LEARNING SERVICES:

The Library & Learning Services at Lake Tahoe Community College promotes LTCC's mission by providing personalized research and tutoring support services, quality information literacy instruction, and course-related library materials for all students. We facilitate access and success through student-centered services, spaces, and collections. We strive to be an engaging and dynamic academic hub for students' individualized and collaborative tutoring, learning, and research needs. For more information, please visit the Library & Learning Services site: <http://www.ltcc.edu/campusresources/library/>.

TUTORING:

Subject Tutors will be scheduled according to the needs of students and instructors. Online tutoring is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year! LTCC students can access NetTutor via Canvas. Call the main library desk (x232) or email proctor@ltcc.edu to schedule a proctoring appointment at least 24 hours in advance.

IMPORTANT LTCC DATES:

Here is a link that includes important LTCC dates, including holidays and the last date to withdraw from the class. I recommend that you take a look to be aware of such dates. <https://www.ltcc.edu/academics/academic-calendar.php>

COURSE SCHEDULE: (subject to change)

| Date | Topic, Readings | Quiz | Notes |
|----------------|---|------------------------------|---|
| Week 1 | Course introduction, icebreaker activity | Syllabus quiz (extra credit) | Icebreaker Activity and Syllabus Quiz due Monday, April 17, 11:59pm |
| Week 2 | Chapter 1, Getting to know the Golden State | | |
| Week 3 | Chapter 3, Modern geology and geomorphology: California's recent, current, and future physical landscapes | | Regional Discussion Exercise due Monday, April 24, 11:59pm |
| Week 4 | Chapter 4, California's weather and climate | Quiz 1 Chapters 1 & 3 | Quiz 1 due Monday, May 1, 11:59pm |
| Week 5 | Chapter 5, Biogeography: Distribution of plants and animals | | Environmental Discussion Exercise due Monday, May 6, 11:59pm |
| Week 6 | Chapter 6, Water resources: Hydrology of California | Quiz 2 Chapters 4 & 5 | Quiz 2 due Monday, May 15, 11:59pm Overview of Final Project |
| Week 7 | Chapter 7, Human population and migration in California | | Last day to drop with a "W" is May 26 Population Discussion Exercise due Monday, May 22, 11:59pm |
| Week 8 | Chapter 8, California's ethnic groups, cultures, and lifestyles | Quiz 3 Chapters 6 & 7 | Quiz 3 due Monday, May 29, 11:59pm |
| Week 9 | Chapter 9, Primary industries and rural landscapes | | Economic Discussion Exercise due Monday, June 5, 11:59pm |
| Week 10 | Chapter 10, California's modern, advanced economies | Quiz 4 Chapters 8 & 9 | Quiz 4 due Monday, June 12, 11:59pm |
| Week 11 | Chapter 11, California's urban landscape | | |
| Week 12 | Course reflection and evaluation | Quiz 5 Chapters 10 & 11 | Final Project due Monday, June 26, 11:59pm Quiz 5 and Course Reflection (extra credit) due Wednesday, June 28, 11:59pm |