

# Western University

## GEOG2131B The Natural Environment

### Course Outline Winter 2017

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

*Name and title:* Ms. Sarah Peirce

*Contact:* Office – SSC 2223  
Email – speirce@uwo.ca

*Office Hours:* TBD (or by appointment)

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

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

Lecture Room: SSC 3026  
Days: Monday & Wednesday  
Hours: 10:30pm – 11:30pm

Seminar Room: SSC 3026  
Day: Friday  
Hours: 10:30pm – 11:30pm

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

##### **Course Description**

This course will introduce you 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.

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

### ***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 obtain 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*

Article Summary #1 – Oosthoek, S. (2015) Game of Thrones. *Canadian Geographic*, 135(6): 36-42.

Article Summary #2 – Casselman, A. (2015) The Big One. *Canadian Geographic*, 135(6): 48-58.

Article Summary #3 – Mouallem, O. (2015) This water came from manure. *Canadian Geographic*, 135(2): 40-45.

Article Summary #4 – Walker, N. (2016) Valley of the Grizzlies. *Canadian Geographic*, 136(2): 32-41.

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**

### **Seminar Assignments (4x2% = 8% total)**

Participation is an important part of this course, both for learning the course material as well as keeping seminar and in-class discussions interesting and engaging. Participation will be evaluated on the basis of short in-class assignments where students will answer questions related to the course and seminar topics. There will be 4 assignments (2% each) to be submitted in-class at the end of seminar discussions (see dates below) for a total of 8%. Evaluation will be based on quality of the submission. Any absences should be discussed with the Teaching Assistant or Instructor ahead of the seminar.

### **Article Summaries (1x2%, 3x5% = 17% total)**

Students will be required to produce and submit summaries of 4 pre-selected articles (listed 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. The first article summary is worth 2% and the three subsequent assignments are worth 5% for a total of 17%.

### **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 (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.

### **Course Evaluation Summary**

<b>Assignments</b>	<b>25%</b> - seminar assignments (8%) and article summaries (17%) – Details outlined above.
<b>Midterm Exam 1</b>	<b>15%</b> - exam will cover all lecture and seminar material covered/assigned to date.
<b>Midterm Exam 2</b>	<b>20%</b> - exam will cover all lecture and seminar material covered/assigned to date.
<b>Final Exam</b>	<b>40%</b> - 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 assignments.

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

- Attend and participate lecture and seminar sessions and complete all assignments.
- Read the relevant reading materials ahead of class and ask questions about concepts, theories, and terms that are not clear for you.
- During class and seminar, 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 and seminar sessions.

## **Course Schedule**

### *Lectures, Seminars, and Readings*

This course will be using OWL to deliver lectures, seminar articles, and grades. Lecture notes will be posted at least 1 day prior to a lecture session. It is your responsibility to print out these lectures and bring them to class. Seminars for this course consist of documentary movies and discussions on topics covered in class.

### *Anticipated Lecture Schedule*

<b>Week</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Text Readings</b>
<b>Jan. 6, 9 &amp; 11</b>	The Planet Earth and Space	Units 2 & 4
<b>Jan. 16 &amp; 18</b>	The Atmosphere: Heat and Temperature	Units 5-7
<b>Jan. 23 &amp; 25</b>	Wind and Circulation	Units 8 & 9
<b>Jan. 30 &amp; Feb 1</b>	Water, Water Everywhere	Units 10-12
<b>Feb. 6 &amp; 8</b>	Global Climates and Climate Change	Units 16-19
<b>Feb. 13 &amp; 15</b>	A Planet of Rocks <i>or</i> Got Stones	Units 20-23
<b>Feb. 20 - 24</b>	<b>No Lectures - Reading Week</b>	
<b>Feb. 27 &amp; Mar 1</b>	Volcanoes and Earthquakes to a Fault	Units 24-27
<b>Mar. 6 &amp; 8</b>	Landscape Evolution and Weathering	Units 28-30

<b>Mar. 13 &amp; 15</b>	Surface water, Streams and Erosion	Units 31-34
<b>Mar. 20 &amp; 22</b>	Glacial Process and Landforms	Units 35-38
<b>Mar. 27 &amp; 29</b>	Extreme Environments	Units 39-42
<b>Apr. 3, 5 &amp; 7</b>	The Biosphere	Units 43-48

*Anticipated Seminar schedule*

<b>Week</b>	<b>Topics</b>
<b>Jan. 6</b>	Lecture: Introduction and Planet Earth
<b>Jan. 13</b>	Assignments and "How to write an article summary"
<b>Jan. 20</b>	Video: Inuit Knowledge and Climate Change <b>Article Summary #1 Due</b>
<b>Jan. 27</b>	Class Discussion on Article #1 and "Inuit Knowledge and Climate Change" <b>Seminar (in-class) Assignment # 1 Due</b>
<b>Feb. 3</b>	<b>Midterm 1</b>
<b>Feb. 10</b>	Video: Journey to the Disaster Zone: Japan 311 (The Nature of Things) <b>Article Summary #2 Due</b>
<b>Feb. 17</b>	Class Discussion on Article #2 and "Journey to the Disaster Zone: Japan 311" <b>Seminar (in-class) Assignment #2 Due</b>
<b>Feb. 24</b>	<b>Reading Week</b>
<b>Mar. 3</b>	Video: Save My Lake (The Nature of Things) <b>Article Summary #3 Due</b>
<b>Mar 10</b>	<b>Midterm exam 2</b>
<b>Mar. 17</b>	Class Discussion on Article #3 and "Save My Lake" <b>Seminar (in-class) Assignment #3 Due</b>
<b>Mar. 24</b>	Video: Manufacturing the Wild (The Nature of Things) <b>Assignment #4 Due</b>
<b>Mar. 31</b>	Class Discussion on Article #4 and "Manufacturing the Wild" <b>Seminar (in-class) Assignment #4 Due</b>
<b>April 7</b>	Guest Lecture: The Biosphere

## **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/accommodation_medical.pdf)

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/medicalform\\_15JUN.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.

Students with special accommodation will write make-up tests and examinations administered by the department on Fridays during respective periods of fall and winter terms. To prevent prior disclosure, the format and contents of make-ups may differ substantially from the scheduled test or examination.

## **Additional Statements**

### **Attendance**

Attendance at lectures and seminars will not be taken. However, there are assignments to be completed during seminar 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.

### **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](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/>.

You can also visit the Wellness Education Centre (UCC 76) for information on the health and wellness resources available at Western and in the London community.

### **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**

Office of the Registrar: <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/>

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