

GEOG 2131B – The Natural Environment Course Outline: Section 001 Winter 2022

1. Course Information



	Delivery Mode	Day/Time	Location
Lecture	In-person	Day: Monday & Wednesday Hours: 10:30am - 11:30am	UCC-67
Tutorial	In-person	Day: Friday Hours: 10:30am – 11:30am	UC-3220

*Details about design and delivery of the course are listed below in Section 6

Classes Start	Spring Reading Week	Classes End	Study day(s)	Exam Period
January 10	February 21-25	April 8	April 9	April 10-30

January 18, 2022: Last day to add a second-term half course

March 14, 2022: Last day to drop a second term half course without penalty



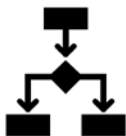
Course Instructor	Contact Information	Office Hours
Mr. Corey Dawson	cdawso46@uwo.ca	Wed. 12:00pm – 1:00pm

Teaching Assistant(s)	Contact Information	Office Hours
David Lui	dlui25@uwo.ca	TBA



- Additional office hours will be held remotely using Zoom by appointment
- Students will be able to sign up for an appointment by email

2. Calendar Description



This course will introduce students to the global natural environment through concepts and principles related to climatology, hydrology, geomorphology, soils, and biologic ecosystems. Real-world case studies from North America will be presented as examples of human dimensions relating to environmental conditions such as climate change and environmental innovations proposed for more sustainable human practices.

24 lecture hours, 0.5 course

Anti-requisite: GEOG1300B (Physical Geography)

3. Textbook



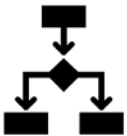
- Articles and recommended readings will be posted in OWL
- Required textbook:** de Blij et al. (2009), *Physical Geography: The Global Environment*, 2nd Canadian Edition, Oxford University Press Canada.
- Articles for Summary Assignments:**
 - Article Summary #1: Oosthoek, S. (2015). Game of Thrones. *Canadian Geographic*, 135(6): 36-42.
 - Article Summary #2: Mouallem, O. (2015). This water came from manure. *Canadian Geographic*, 135(2): 40-45.
- Recommended Readings:** TBA in OWL through out the course

4. Course Objectives and Format

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Explain the physical principles and structure of the natural environment, particularly the atmospheric, geomorphic, hydrologic, pedologic, ecologic, and biogeographic processes
- Describe spatial and temporal relationships of 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

This course involves lectures, tutorials, readings, and written assignments. Lectures will introduce concepts and theories presented in the course textbook and recommended readings. Students are expected to read the assigned readings and view documentary videos prior to participating in seminar discussions. A partial version of lecture slides will be uploaded in OWL before every class, with blanks for students to fill.



- Attendance at lectures and seminars will not be taken. However, there are article summaries (hard copy) and assignments to be completed during tutorial time. In addition, 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.
- Missed work should be completed within 48 hours. Any participation grades (2x2%) missed will be transferred to the weight of article summary content.

All course material will be posted to OWL: <http://owl.uwo.ca>. Any changes will be indicated on the OWL site and discussed with the class.

[Google Chrome](#) or [Mozilla Firefox](#) are the preferred browsers to optimally use OWL; update your browsers frequently. Students interested in evaluating their internet speed, please click [here](#).

If students need assistance, they can seek support on the [OWL Help page](#). Alternatively, they can contact the [Western Technology Services Helpdesk](#). They can be contacted by phone at 519-661-3800 or ext. 83800.

5. Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate informed awareness of geographical diversity through knowledge of different places and understanding of the processes that shape them spatially and over time.
- Combine breadth of knowledge of Geography with specialized understanding in the natural environment.
- Relate specialized understanding of the geography of bio-physical systems to knowledge and practices in environmental and natural sciences
- Critically reflect on the scope and intellectual development of the discipline of Geography
- Analyze and interpret geographical and geo-spatial data in relation to social and biophysical systems
- Analyze real-world problems and policy applications using geographical concepts, skills and understanding.
- Communicate geographic ideas and understanding effectively to a variety of audiences in writing, orally, and graphically



6. Course Content and Schedule

Lecture and seminar schedule and readings (may be changed with notice). This course will be using OWL to deliver lectures, seminar articles, and grades. Lecture slides will be posted at least 1 day prior to lecture sessions. It is the student's responsibility to access these lectures and bring them to class. Seminars for this course consist of documentary movies and discussions on topics related to assignments and article summaries.

Lecture Schedule

Week	Dates	Topic	Text Readings
1	Jan. 10 & 12	The Planet Earth and Space	Units 2 & 4
2	Jan. 17 & 19	The Atmosphere: Heat and Temperature	Units 5 - 7
3	Jan. 24 & 26	Wind and Circulation	Units 8 & 9
4	Jan. 31 & Feb. 2	Water Balance and Circulation	Units 10 - 12
5	Feb. 7 & 9	Global Climates and Climate Change	Units 16 - 19
6	Feb. 14 & 16	Earth's Profile and Rocks	Units 20 - 23
7	Feb. 21 – 25	No Lectures - Reading Week	
8	Feb. 28 & Mar. 2	Volcanoes and Earthquakes	Units 24-27
9	Mar. 7 & 9	Landscape Evolution and Weathering	Units 28 - 30
10	Mar. 14 & 16	Surface water, Streams and Erosion	Units 31 - 34
11	Mar. 21 & 23	Landforms and Glacial Processes	Units 35 - 38
12	Mar. 28 & 30	Extreme Environments	Units 39 - 42
13	Apr. 4 & 6	The Biosphere	Units 43 - 48



Seminar Schedule

Week	Dates	Topics
1	Jan. 14	Assignments and "How to write an article summary"
3	Jan. 28	Video: Save My Lake (The Nature of Things) Assignment #1 Due
5	Feb. 11	Discussion on Article 1 and "Save My Lake" Article Summary #1 Due
8	Mar. 4	Midterm Exam part 1
9	Mar. 11	Midterm Exam part 2
11	Mar. 25	Video: Manufacturing the Wild (The Nature of Things) Assignment #2 Due
13	Apr. 8	Discussion on Article 2 and "Manufacturing the Wild" Article Summary #2 Due



7. Communication



- Students should check the OWL site every 24 – 48 hours.
- A weekly update will be provided on the OWL announcements to clarify the course schedule throughout the semester.
- Students should email their instructor and teaching assistant using Western email provided above.
- Emails will be monitored daily; students will receive a response in 24 – 48 hours.
- The centrally administered **e-mail account** provided to students will be considered the individual's official university e-mail address. It is the responsibility of the account holder to ensure that e-mail received from the University at his/her official university address is attended to in a timely manner. You can read about the privacy and security of the UWO email accounts [here](#).
- This course will use the OWL forum for discussions. Students should post all course-related questions and content on the discussion forum so that everyone can access and provide answers to questions.
- The discussion forums will be monitored daily by instructors or teaching assistants.

8. Evaluation

Seminar Assignments (2x5% = 10% total)



Participation is an important part of seminar discussions and learning the course material. Although attendance will not be taken, participation will be evaluated on the basis of short in-class assignments where students will answer questions related to documentary videos on the geographies of global environmental change. There will be 2 assignments (5% each) to be submitted in-class at the end of week 3 and 11 seminars (see dates below). Evaluation will be based on quality of submissions, consisting of 5 questions per assignment (1% each) for a total of 10%. Any absences should be discussed with the Teaching Assistant or Instructor ahead of the seminar.

Article Summaries (2x10% = 20% total)

Students will be required to submit summaries of 2 pre-selected articles (listed above) and participate in seminar discussions related to article content. These articles investigate the impacts of humans on environmental processes and physical structures, providing case studies related to concepts provided in lectures.

Summaries must include descriptions of the problem, the main ideas presented, and any potential solutions mentioned in the article. Summaries should be 250 - 300 words and will be graded on content, clarity, and writing style. Summaries should be submitted electronically through the course OWL page prior to the beginning of week 5 and 13 seminars (see dates below) and a hard copy should be brought for discussions. Hard copy summaries will be submitted at the end of seminar discussions worth 2% participation and 8% summary quality for a total of 20% (10% each).

Examinations

There will be two midterm exams and one final examination. The midterm exams (1 hour each) will be held during scheduled tutorials on February 18 and March 4. The final examination (2 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.

Below is the evaluation breakdown for the course. Any deviations will be communicated.

Assessments	Format	Weight	Due Date
Seminar Assignments	Short Answer	10%	Jan. 28 & Mar. 25
Article Summaries	Written Assignment	20%	Feb. 8 & Apr. 8
Midterm Exam part 1	Cumulative Examination	15%	Mar. 4
Midterm Exam part 2	Cumulative Examination	15%	Mar. 11
Final Exam	Cumulative Examination	40%	TBA

Students are responsible for material covered in the lectures as well as the assigned chapters/sections in the text.

Your evaluation will be based on your knowledge of course materials as demonstrated in the midterm tests, final exam, and assignments.

Tips for obtaining a mark of 70 or above in this course:

- Attend lectures, participate in seminar discussions, and complete all assignments.
- Read the relevant reading materials ahead of class and ask questions about concepts, theories, and terms that are not clear to you.
- During class and seminars, take reasonable notes and ask questions for clarification of any terms, concepts, or theories you have not understood.
- After class, combine your notes from class and the readings to review and integrate concepts, theories, and definitions.
- Ask for additional clarification during office hours, seminars, or post questions on the course discussion board

- Electronic article summaries are due at 10:25 am and hard copies due at 10:30 am on submission dates (see above). Late electronic submissions will be accepted until 2 days after the deadline.
 - Assignment rubrics will be used to evaluate assessments and will be posted with the instructions.
 - After an assessment is returned, students should wait 24 hours to digest feedback before contacting their evaluator; to ensure a timely response, reach out within 7 days.
- Click [here](#) for a detailed and comprehensive set of policies and regulations concerning examinations and grading. The table below outlines the University-wide grade descriptors.

A+	90-100	One could scarcely expect better from a student at this level
A	80-89	Superior work which is clearly above average
B	70-79	Good work, meeting all requirements, and eminently satisfactory
C	60-69	Competent work, meeting requirements
D	50-59	Fair work, minimally acceptable
F	below 50	Fail



Information about late or missed evaluations:

If documentation is required for either medical or non-medical academic accommodation, then such documentation must be submitted by the student directly to the appropriate Faculty Dean's office and not to the instructor. It will be the Dean's office that will determine if accommodation is warranted.

- Late article summaries and assignments without illness self-reports will be subject to a late penalty of 10% per day for the first 7 days. A mark of 0% will be recorded if work is submitted more than a week late. Failure to submit hard copies during seminars will be penalized 20% of each article summary grade (2% of course grade).
- If you are unable to submit an assessment 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 instructor 2 days before the assessment is due. Late article summaries and assignments with illness self-reports should be submitted within 24 hours of submission of the last illness self-report for no penalty.
- An assignment cannot be submitted after it has been returned to the class. An alternative assessment will be assigned if circumstances require.
- A make-up test will be offered for midterm exam part 1 or part 2 on March 11 at 10:30 am – 11:30 am (tutorial time block).

Grades will not be adjusted on the basis of need. It is important to monitor your performance in the course. Remember: *You* are responsible for your grades in this course.

9. Accommodation Policies

Students with disabilities work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and

cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#).

Academic Consideration for Student Absence

Students will have up to two (2) opportunities during the regular academic year to use an on-line portal to self-report an absence during the term, provided the following conditions are met: the absence is no more than 48 hours in duration, and the assessment for which consideration is being sought is worth 30% or less of the student's final grade. Students are expected to contact their instructors within 24 hours of the end of the period of the self-reported absence, unless noted on the syllabus. Students are not able to use the self-reporting option in the following circumstances:

- for exams scheduled by the Office of the Registrar (e.g., December and April exams)
- absence of a duration greater than 48 hours,
- assessments worth more than 30% of the student's final grade,
- if a student has already used the self-reporting portal twice during the academic year

If the conditions for a Self-Reported Absence are *not* met, students will need to provide a Student Medical Certificate if the absence is medical, or provide appropriate documentation if there are compassionate grounds for the absence in question. Students are encouraged to contact their Faculty academic counselling office to obtain more information about the relevant documentation.

Students should also note that individual instructors are not permitted to receive documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for consideration on medical grounds, or for other reasons. **All documentation required for absences that are not covered by the Self-Reported Absence Policy must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's Home Faculty.**

Western University policy on Consideration for Student Absence

Student Medical Certificate (SMC)

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the [Western Multicultural Calendar](#).

10. Make-up Examinations

Make-ups will be granted with approved documentation only. All documentation for missed exams must be provided to the [Academic Counselling Office](#) within 48 hours of the scheduled exam, otherwise the instructor will assign a grade of zero.

The content of make-ups may differ substantially from the scheduled test or examination.

11. Use of Electronic Devices

With the exception of calculators, if necessary, no electronic devices will be allowed during tests and examinations. Laptops are encouraged for note taking during lectures.

12. How to Be Successful in this Class:

Students enrolled in this class should understand the level of autonomy and self-discipline required to be successful.

1. Invest in a planner or application to keep track of your courses. Populate all your deadlines at the start of the term and schedule time at the start of each week to get organized and manage your time.
2. Make it a daily habit to log onto OWL to ensure you have seen everything posted to help you succeed in this class.
3. Follow weekly checklists created on OWL or create your own to help you stay on track.
4. Take notes as you go through the lesson material. Keeping handwritten notes or even notes on a regular Word document will help you learn more effectively.
5. Connect with others. Try forming a study group and try meeting on a weekly basis for study and peer support.
6. Do not be afraid to ask questions. If you are struggling with a topic, check the online discussion boards or contact your instructor and or teaching assistant.
7. Reward yourself for successes. It seems easier to motivate ourselves knowing that there is something waiting for us at the end of the task.



13. Course delivery with respect to the COVID-19 pandemic

Although the intent is for this course to be delivered in-person, the changing COVID-19 landscape may necessitate some or all of the course to be delivered online, either synchronously (i.e., at the times indicated in the timetable) or asynchronously (e.g., posted on OWL for students to view at their convenience). The grading scheme will not change. Any assessments affected will be conducted online as determined by the course instructor.

When deemed necessary, tests and examinations in this course will be conducted using a remote proctoring service. By taking this course, you are consenting to the use of this software and acknowledge that you will be required to provide personal information (including some biometric data) and the session will be recorded. Completion of this course will require you to have a reliable internet connection and a device that meets the technical requirements for this service. More information about this remote proctoring service, including technical requirements, is available on Western's Remote Proctoring website at: <https://remoteproctoring.uwo.ca>.

14. Information on COVID-19

Masking Guidelines

Students will be expected to wear triple layer, non-medical, paper masks at all times in the classroom as per University policy and public health directives. Students who are unable to wear

a mask must seek formal accommodation through Western Accessible Education, and present medical documentation.

Students are not permitted to eat or drink while in class to ensure masks stay in place. Students will be able to eat and drink outside of the classroom during scheduled breaks.

Students unwilling to wear a mask as stipulated by Western policy and public health directives will be referred to the Dean, and such actions will be considered a violation of the student Code of Conduct.

Course Absences due to Daily COVID Screening Questionnaire

Missed assessments (i.e., assignments, article summaries, midterms, etc.) require formal academic considerations (typically self-reported absences and/or academic counselling). Students should be aware that some learning outcomes cannot be easily made up and may need to be completed in a subsequent year. Your instructor will provide you with further information as to how this applies within this course.

Students who demonstrate a pattern of routinely missing coursework due to self-reported COVID symptoms, and therefore do not demonstrate mastery of the learning outcomes of the course, will not receive credit for the course.

15. 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.

16. Western's Commitment to Accessibility

The Department of Geography and Environment strives at all times to provide accessibility to all faculty, staff, students and visitors in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.

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 519-661-2147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation. Information regarding accommodation of exams is available on the Registrar's website.

More information about "Accessibility at Western" is available.

17. Mental Health

If you or someone you know is experiencing distress, there are several resources here at Western to assist you. Please visit Western's Health and Wellness website for more information on mental health resources.

18. Support Services

Western's Support Services
Student Development Centre

19. Important Dates

January 10: Classes resume

January 18: Last day to add a second term half course

February 21: Family Day – Department Office Closed

February 21-25: Spring Reading Week (No classes; Department Office open)

March 14: Last day to drop a first term half course without penalty

April 8: Classes end

April 9: Study days

April 10-31: Examination Period