Welcome to PCCC SC 108 GIS I - Applications of GIS  
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Welcome to PCCC GIS I! You are here for any number of reasons. Perhaps you are already aware that the US Dept of Labor has identified GIS as a high-tech discipline that is projected to be one of the top 10 fastest-growing disciplines in the 21st century, and that this course is the first step toward a desirable Certificate in GIS. Perhaps you see this as an optimum way to fulfill a PCCC lab science requirement. Perhaps you are here just to learn more about computers and to enhance your computer skills. Whatever the reason, you can be assured that you will grow and learn in this course.

PCCC GIS I represents a truly “interdisciplinary” approach to learning. You will be expected to participate in the classroom / computer lab setting, but the nature of the latest generation of ESRI® GIS software will enable you to also perform a great deal of work at home if desired. In addition, this class will draw upon the resources of the Online world by using WebCT for exercise and exam delivery, email communication, and weekly online chat sessions.

Much of the GIS learning experience is about helping each other, about learning new “tricks” from each other, about sharing new approaches to the display and analysis of data. I have also begun to develop “Tips and FAQs” documents that help with tasks that we learn but tend to forget if not performed continuously (e.g., downloading and unzipping data files). I also have no doubt that all of you will provide suggestions and feedback that will improve the course.

I encourage you to help and support each other, but also remind you: Don’t do the work for each other. That does not help learning; it hinders it. Stay in touch with each other during class and through WebCT’s communication tools (chat room, discussion forum, email). Stay on schedule with your assignment deadlines. Plan out (with my assistance) your independent research project early in the semester, and keep in mind that it is perfectly OK (in fact, preferred) to use the research requirement for this course as a "springboard" to begin GIS research that will satisfy the research project component of the PCCC-NJCU GIS Certificate currently being developed.

There are challenges ahead, but I have every confidence that each of you can do a great job and learn a great deal in this course. We are in this learning community together, even if the course is online. I am pulling for you and am here to help you empower yourself. Which takes us back to the beginning: Even though this is a learning community, please take responsibility for your performance, and remember that you will get out of this course what YOU put into it.