



Image by D. Herberg (<http://www.panoramio.com>)

GEOGRAPHY 2071G World Rivers

winter/spring 2013-2014

Course Outline

v1.0 - 03 Jan 2014



Course Instructor:

M. Van De Wiel
office: Room 2412, Social Sciences Centre
email: mvandew3@uwo.ca
office hours: Tuesday, 14:00 – 17:00 (SSC 2412)

Teaching Assistant:

Yannick Rousseau
office: Room 2404, Social Sciences Centre
email: yroussea@uwo.ca
office hours: TBA

Lectures:

weekly

Monday, 12:30 – 14:30

room 3024, Social Sciences Centre

Practicals:

twice (Feb 5nd and March 5nd)

Wednesday, 10:30-11:30

room 3028, Social Sciences Centre

Tutorials:

irregular, as arranged by TA

Wednesday, 10:30-11:30

room 3028, Social Sciences Centre

Attendance:

Attendance at lectures and tutorials is optional, but recommended. Students are responsible for keeping up with course material of missed lectures, practicals and tutorials.

Course Description:

River channels convey water and sediment, ships and barges, sewage leakages and industrial pollution. They are used for sand and gravel extraction, and as artificial storage sites. They are natural habitats for flora and fauna. They are sources of health and wealth, as well as of major calamities by way of catastrophic floods, erosion and destruction, and conveyance of epidemics. Yet we like to live by them, swim in them, drink their water, fish from them and relax by them. Hence, it is not difficult to see why rivers become zones of conflicting interests, public litigation and international dispute.

Rivers are features of the landscape which profoundly affect environment, agriculture, industry, economy, politics, and culture. Yet, at the same time, rivers are affected by their physiographic environment and the natural processes occurring therein, as well as by a range of human activities. The course examines these mutual relations for several major river systems around the world.

Course Objectives:

This course introduces students to the mutual relations between rivers, their physiographic environments, and human endeavours. At the end of this course, the student will be able to ...

- perceive the importance of river systems to society, culture and environment
- relate defining properties of a river to its physiographic setting
- relate defining properties of a river to anthropogenic influences
- relate aspects of societal behaviour to the defining properties of a river
- realize that rivers aren't as simple as they seem

Course Prerequisites:

none

The course takes a case-study approach, by which a different river will be explored each week. Various aspects of these rivers will be discussed: physiography, climate, geology, natural environment, ecology, wildlife, natural resources, erosion, flooding, agriculture, navigation, settlements, pollution, industry, dams, hydropower, geo-politics, religion, and literature. However, not all of these topics will be considered for each river. Each week's lecture will introduce three or four different topics pertaining to the selected river. The students will investigate additional topics on these rivers in practicals and essay assignments.

Lecture schedule

Mon, January 6:	Introduction
Mon, January 13:	Amazon
Mon, January 20:	Mississippi
Mon, January 27:	Yangtze
Mon, February 3:	Tigris and Euphrates
Mon, February 10:	Rhine and Danube
Mon, February 17:	<i>[Reading week]</i>
Mon, February 24:	Jordan
Mon, March 3:	Mackenzie
Mon, March 10:	Nile
Mon, March 17:	Ganges/Brahmaputra
Mon, March 24:	Colorado
Mon, March 31:	Okavango
Mon, April 7:	Rio Grande

NOTE: This scheduling of lecture topics is provisional, and may change depending on class dynamics during term.

Evaluation of the course will be based on the following components:

Assignments: 65 %, of which:

short essay #1:	5 %
short essay #2:	10 %
short essay #3:	10 %
practical #1:	10 %
practical #2:	10 %
long essay:	20 %

Final exam: 35 %

The final exam will be held during the official University examination period. The final exam will be a 3-hour exam and will consist of a mix of multiple choice, short answer and short essay-type questions.

There is no mid-term exam for this course.

NOTE: No electronic devices will be allowed during tests and examinations

NOTE: The mark awarded by an instructor in a course at UWO is only final when students receive it from the Registrar.

Students will have to complete 6 assignments during the term. There are three short essays (maximum length: two pages) and one long essay (minimum length: six pages; maximum length: eight pages). In addition there are two hand-on practicals. Detailed assignment instructions will be provided on the assignment handouts (OWL).

Assignment Schedule

Wed, February 5: session: Lab #1
Tue, February 11: due: Short Essay #1
Tue, February 25: due: Lab Report #1
Tue, March 4: due: Short Essay #2
Wed, March 5: session: Lab #2
Tue, March 11: due: Lab Report #2
Tue, March 25: due: Short Essay #3
Tue, April 8: due: Long Essay

Assignment deadlines will be strictly enforced (see Late Work, below).

Late Policy:

All assignments must be handed in before 5pm on the due date. 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.

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

There is no course textbook.

Handouts of selected lecture material will be provided electronically (via OWL) before each lecture, but students may find it helpful to take notes during the lectures to complement the handouts. Additional readings, to be assigned during term, will consist of selected papers from academic journals to which the University subscribes (in print or online).

Interested students may wish to have a look at (optional):

De Villiers, M. 1999. *Water*. Stoddard Publishing, Toronto, Canada.

Gupta, A. 2007. *Large Rivers*. John Wiley and Sons, Chichester, UK.

Wohl, E. 2011. *A World of Rivers*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, US.

These three books were used as sources of information for creating this course, as were academic journals, other academic books, textbooks, and various Internet sources. All sources are credited in the lecture handouts.

Academic Conduct: Students should be familiar with the University Academic Policies and Regulations, and with the Academic Rights and Responsibilities in the Academic Calendar on the Registrar's website.

<http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/2012/pg37.html>

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/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Plagiarism refers to the inclusion or submission of someone else's work (published or unpublished) without giving credit to the original author. Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

NOTE: All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Geography Undergraduate Assistant:

Angelica Lucaci
SSC 2322A

Registrarial Services:

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

Student Development Services:

<http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Social Sciences Academic Counselling:

<http://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/>
SSC 2105

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 x82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation.

Mental Health:

If you or someone you know is experiencing distress, there are several resources at Western to assist you. Please visit <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for more information on these resources and on mental health.