COURSE OUTLINE

EARTH SC/ENV SC 3BO3 –GLOBAL CHANGE, ECOSYSTEMS AND THE EARTH SYSTEM

Winter 2018

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INSTRUCTIONAL ASSISTANT: TBA Email

Course Description: An examination of how soil, water, vegetation, ecosystem and climate processes occur and interact at landscape, regional and global scales, and of the consequences of climate change on terrestrial ecosystem form and function. Feedbacks between ecological systems and climate change will be examined.

Lectures: Mondays and Thursdays 9:30-10:20 am DSB AB102
Labs: Labs begin the week of January 15, 2017.
LO1- Monday 12:30-14:20 BSB B154
LO2- Wednesday 12:30-14:20 BSB B154
LO3- Wednesday 8:30-10:20 BSB B154

Required Texts & Materials: Readings will be provided.

Course Objectives: The objectives for this course would be to 1) to integrate previous learning into deeper thinking about the physical processes that affect soil and water quality as well as the distribution of vegetation, 2) to examine historic (Quaternary) ecotonal boundaries and their relationship to the physical environment at various scales 3) and apply these learnings to discussions about the implications of changing future climate on vegetation biodiversity and how that will affect the local and global carbon budget. Primary research articles will be used to promote nuanced discussion of these complex issues. Cross disciplinary thinking is highly encouraged in discussions and assignments.

Format: Weekly lectures will introduce topics that will be discussed in lab sections as groups. Lab section time will also be used for assignments and presentations (if you choose a presentation).

Schedule of Topics:
4 Jan Course introduction
8-29 Jan  
Earth Systems, geochemical cycles, soils, erosion

1 Feb – 1 Mar  
Climate cycles, Quaternary environments, vegetation distribution, plant migration

5 Mar – 5 Apr  
Climate predictions, changing environments, impact on ecosystems.

5 Apr - 9 Apr  
Review and essay/presentations assistance

**Evaluation:**

Assignments: 4 x 15% each  
Essay or presentation (your individual choice): 25%

Final Exam: 15%

Up to 2 assignment marks can be added to the final exam. **No MSAF** necessary for the first two missed assignments although doing the assignments is recommended. For example, if you only do 3 assignments, the final will be worth 30%. Your final mark will be calculated using the combination of exam and assignments that gives you the highest mark with a minimum of two assignments completed.

**Absences & Missed Work:**

If you are absent from the university for a minor medical reason, lasting up to 3 calendar days, you may report your absence, **once per term**, without documentation, using the McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF). Absences for a longer duration or for other reasons must be reported to your Faculty office, with documentation, and relief from term work may not necessarily be granted. When using the MSAF, report your absence to course instructor or designate. You must then contact the instructor/instructional assistant/other immediately (normally within 2 working days) by email. Please refer to the contact list on the first page of this outline for appropriate email addresses. The instructor/instructional assistant will indicate what relief may be granted for the work you have missed, and relevant details such as revised deadlines, or time and location of a make-up exam/quiz/test. Please note that the MSAF may not be used for final deliverables, nor can it be used for a final examination or its equivalent.

Checking Your Grades: Grades will be made available on Avenue to Learn

**Re-mark Policy:** Students have 1 week from the release of a mark to contest it.

**Communication between Students and Faculty:** Please contact me by email or personally after the lectures. I am also available to make appointments.

**Student Responsibilities:**
To get the most out of the course, you must be prepared to:
• attend all sessions, make up all missed work, and provide documentation for authorized absences;
• interact frequently with faculty, students, TAs, and other support staff;
• plan and manage your own time;
• complete preparatory tasks (such as reading, writing assignments, and initial research) in advance of sessions;
• develop and use reflective learning skills (for example identifying learning objectives, planning and carrying out research tasks, acting on academic feedback);
• work as an effective, efficient, and responsive team member on group assignments;
• follow all the guidelines as outlined in the Introduction section of the Laboratory Manual;
• check the course Avenue site, and your McMaster and Avenue e-mail daily for updates; and,
• follow all university policies and guidelines, and in all ways be a responsible university member.

**Senate Student Policies**


Senate Policy Statements are also available from the Senate Secretariat Office, Room 104, and Gilmour Hall.

**Academic Integrity** - ([http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicIntegrity.pdf](http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicIntegrity.pdf)

Academic dishonesty consists of misrepresentation by deception or by other fraudulent means and can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.

The following illustrate only four of many forms of academic dishonesty:

• plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which other credit has been obtained;
• copying or using unauthorized aids in laboratory exercises
• improper collaboration in group work; and
• copying or using unauthorized aids in quizzes, tests and examinations

All students are reminded of the importance of academic integrity, and the serious consequences of academic dishonesty.

You acknowledge that your behavior in all aspects of this course should meet the standards of the McMaster University Student Code of Conduct. You understand that any inappropriate behavior directed against any of your colleagues, teaching assistants, or the instructional team will not be tolerated. Disruptive behavior during any session (e.g. lecture, seminar, lab, tutorial) such as talking, sleeping or non-class computing while an individual presents information, or constantly being late, will also not be tolerated. Abuse, ridicule, slander, inappropriate language, and discrimination towards instructors teaching staff, teaching assistants and other students will not be tolerated in any capacity. Shared spaces such as the Avenue to Learn course discussion board are to be considered inclusive and safe.

**Plagiarism Detection**

In this course, we will be using a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal plagiarism. Students will be expected to submit their work electronically to Turnitin.com and in hard copy so that it can be checked for academic dishonesty. Students who do not wish to submit their work to Turnitin.com must still submit a copy to the instructor. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to Turnitin.com. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, etc.). To see the Turnitin.com Policy, please go to [www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity).

**Copyright Policy**

In this course you will have access to material that is subject to copyright laws. This includes (but is not limited to) textbooks and all resources developed by the instructors such as lab manuals, demonstration videos, quizzes, assignments, tests, class notes and class slides. Under no circumstance are you allowed to share or redistribute this material in any printed or electronic form without the explicit written consent of the copyright holder. This includes posting any course material on Internet bulletin boards, course repositories, social networks, etc.

The instructors and university reserve the right to alter this outline if necessary. The instructors and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check their McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.