

# Western University

## GEOG2131B The Natural Environment

### Course Outline

Winter 2013

#### ***Instructor Information***

*Name and title:* Dr. Adam G. Yates

*Contact information:* Office – 2403  
Email – adam.yates@uwo.ca

*Office Hours:* Wednesdays 3:00pm -4:00pm (or by appointment)

#### ***Course Information***

Lecture Room: SSC 3022  
Days: Monday & Wednesday  
Hours: 10:30pm – 11:20pm

Seminar Room: SSC 3022  
Days: Friday  
Hours: 10:30pm – 11:20pm

#### ***Course Syllabus***

##### **Course descriptions**

This course introduces students to our planetary natural environment. It presents the general concepts and principles of climatology, hydrology, geomorphology, soils and terrestrial ecosystems using North American as the focus and case study examples. The course emphasizes on processes, origins, characteristics of these natural environment and their variations in space and time.

##### **Course Objectives**

By the end of the semester, you will be good at:

- Explaining the physical principles and structure of natural environment, namely atmospheric, geomorphic, hydrologic, pedologic, ecologic and biogeographic processes in Canadian context.

- Describing spatial and temporal variations in the characteristics of the processes and physical structures of the natural environment.
- Discussing and elaborating human impacts on the above-mentioned processes and physical structures.
- Understanding the natural environment as an integrated system.
- Implementing basic techniques used for the analysis of processes and structures of the physical environment.

***Anti-requisite – GEOG1300B (Physical Geography)***

0.5 credit course

2 hours of lecture and 1 hour of seminar per week

***Course Materials***

**Reading assignments**

*I. Course textbook readings*

*de Blij et al. (2009), Physical Geography: The Global Environment, 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Edition, Oxford University Press Canada.*

This text is required reading for the course and all students are strongly encouraged to purchase a copy as the lectures will draw from the text and as such the text will provide important supplementary information for integrating and contextualizing the lecture and seminar materials. Copies of the text will be available on 2-hour reserve at the Weldon Library.

The course text comes with extensive student resources (study guide and interactive quizzes) that are available at <http://www.oupcanada.com/deblij2>. These resources can be accessed using the following login information:

*Username: deblij\_pg*

*Password: Wes3E*

*II. Readings for Summary Assignments*

Assignment #1 – DeMont, J. (2010) In the eye of the storm. *Canadian Geographic*, 130: 58-66.

Assignment #2 – Gregoire, L. (2008) Cold warriors. *Canadian Geographic*, 128: 34-50.

Assignment #3 – Casey, A. (2010) Water for a dry land. *Canadian Geographic*, 130: 32-46.

Assignment #4 – Herriot, T. (2004) Snakes in the suburbs. *Canadian Geographic*, 124: 87-98.

## ***Methods of Evaluation of Assignments***

### **Course Evaluation**

#### *Article Summaries*

Students will be required to produce and submit summaries of 4 articles associated with the impacts of humans on environmental processes and physical structures and the reciprocating effects of environmental change on humans. Summaries are to be in abstract format and include descriptions of the problem, the cause and effects of the problem and potential solutions. Summaries are to be less than 250 words and will be graded on content, clarity and writing style.

#### *Examinations*

There will be 2 midterm exams and a final examination. The mid-terms exams (1 hour) will be held during scheduled tutorials in early February and early March. The final examination (3 hours) will be scheduled during the examination period at the end of the winter term. The midterm and final examinations assess knowledge of lecture, tutorial and assigned reading materials.

#### *Course Evaluation Summary*

Article Summaries	20% (5% per summary) - written summaries of assigned articles
Midterm Exam 1	20% - exam will cover all lecture and seminar material covered/assigned to date
Midterm Exam 2	20% - exam will cover all lecture and seminar material covered/assigned to date
Final Exam	40% - exam will cover all lecture and seminar material covered/assigned to date

Your evaluation will base on your knowledge of course materials as substantiated in the midterm tests, final exam, class and tutorial participations. It may not be easy to get a good mark in this course. Here are some ways that may help you obtain a mark of 70 or above in this course. Attend and participate lecture and tutorial sessions. Before class, make sure you read the entire lecture and reading materials and bring to class concepts, theories and terms that are not clear for you. During class, take reasonable notes, ask questions for clarification of any terms, concepts or theories you have not understood. After class, combine your notes on assigned reading materials and the one you took in the class and learn an integrated concepts, theories and definitions. Ask for help in case you need additional clarification using office hours and tutorial sessions.

## Course Schedule

### *Lectures, Tutorials, and Readings*

This course will be using OWL to deliver lectures, seminar articles, assignments and post grades. Lecture notes will be posted 2 to 7 days prior to a lecture session. It is your responsibility to print out these lectures and bring them to class. The lecture notes contain illustrations, photographs, maps, tables etc... that will make following a lecture easy in class. Tutorials for this course consisted of documentary movies and discussions on topics covered in class.

### *Lecture schedule (Subject to change until Jan 7)*

<b>Week</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Text Readings</b>
Jan. 7 & 9	The Planet Earth and Space	Units 2 & 4
Jan. 14 & 16	The Atmosphere: Heat and Temperature	Units 5-7
Jan. 21 & 23	Wind and Circulation	Units 8 & 9
Jan. 28 & 30	Water, Water Everywhere	Units 10-12
Feb. 4 & 6	Weather and Weather Forecasting	Units 13-15
Feb. 11 & 13	Global Climates and Climate Change	Units 16-19
<b>Feb. 18 &amp; 20</b>	<b>No Lectures - Reading Week</b>	
Feb. 25 & 27	A Planet of Rocks <i>or</i> Got Stones	Units 20-23
Mar. 4 & 6	Volcanoes and Earthquakes to a Fault	Units 24-27
Mar 11 & 13	Landscape Evolution and Weathering	Units 28-30
Mar. 18 & 20	Surface water, Streams and Erosion	Units 31-34
Mar. 25 & 27	Glacial Process and Landforms	Units 35-38
Apr. 1 & 3	Extreme Environments	Units 39-42
Apr. 8 & 10	The Biosphere	Units 43-48

*Seminar schedule (Subject to change until Jan 7)*

Week	Topics
Jan. 11	"How to write an article summary"
Jan. 18	Guest Speaker (TBA) <b>Assignment #1 Due</b>
Jan. 25	Video: From Pole to Pole (Planet Earth)
Feb. 1	Guest Speaker (TBA) <b>Assignment #2 Due</b>
<b>Feb. 8</b>	<b>Mid-term exam 1</b>
Feb. 15	Video: Inuit Knowledge and Climate Change
<b>Feb. 22</b>	<b>No Seminar - Reading Week</b>
Mar. 1	Guest Speaker (TBA) <b>Assignment #3 Due</b>
Mar. 8	Video: Journey to the Disaster Zone: Japan 311 (The Nature of Things)
Mar 15	Video: Geologic Journey: The Rockies (The Nature of Things) <b>Assignment #4 Due</b>
<b>Mar. 21</b>	<b>Mid-term exam 2</b>
Mar. 9	Guest Speaker (TBA)
Apr. 5	Video: The Last Grizzly of Paradise Valley (The Nature of Things)

### **Course Policies**

#### *Late Policy*

All article summaries must be handed in before the allocated deadline. Late submissions will be penalized at a rate of 10% per day for the first seven days. A mark of 0%-mark will be recorded if work is submitted more than a week late.

#### *Extensions*

If you have genuine extenuating circumstances and will not be able submit an assignment on time, you may submit a written request for extension, clearly outlining why you should be granted an extension. This request must be submitted to the course instructor at least seven days before the assignment is due.

#### *Accommodation*

If you have genuine extenuating circumstances and failed to submit an assignment on time, you must submit a signed doctor's letter or other legitimate documentation explaining why you failed to meet the deadline.

This documentation should be submitted directly to the Dean's Office, not the course instructor. It is the Dean's Office that will determine if accommodation is warranted.

*NOTE: Also see UWO's Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness (<https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm>).*

### *Illness*

If you have an illness during the term that affects your work or ability to write exams or to complete work on schedule, please contact me as soon as you can, so I that can help with any accommodation. Also, please refer to Western's Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness:

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/accommodation\\_medical.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf).

You can download a Student Medical Certificate (SMC) from: <https://studentservices.uwo.ca> under the Medical Documentation heading.

## ***Additional Statements***

### **Statement on Use of Electronic Devices**

Students are encouraged to bring their cell phones to class for participation in class polls. Outside of use for polls, students will have their cell phones turned off.

No electronic devices will be allowed during tests and examinations.

### **Statement on Academic Offences**

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

<http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholoff.pdf> .

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

### **Mental Health**

If you or someone you know is experiencing distress, there are several resources here at Western to assist you. Please visit the site below for more information on mental health resources:

<http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/>.

### **Western's commitment to accessibility**

The University of Western Ontario is committed to achieving barrier free accessibility for persons studying, visiting and working at Western.

Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 661-2111 x 82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation.

### **Support Services**

Registrarial Services: <http://www3.registrar.uwo.ca/index.cfm>

Student Development Services: <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>