

2016

# Academic Learning Compact : Geography [Effective 2016]

University of South Florida St. Petersburg.

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Academic Learning Compact: Fall 2016- Spring 2017

*“ . . . to ensure student achievement in undergraduate and graduate degree programs . . . ”*



## **Academic Learning Compacts**

### **Bachelor of Arts in Geography**

**Academic Year: Fall 2016 & Spring 2017**

**Due: May 19, 2017**

### **Academic Program-linked College Mission-based Goals/Objectives**

In the matrix on the following page, please place an X in the grid that identifies the degree program goals and objectives that align with the institutional mission-based goals/objectives and the College based goals/objectives. These goals/objectives need to be documented in your ALC data.

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA ST. PETERSBURG GOALS & OBJECTIVES		COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES GOALS & OBJECTIVES	UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS												
			Anthropology	Biology	Criminology	Literature & Writing	Environmental Science (BA)	Graphic Design	Political Science	Psychology	History	I.S.S.	Journalism (BA)	World Languages	
<b>Academic Performance</b>	Use sustained evidence of SLO's and student achievement for continuous improvement	Initiate and expand graduate programs and develop formal academic ties to other graduate programs within the USF system					x								
	Offer certificate, undergraduate and graduate programs that meet regional needs						x								
	Implement and support information and instructional technologies that facilitate effective pedagogies						x								
	Enhance programs that specifically support academic excellence						x								
	Increase student awareness of participating in a global society						x								
<b>Student Engagement</b>	Create a freshman experience that enables students to thrive and move successfully through to graduation	Our students will have critical skills and a broad outlook that will make them engaged and productive citizens  Incorporate civic engagement, service learning, and experiential learning into their classes, when appropriate													
	Foster institutional pride and strengthen connections within the campus community														
	Enhance opportunities for increased student involvement in curricular and co-curricular activities						x								
<b>Diversity &amp; Inclusion</b>	Insure an inclusive community where differences are respected and valued	Cultivate a vigorous liberal arts culture by recruiting talented diverse students, maintaining small class sizes, and mentoring those students we have.  Encourage free discussion, foster critical thinking, demand that our students write, and work across disciplines					x								
	Attract and retain a diverse student population														
	Increase the diversity of faculty and staff														
<b>Research &amp; Creative Activities</b>	Create a vibrant culture of faculty research and creative scholarship	Make significant and meaningful contributions to ongoing dialogues in our academic fields.  We expect our undergraduate and graduate students to engage in research in collaboration with faculty													
	Promote and support undergraduate research as a meaningful aspect of campus life						x								
	Enhance and support research and scholarly collaborations with community partners						x								

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**Signature Page for Academic Program**

Academic Program: **Geography**

Chair/Coordinator: **Christopher F. Meindl**

Date: 6 December 2017

**Summary Statement – Academic Program Performance in Fall 2016- Spring 2017**

***Provide a summary statement about academic program performance over the previous year including high points and low points***

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The Geography major had been suspended at USFSP for several years and just completed its second full year of operation. We had a small student cadre of just a dozen students at the beginning of the fall term but this increased by three students in the spring term. Because of this, we had a couple of required classes that had no Geography majors in them. Moreover, we have yet to offer the Senior Seminar in Geography as a regularly scheduled class: we have tried to cater to students by offering it as an independent study each term, but we fear that students are not receiving the same benefit as they would if they were in a classroom with their peers. The data reflect that many students do well in some areas, but not as well in other areas.

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**Summary Statement – Impact of Changes Made in Fall 2016- Spring 2017**

***Provide a summary statement about the changes that were made in your program resulting from the ALC's in the preceding Academic Year. Include both the high points and low points***

Faculty made a special effort to identify struggling students and provide them additional help and guidance, and/or refer them to the Student Success Center. Also, in an effort to attract more students, the Geography faculty changed the name of the major to Geospatial Analysis and Geography.



## Academic Learning Compacts

### Bachelor of Arts in Geography

**Academic Year: GOALS FOR FALL 2016 & SPRING 2017**

**Mission of Academic Program (include URL):**

The degree core focuses on physical geography and environmental systems including the hydrosphere, atmosphere, geosphere, and biosphere. Particular emphasis is placed on the human modification of the natural environment and the global interconnections of the major earth systems. Electives for the degree program focuses on human geography (where the social and spatial effects of the growth of cities, including issues such as the conflicts, economic restructuring, the growth and decline of inner-cities, and urban racial and ethnic relations and disease are discussed) and physical geography (where land-use changes and impacts of urbanization on water resources are discussed). The Geospatial Science concentration focuses on the quantitative and analytical study of relationships of events and processes in space and time. In recent years, powerful new technologies and techniques have emerged that greatly improve our ability to acquire, archive, analyze and communicate information regarding people, places and other processes on or near the Earth's surface. These same technologies and analytical frameworks allow us to combine this information into multi-tiered databases describing complex and inter-related aspects of our physical and social world. Students will learn these technologies and analytical framework. The Environment and Society concentration provides students with an in-depth understanding of the socio-cultural and political contexts in which specific environmental problems arise and are addressed. Popular conceptual frameworks in human-environment interaction, such as political ecology, sustainable development, and natural hazards, are applied to a range of environmental problems at the local, national and global scales.

**List Program Goal(s) / Objective(s):**

Content/Disciplinary Knowledge:

Geography students will demonstrate knowledge of one of the world regions through analysis of examples of those regions/countries' historical or contemporary social, political, economic, environmental, and/or cultural life.

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Geography students will demonstrate a strong understanding of the contributions of the major writers and thinkers in environmental thought from within geography, environmental history, philosophy and the other social sciences.

Geography students will demonstrate a strong understanding of the spatial and temporal variations in conceptualization of the human-environment relationship.

Geography students will successfully recognize and comprehend fundamental concepts, principles, and processes about the natural world.

Geography students will demonstrate understanding of the design and purpose of qualitative research methods in the social sciences.

Geography students will demonstrate an understanding of techniques by which geographic features are referenced on the earth and the methods by which they can be represented digitally for mapping and analysis purposes.

Geography students will demonstrate knowledge of a widely-used mapping/GIS software application.

Geography students will demonstrate mastery of the fundamental principles of cartography, map design, and production.

Program Goals / Objectives must be mapped to College Goals / Objectives – use consistent nomenclature.

*ALCs must address student learning in four areas: 1. Content/Discipline Skills; 2. Communication Skills; Critical Thinking Skills; and 4. Civic Engagement.*

## 1. Content/Discipline Skills

Goals/Objectives	Means of Assessment/ Corroborating Evidence*	Criteria for Success	Findings	Plan for Use of Findings in Fall 2017 – Spring 2018
<b>Geography students will demonstrate knowledge of one of the world regions through analysis of examples of those regions/countries’ historical or</b>	GEA 2000 World Regional Geography. Students write a series of short analyses of contemporary geographic issues related to each of	80% of students will receive a score of 80% or higher on Chapter 1 Discussion Post; and	<b>Johns</b> Spring semester utilized only 2 discussion boards as the format of the	This course has been reworked using a DL improvement grant. I now use an external

<p><b>contemporary social, political, economic, environmental, and/or cultural life.</b></p>	<p>the ten world regions.</p>	<p>Chapter 8 Discussion Post.</p>	<p>course has changed. On the first board, 88% of students received a grade of 80% or higher. On the second board, 93% received a grade of 80% or higher. Fall semester: Since the format of the course has changed, I used a research paper for this assessment in Fall 2016. 71% of students received a score of 80% or higher. Admittedly, this assignment is significantly more challenging than the two discussion boards, which is why I switched to the boards in Spring. The discussions give students two attempts to work on their writing which is more beneficial, I think, than one long paper. I will continue to adjust the writing portion of this class to make it useful for students and as an assessment of learning.</p>	<p>website for hands-on activities, including mapping assignments, map quizzes and video quizzes. However, this particular assessment requires demonstration of analytical skills, which is best done through writing. I will continue to assign two or more writing projects in this class in order to assist students with demonstrating analytical thinking as well as in developing academic writing skills.</p>
<p><b>Students will demonstrate an understanding of techniques by which geographic features are referenced on the earth and the methods by which they can</b></p>	<p>GIS 3006 Introduction to Computer Cartography: will be assessed via (a) term project that requires synthesis and integration of GIS concepts tools</p>	<p>(a) 65% of GPY students will earn 80% or higher on their term project. (b) 75% of GPY</p>	<p><b>Dixon</b> No Geography majors took this course.</p>	

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<p><b>be represented digitally for mapping and analysis purposes.</b></p>	<p>and thinking and (b) the Midterm II.</p>	<p>majors will earn a minimum of 85% in the relevant questions in Midterm II.</p>		
<p><b>Geography students will demonstrate understanding of the design and purpose of qualitative research methods in the social sciences</b></p>	<p>ISS 3930 Qualitative Research Methods. Students design and complete an independent research project.</p>	<p>80% of students will receive a score of 80% or higher on the paper</p>	<p><b>Metzger</b> No Geography majors took this course this year.</p>	
<p><b>Students will demonstrate a strong understanding of the contributions of the major writers and thinkers in environmental thought from within geography, environmental history, philosophy and the other social sciences.</b></p>	<p>GEO 4379 Geography of Environment. Students take a midterm exam and a final exam</p>	<p>80% of students will receive a score of 80% or higher on both exams</p>	<p><b>Johns</b> Only 50% of students scored 80% of higher on the midterm. 66% scored 80% or higher on the final exam.</p>	<p>Targets were not met on these assessments. Two actions will be taken. First, it is critical that we separate the undergraduate from the graduate sections so I can more clearly focus the undergraduate course to the level of preparedness of students. While the exams were different between the two courses, the fact is that the material covered is nearly identical, and is very challenging for undergraduates. With separate classes, I can adjust the focus of the undergraduate course so it is more appropriate. The second action will be to lessen the rigor of the exams for</p>



				undergraduates even further, and to substitute easier readings for them in the Fall 2017 course.
<b>Students will demonstrate a strong understanding of the spatial and temporal variations in conceptualization of the human-environment relationship.</b>	GEO 4379 Geography of Environment. Students write weekly reflection papers evaluating varying perspectives on nature. One reflection deals specifically with representations of nature in the Global South.	80% of students will receive a score of 80% or higher on the reflection paper.	<b>Johns</b> 85% of students received a score of 80% or higher on this assignment.	Weekly writing reflections continue to be a good tool for student learning and assessment.
<b>Students will successfully recognize and comprehend fundamental concepts, principles, and processes about the natural world.</b>	GEO 2200 Physical Geography students take a comprehensive final exam.	80% of students will score 80% or higher on the final exam.	<b>Meindl</b> I had a total of 69 students take the comprehensive final exam and 35% scored at least 80%. However, I had only <u>two</u> students identify as Geography majors and 50% scored at least 80% on the final exam. By comparison, three Biology students took the final exam and 0% met the standard. Finally, I had 13 ESP majors take the final exam and 77% of them met the standard.	This is a Gen Ed class, so I have far more than just Geography majors in this class. Perhaps I can make a special effort to reach out to Geography majors to make sure they understand the importance of this course in their curriculum—and to offer an additional bit of exam prep time for them and all other students?
<b>Students will demonstrate mastery of the fundamental principles of cartography, map design, and production;</b>	GIS 3006 Intro to Computer Cartography. will be assessed via (a) term project that requires map composition as a final product	85% of GPY majors will earn a minimum of 85% in the relevant section of the Term Project that measures map composition skills	<b>Dixon</b> No one in Geography Major took this course	
<b>Students will demonstrate knowledge of a widely-used mapping/GIS software application.</b>	GIS 3006 Intro to Computer Cartography – will be assessed by the lab exercises.	80% of the GPY majors will earn a minimum of 75% in key lab exercises	<b>Dixon</b> No one in Geography Major took this course	

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		that are designed to test software proficiency		
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\*Please include multiple assessments. For example: students perform well on classroom assignments, norm-referenced tests/surveys, and they get accepted to graduate school or are employed.

## 2. Communication Skills

Goals/Objectives	Means of Assessment/ Corroborating Evidence*	Criteria for Success	Findings	Plan for Use of Findings in Fall 2017 – Spring 2018
<b>Students will demonstrate their ability to present their ideas and research orally.</b>	ISS 3930 Qualitative Research Methods. Students present their final research to the class in a formal presentation.	80% of the students will achieve a score of at least 80% on each of these presentations.	<b>Metzger</b> No one in Geography Major took this course	I will continue to use oral presentations in this class.
	GEO 4379 Geography of Environment. Students present the results of their film analysis and their found object analysis orally.	80% of the students will achieve a score of at least 80% on each of these presentations	<b>Johns</b> 88% of students received a score of 80% or higher on their presentations.	
<b>Students will demonstrate a high level of written communication skills through a variety of analytic writing assignments.</b>	GEO 4379 Geography of Environment. Students write two short papers of 5 to 8 pages. One analyzes the representation of nature in a film; the second analyzes a representation of nature in a found object.	80% of students will receive a score of 80% or higher on both papers.	<b>Johns</b> 78% of students received a score of 80% or higher on these assignments.	I will continue to use the short analytical papers for this class. 7/9 students did very well on these assignments.
<b>Students will communicate in writing the examination of scientific observations, hypotheses or models, to include quantitative analyses and relevance to societal issues</b>	GEO 2200 Physical Geography: students complete a final research paper.	80% of students will receive a score of 80% or higher on the paper.	<b>Meindl</b> 69 students submitted a Fla. precipitation pattern analysis and 93% scored at least 80%. I	Some students struggle to grasp to fact that the generalizations about precipitation that we

			had only two Geography majors in this class, and both of them scored at least 80% on this assignment.	discuss in class are a form of a model or hypothesis about what they can expect to find in their own analysis of Fla. precipitation data. I need to work harder to impress upon them the difference between models/hypotheses and data/facts.
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### 3. Critical Thinking Skills

Goals/Objectives	Means of Assessment/ Corroborating Evidence*	Criteria for Success	Findings	Plan for Use of Findings in Fall 2017 – Spring 2018
<b>Students will demonstrate the ability to summarize and discuss the critical theories and concepts within the field of environmental thought.</b>	GEO 4379 Geography of the Environment students take a comprehensive final exam which includes a substantial essay in which students bring various sources from the field into conversation.	80% of students will receive a score of 80% or higher on the final exam.	<b>Johns</b> Only 66% of students received a score of 80% or higher on the take-home, essay final.	While this exam is an open-book, take-home exam, students still struggled with it. Please see notes above in plans for the future.
<b>Geography students will demonstrate the ability to critically evaluate the role played by factors such as race, age, gender, ethnicity, economic status, environment, etc., in influencing human social interaction</b>	GEA 2000 World Regional Geography. Students take an exam on fundamental social processes and geographic concepts and theories (Chapter 1).	80% of students will earn 80% on the Chapter 1 exam.	<b>Johns</b> Fall 2016: 91% of students received a score of 80% or higher on this exam. Spring 2017: 88% of students received a score of 80% or higher on this exam.	The exams appear to be working very well in this class.
<b>Geography students will demonstrate the ability to critically deconstruct a variety of representations of nature and the human-nature relationship from within the canon of environmental thought.</b>	GEO 4379 Geography of Environment. Students in this course write a short paper deconstructing the representation of nature in a found object. This analysis is done within the	80% of students will receive a score of 80% or higher on the essay.	<b>Johns</b> 78% of students received a score of 80% or higher on this assignment.	I will continue to use this paper. 7/9 students did very well on it, and this is one of the most enjoyable assignments in the class from a student perspective.

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<p><b>Students will demonstrate the ability to critically examine and evaluate scientific observation, hypothesis, or model construction, and the use of scientific method to explain the natural world.</b></p>	<p>framework of the canon. GEO 2200 Physical Geography take a comprehensive final exam.</p>	<p>80% of students will score 80% or higher on the final exam.</p>	<p><b>Meindl</b> I had a total of 69 students take the comprehensive final exam and 35% scored at least 80%. However, I had only <u>two</u> students identify as Geography majors and 50% scored at least 80% on the final exam. By comparison, three Biology majors took the final exam and 0% met the standard. Finally, I had 13 ESP majors take the final exam and 77% of them met the standard.</p>	<p>I had a total of 69 students take the comprehensive final exam and 35% scored at least 80%. However, I had only <u>two</u> students identify as Geography majors and 50% scored at least 80% on the final exam. By comparison, three Biology majors took the final exam and 0% met the standard. Finally, I had 13 ESP majors take the final exam and 77% of them met the standard.</p>
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\*Please include multiple assessments. For example: students perform well on classroom assignments, norm-referenced tests/surveys, and they get accepted to graduate school or are employed

#### 4. Civic Engagement:

Goals/Objectives	Means of Assessment/ Corroborating Evidence*	Criteria for Success	Findings	Plan for Use of Findings in Fall 2017 – Spring 2018
<p><b>Geography students will engage in the community through experiential learning through the design and participation of a field based research project.</b></p>	<p>ISS 3930 Qualitative Research Methods: students in this course conduct participant observation while volunteering in a local organization.</p>	<p>80% of students will receive an 80% or higher on their final paper in which they write up and discuss their experiential learning experience.</p>	<p><b>Metzger</b> No Geography majors took the course</p>	

\*Please include multiple assessments. For example: students perform well on classroom assignments, norm-referenced tests/surveys, and they get accepted to graduate school or are employed