

## Teaching of College Geography

*San Diego State University, Department of Geography*

*3<sup>rd</sup> Session: Tests, Homework, Term Papers, Grading Fairly, etc.*

### **Preparing Students for Exams**

- Show test dates on syllabus/announce in class (i.e., give ample warning)
- Possibly provide sample exam questions or exams
- Make clear what type of exam will occur (e.g., multiple choice, essay, problems, etc.); weighing of questions (relative worth)
- Review sections, review handouts
- Students missing exams (have a policy)
- Providing for special students (e.g., those having dyslexia, etc.); Student Disability Services at SDSU
- Other

### **Preparing Good Tests**

- Weigh questions/points fairly and evenly of the time period preceding the exam
- Prepare clear questions (multiple choice, essay, short answer, problems, maps, etc.); strongly consider avoiding ‘true-false’ questions
- Provide adequate time
- Possibly provide different versions of the same exam to discourage/catch cheating
- Analyze past exams to detect possible problems
- Use of unannounced (‘pop’) quizzes
- Other

### **Essay Questions and Term Papers**

- Construct clear questions
- Reading (grading) essays – “gestalt” vs. “numerical” approaches
- Score adjustments
- Term papers; be clear as to expectations (e.g., length, points, originality, sources, format, due date, grading criteria, etc.)

- “Refined” term papers (i.e., allowing the student to modify in order to increase his/her score/grade)
- Plagiarism
- Other

### **Homework Assignments and Group Projects**

- Be clear on expectations (grading policy, lateness, relation to exams, etc.)
- Other

### **Grading Fairly**

- Grading expectations; i.e., average for upper- and lower-division classes; also percentages of each grade awarded
- Use of electronic scoring machines (e.g., Instructional Technology Services)
- Grading Problems (partial credit)
- Extra Credit (possibly avoid)
- Grading Curves (example); absolute scales; relative scales
- Posting Grades (and keeping students posted!) – use of Blackboard
- Other

### **Keeping Good Records**

- Class record books
- Spread sheets (e.g., using EXCEL for records)
- Blackboard
- Final grade sheets (keep a copy for your personal records)
- Keep all exams for an appropriate period (in the event of a protest)
- Other