

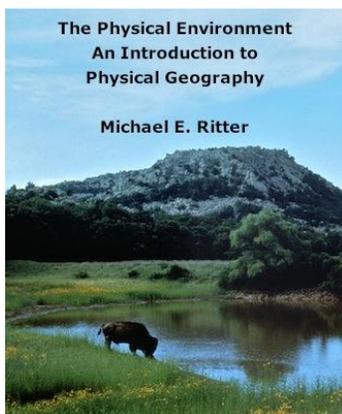


Faculty Review of Open eTextbooks

The [California Open Educational Resources Council](http://www.cool4ed.org) has designed and implemented a faculty review process of the free and open etextbooks showcased within the California Open Online Library for Education (www.cool4ed.org). Faculty from the California Community Colleges, the California State University, and the University of California were invited to review the selected free and open etextbooks using a rubric. Faculty received a stipend for their efforts and funding was provided by the State of California, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Textbook Name:

The Physical Environment: An Introduction to Physical Geography



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The Physical Environment: An Introduction to Physical Geography by Michael E. Ritter is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)

Find it: [eTextbook Website](#)

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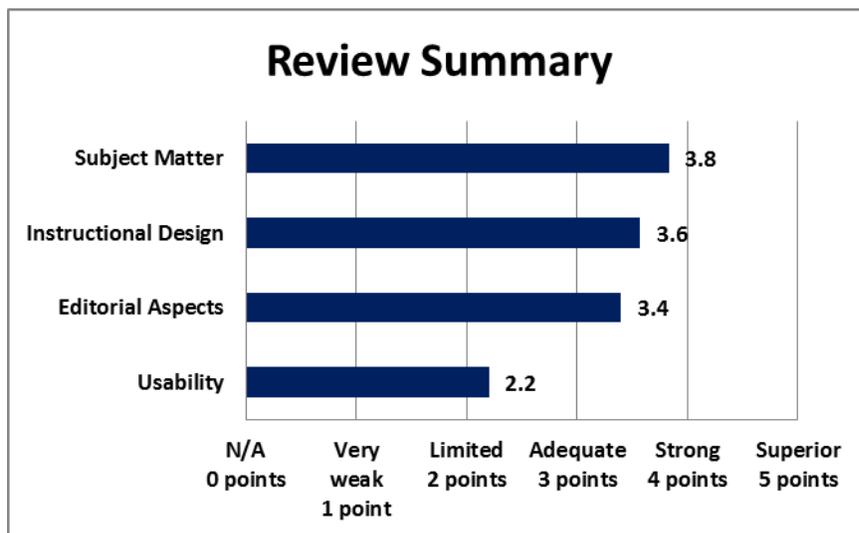
Professor

Format

Reviewed:

[Online](#)

A small fee may be associated with various formats.



Date Reviewed:

December 2015

California OER Council eTextbook Evaluation Rubric

CA Course ID: [GEOG 115](#)

Subject Matter (30 possible points)	N/A (0 pts)	Very Weak (1pt)	Limited (2 pts)	Adequate (3pts)	Strong (4 pts)	Superior (5 pts)
Is the content accurate, error-free, and unbiased?					X	
Does the text adequately cover the designated course						X

with a sufficient degree of depth and scope?						
Does the textbook use sufficient and relevant examples to present its subject matter?						X
Does the textbook use a clear, consistent terminology to present its subject matter?					X	
Does the textbook reflect current knowledge of the subject matter?						X
Does the textbook present its subject matter in a culturally sensitive manner? (e.g. Is the textbook free of offensive and insensitive examples? Does it include examples that are inclusive of a variety of races, ethnicities, and backgrounds?)	X					

Total Points: 23 out of 30

Please provide comments on any aspect of the subject matter of this textbook:

- The content is comprehensive, and more detailed than most other physical geography ebooks. There are many contemporary examples, with supporting images and animations.
- A review section concludes each chapter, with terms, questions, and a self-abasement quiz. There are also multimedia and other resources to support the content.
- However, one risk of so much material is that many of the links are broken, and the self-assessment quiz answers do not always materialize.

Instructional Design (35 possible points)	N/A (0 pts)	Very Weak (1pt)	Limited (2 pts)	Adequate (3pts)	Strong (4 pts)	Superior (5 pts)
Does the textbook present its subject materials at appropriate reading levels for undergrad use?					X	
Does the textbook reflect a consideration of different learning styles? (e.g. visual, textual?)		X				
Does the textbook present explicit learning outcomes aligned with the course and curriculum?						X
Is a coherent organization of the textbook evident to the reader/student?			X			
Does the textbook reflect best practices in the instruction of the designated course?				X		
Does the textbook contain sufficient effective ancillary materials? (e.g. test banks, individual and/or group activities or exercises, pedagogical apparatus, etc.)						X
Is the textbook searchable?						X

Total Points: 25 out of 35

Please provide comments on any aspect of the instructional design of this textbook:

- All the content appears, eventually, but the layout and accessibility will be difficult for some students. The layout is not always intuitive, and many links are broken. To some extent, this is a risk with so much comprehensive coverage of every topic. The level is written for more advanced students, and would not be appropriate for English learners, or those with weak academic backgrounds.

Editorial Aspects (25 possible points)	N/A (0 pts)	Very Weak (1pt)	Limited (2 pts)	Adequate (3pts)	Strong (4 pts)	Superior (5 pts)
Is the language of the textbook free of grammatical, spelling, usage, and typographical errors?					X	
Is the textbook written in a clear, engaging style?				X		
Does the textbook adhere to effective principles of design? (e.g. are pages laid out and organized to be clear and visually engaging and effective? Are colors, font, and typography consistent and unified?)		X				
Does the textbook include conventional editorial features? (e.g. a table of contents, glossary, citations and further references)						X
How effective are multimedia elements of the textbook? (e.g. graphics, animations, audio)					X	

Total Points: 17 out of 25

Please provide comments on any editorial aspect of this textbook.

- As above: All the content appears, eventually, but the layout and accessibility will be difficult for some students. The layout is not always intuitive, and many links are broken. To some extent, this is a risk with so much comprehensive coverage of every topic. The level is written for more advanced students, and would not be appropriate for English learners, or those with weak academic backgrounds.

Usability (25 possible points)	N/A (0 pts)	Very Weak (1pt)	Limited (2 pts)	Adequate (3pts)	Strong (4 pts)	Superior (5 pts)
Is the textbook compatible with standard and commonly available hardware/software in college/university campus student computer labs?					X	
Is the textbook accessible in a variety of different electronic formats? (e.g. .txt, .pdf, .epub, etc.)	X					
Can the textbook be printed easily?					X	
Does the user interface implicitly inform the reader how to interact with and navigate the textbook?				X		
How easily can the textbook be annotated by students and instructors?	X					

Total Points: 11 out of 25

Please provide comments on any aspect of access concerning this textbook.

- This format will challenge some users. The pages appear to print and go into pdf easily. The comprehensive amount of content, links, and option will greatly challenge students at the lower end of the scale.

Overall Ratings	Not at all (0 pts)	Very Weak (1 pt)	Limited (2 pts)	Adequate (3 pts)	Strong (4 pts)	Superior (5 pts)
What is your overall impression of the textbook?					X	
How willing would you be to adopt this book?	Not at all (0 pts)	Strong reservations (1 pt)	Limited willingness (2 pts)	Willing (3 pts)	Strongly willing (4 pts)	Enthusiastically willing (5 pts)
				X		

Total Points: 7 out of 10

Overall Comments

If you were to recommend this textbook to colleagues, what merits of the textbook would you highlight?

- This book offers comprehensive and accurate content, with numerous supplemental materials (photos, links to relevant sites, animations, and diagrams). This approach is best suited for more advanced students. The images are properly cited. Each chapter begins with clearly stated Learning Outcomes, and concludes with a useful review that offers supplemental material and self-assessments.

What areas of this textbook require improvement in order for it to be used in your courses?

- The text will benefit by streamlining some of the content, repairing the broken links, completing the few areas still "under development", and in general, working to smooth out the interface of so many moving parts. That stated, this is a strong and voluminous work that will be useful to more capable students.

We invite you to add your feedback on the textbook or the review to [the textbook site in MERLOT](#)
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For questions or more information, contact the [CA Open Educational Resources Council](#).



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