

Western University

GEOG2131B The Natural Environment

Course Outline

Winter 2016

Instructor Information

Name and title: Sarah Peirce

Contact: Office – SSC 2310
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Office Hours: Wednesdays 2:30pm - 3:30pm (or by appointment)

Course Information

0.5 credit course
2 hours of lecture and 1 hour of seminar per week

Lecture Room: SSC 3028
Days: Monday & Wednesday
Hours: 10:30pm – 11:20pm

Seminar Room: SSC 3028
Day: Friday
Hours: 10:30pm – 11:20pm

Course Syllabus

Course Description

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

Course Objectives

By the end of the semester, you will be able to:

- Explain the physical principles and structure of natural environment, namely atmospheric, geomorphic, hydrologic, pedologic, ecologic, and biogeographic processes with emphasis in a Canadian context.
- Describe spatial and temporal variations in the processes and physical structures of the natural environment as an integrated system.
- Discuss and evaluate human impacts on the above-mentioned processes and physical structures.
- Implement basic techniques used for the analysis of processes and structures of the physical environment.

Anti-requisite – GEOG1300B (Physical Geography)

Course Materials

Reading assignments

I. Course textbook readings

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

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

The course textbook 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(5): 58-66.

Assignment #2 – Gregoire, L. (2008) Cold warriors. *Canadian Geographic*, 128 (5): 34-50.

Assignment #3 – Casey, A. (2010) Water for a dry land. *Canadian Geographic*, 130(5): 32-46.

Assignment #4 – Herriot, T. (2004) Snakes in the suburbs. *Canadian Geographic*, 124(5): 87-98.

Copies of the articles for summary are available on 2-hour reserve at the Weldon Library and can also be found online through the library web page. Students are encouraged to find the periodical issue to take advantage of the added context of the article photographs.

Methods of Evaluation

Course Evaluation

Article Summaries

Students will be required to produce and submit summaries of 4 assigned journal articles (above). These articles investigate the impacts of humans on environmental processes and physical structures as well as the reciprocating effects of environmental change on humans.

Summaries must include descriptions of the problem, the main ideas presented, and any potential solutions mentioned in the article. Summaries are to be less than 250 words and will be graded on content, clarity, and writing style. Assignments should be handed in electronically through the course OWL page prior to the beginning of seminar. Any assignment submitted after 10:30 am on the due date will be considered late (*see late policy*). It is the student's responsibility to ensure that completed assignments are properly uploaded to OWL – no exceptions.

Examinations

There will be two midterm exams and one final examination. The midterm exams (1 hour each) 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 cover material from lectures, seminars and the assigned readings.

Course Evaluation Summary

Article Summaries	20% (2, 4, 6, 8% for 4 summaries) - 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 be based on your knowledge of course materials as demonstrated in the midterm tests, final exam, class and tutorial participations.

Tips for obtaining 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 ones you took in the class and learn integrated concepts, theories and definitions. Ask for help in case you need additional clarification during office hours and tutorial sessions.

Course Schedule

Lectures, Tutorials, and Readings

This course will be using OWL to deliver lectures, seminar articles, assignments and grades. Lecture notes will be posted at least 2 days prior to a lecture session. It is your responsibility to print out these lectures and bring them to class. Tutorials for this course consisted of documentary movies and discussions on topics covered in class.

Anticipated Lecture Schedule

Week	Topics	Text Readings
Jan. 4 & 6	The Planet Earth and Space	Units 2 & 4
Jan. 11 & 13	The Atmosphere: Heat and Temperature	Units 5-7
Jan. 18 & 20	Wind and Circulation	Units 8 & 9
Jan. 25 & 27	Water, Water Everywhere	Units 10-12
Feb. 1 & 3	Water, Water Everywhere	Units 10-12
Feb. 8 & 10	Global Climates and Climate Change	Units 16-19
Feb. 15 – 19	No Lectures - Reading Week	
Feb. 22 & 24	A Planet of Rocks <i>or</i> Got Stones	Units 20-23
Feb 29 & Mar 2	Volcanoes and Earthquakes to a Fault	Units 24-27
Mar. 7 & 9	Landscape Evolution and Weathering	Units 28-30
Mar. 14 & 16	Surface water, Streams and Erosion	Units 31-34
Mar. 21 & 23	Glacial Process and Landforms	Units 35-38

Mar. 28 & 30	Extreme Environments	Units 39-42
Apr. 4 & 6	The Biosphere	Units 43-48

Anticipated Seminar schedule

Week	Topics
Jan. 8	"How to write an article summary"
Jan. 15	Video: Inuit Knowledge and Climate Change Assignment #1 Due
Jan. 22	Class Discussion on Article #1 and "Inuit Knowledge and Climate Change"
Jan. 29	Video: Journey to the Disaster Zone: Japan 311 (The Nature of Things) Assignment #2 Due
Feb. 5	Mid-term exam 1
Feb. 12	Class Discussion on Article #2 and "Journey to the Disaster Zone: Japan 311"
Feb. 19	No Seminar - Reading Week
Feb. 26	Video: Save My Lake (The Nature of Things) Assignment #3 Due
Mar. 4	Class Discussion on Article #3 and "Save My Lake"
Mar 11	Mid-term exam 2
Mar. 18	Video: The Last Grizzly of Paradise Valley (The Nature of Things) Assignment #4 Due
Mar. 25	No Seminar – Good Friday
Apr. 1	Class Discussion on Article #4 and "The Last Grizzly of Paradise Valley"

Course Policies

Late Policy

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 are unable to 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 2 days before the assignment is due.

Accommodation

For UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness and a downloadable Student Medical Certificate see:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform_15JUN.pdf

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 contact the *Academic Counselling office* of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department.

For assignments *worth less than 10%* no medical documentation is required but you must contact the instructor before the assignment due date, or as soon as possible afterwards, to notify them of the medical absence and for arranging academic accommodation.

Additional Statements

Attendance

Attendance at lectures and seminars will not be taken. However, the course material is cumulative and poor attendance may make it difficult to keep up with subsequent material. Regular attendance is strongly recommended. It is the student's responsibility to keep up with course material of missed lectures and seminars.

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/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.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://www.registrar.uwo.ca/>

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