

Western University
GEO 2071G World Rivers

Course Outline

Winter 2015

Instructor Information

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Teaching Assistant: Chris Chesworth

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Office Hours: TBA

Course Information

Lecture Room: SSC 3026

Day & Time: Monday – 12:30pm-2:30pm

Format: One lecture hour, One discussion/group work hour

Labs: Twice (Feb. 4 and Mar. 4)
Wednesday – 10:30am-11:30am
Room SSC 3026

Course Calendar Description:

This course introduces students to the interactions between rivers, their physiographic environments, and human activities.

Course Syllabus

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:

- understand the importance of water resources and water quality
- assess the human impact on river systems and its consequences
- relate defining properties of a river to anthropogenic influences
- understand the importance of river systems to society, culture and environment
- relate aspects of societal behaviour to the defining properties of a river
- Effectively produce a comprehensive paper using academic literature and other resources

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.

Course Schedule

Lectures and Lab/Assignments

<i>Week</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Topics</i>	<i>Lab/Assignment</i>
1	Jan 5	Introduction	
2	Jan 12	Amazon	
3	Jan 19	Colorado	
4	Jan 26	Movie: Waterlife	
5	Feb 2	Yangtze	Wed Feb 4: Lab #1
6	Feb 9	Mackenzie	Tues Feb 10: Assignment #1 due
7	Feb 16	Reading Week	
8	Feb 23	Jordan (Guest: Bergman)	Tues Feb 24: Lab Report #1 due
9	Mar 2	Nile	Tues Mar 3: Assignment #2 due Wed Mar 4: Lab #2
10	Mar 9	Grand (Guest: Krynak)	Tues Mar 11: Lab Report #2 due
11	Mar 16	Ganges/Brahmaputra	
12	Mar 23	Mississippi	
13	Mar 30	Okavango (Guest: Lipkowski)	
14	Apr 6	Rhine & Danube	Tues Apr 7: Long Essay due

Course Structure & Classroom Culture

This course requires active participation from students, both for assessment, and to enhance the learning experience of the entire class. Active learning benefits students by supporting higher-level learning and improves retention of material (M. J. Prince, 2004). Participation will be graded, and there are formal and informal expectations of involvement. Lectures will be interspersed by brainstorming, activities, and discussion. Please come to class prepared to be involved and respectful to your classmates, the instructor, guest lecturers, and the teaching assistant. Be respectful of the opinions and thoughts of other classmates posted in discussion forums and contributed to discussion. Derogatory or offensive remarks and responses are not acceptable, nor are they effective forms of academic debate.

Course Materials

Reading assignments

There is no course textbook.

Other Texts:

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.

Course Website:

Additional course information will be provided on the web using OWL. Use <http://owl.uwo.ca> and then log in using your Western University username and password. Your log in will require that you be officially enrolled in the course. Please become familiar with this site, and carefully check that your computer meets the OWL requirements.

Methods of Evaluation

Course Evaluation

Students will have to complete 5 assignments during the term. The first two assignments prepare the students for their final long essay (minimum length: six pages; maximum length: eight pages). In addition there are two hands-on labs. Detailed assignment instructions will be provided on the assignment handouts (OWL).

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

Assignments: 65 %, of which:

- participation: 5%
- assignment #1: 5 %
- assignment #2: 10 %

lab #1:	10 %
lab #2:	10 %
long essay:	25 %

Final exam: 35 %

The final exam will be held during the official University examination period. The final exam will be a 3-hour exam. There is no mid-term exam for this course.

1. Marks as posted by the course instructor are considered provisional until approved by the Department Chair. Final marks are received from the Registrar; errors may be corrected through use of a Marks Revision Form.
2. 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.
3. No electronic devices will be allowed during test and examinations

Description of Assignments

Further details will be provided when the assignments are introduced in class – below the assignments are summarized.

Assignment 1 (5%): Students are required to create an outline of their final paper (maximum 2 pages).

Assignment 2 (10%): Students are to prepare an annotated bibliography for their final paper.

Long Essay (25%): Students are required to write a long essay of a river that was not introduced in class on the themes that were focussed on in class and tie it all to the importance of water resources and quality (6-8 pages)

Lab #1 (10%):

Part 1: Making sense of numbers. At various points throughout the course, numbers of some sort are being mentioned: river discharges, river sediment loads, concentrations of chemicals, erosion rates, sizes of lakes and river basins, areas affected rainfall, rate of deforestation, In the lab, we will try to make sense of some of the numbers by converting them into measures that might make more intuitive sense – or which should grasp their enormity.

Lab #2 (10%): Students will watch a video and will answer questions about it.

Participation (5%): Includes in-class participation/activities.

Prerequisite checking:

Prerequisites: none

Antirequisite: The former Geography 2071A/B

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written permission from the Dean to enrol in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Communication Policy

1. Please contact the instructor and the teaching assistant by email GEO2071G in the subject heading, and use professional communication etiquette. The instructor will try her best respond to email messages within 24 hours (except weekends and holidays). Please ask questions with ample time for response and be patient. Personal accounts might be intercepted by SPAM filters and be sent to junkmail, and are not to be used for communication between university employees, students, and staff. The teaching assistant and I will therefore not be responding to emails that are not from @uwo.ca addresses.
2. Generally, all emails will be addressed during regular work hours (9-5). We may choose, at our discretion, to respond outside these hours, depending upon availability.
3. Announcements regarding any changes or notifications will be made on Owl. Please check often for updates.

Grade Breakdown

90-100	Excellent. You have surpassed my expectations (very rare)
80-89	Very good. You have fulfilled my expectations
70-79	Good. Expectations are mostly fulfilled with weak areas
60-69	Satisfactory. There are problems such as confusing writing or expectations were not fulfilled
50-59	Less than satisfactory. There are major problems
<50	Unsatisfactory. Task not fulfilled

Course Policies

Late Policy/Extensions

Exams: In accordance with the university policy, missed exams cannot be made up except on written medical grounds and notification prior to exam date.

Assignments: Late assignments will have a penalty of 10% per day. Assignments submitted more than 1 week late will not be accepted. Exceptions can be made for documents medical and other significant reasons beyond your control.

Non-medical absences

Non-medical absence requires prior approval of the instructor or approval by the Dean's office (appropriate documentation will be required by the Faculty Dean's Office for approval if it is not obtained prior to the midterm).

Accommodation/Illness

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components, and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department.

For Western University Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness and a downloadable SMC see:

http://www.uwo.ca/universe/handbook/appeals/accomodation_medical.pdf

Downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC): <https://studentservices.uwo.ca> under the Medical Documentation heading.

When medical illness affects work worth less than 10% of the total course grade (i.e. an assignment), please contact the course instructor for academic accommodation (documentation not required).

Additional Statements

Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

No calculators will be required or permitted in exams. Students who require electronic assistance with language translation must obtain prior approval from the instructor.

Statements 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/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

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

Western University 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.

Fire Drills:

Students are required to evacuate the building when the fire alarm is activated.

Support Services

Registration Services: <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/index.cfm>

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

Emotional/Mental Health: Students who are in emotional distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Plagiarism

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).