



ENVS 104.01W + Lab (4 credit hours)
Natural Disasters
Environmental Sciences
SYLLABUS

Instructor: Janet Hull
Office Location: online
Online Office Hours: M-S 10:00-5:00
Department Contact: 903-886-5378
University Email: Janet.Hull@tamuc.edu

COURSE INFORMATION

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings:

Textbook Required: Natural Disasters by Patrick Abbott, Ninth (9th) Edition. McGraw Hill.

Course Description:

This course is designed for science and non-science majors to increase your awareness about global natural disasters. The Earth is definitely on the move today, and understanding *why* more natural disasters are occurring will increase your appreciation of the immense power of our planet.

The material and information for lecture will come from the 9th textbook edition, and will be the focus of information on your weekly unit tests.

This course will be fairly intensive, and you will have to spend some time becoming familiar with geographic locations, worldwide. If you are on campus, look at the maps and globes in the library, and dust off the globe in your closet. Add the Google Earth app on your phone or tablet. It is required to learn the locations of the continents, seas, and various landscapes around the globe.

Prerequisites:

Intro to Geography, ENVS, or Intro to Geology preferred, but not required.

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. In the first part of this course, you will learn how natural disasters affect the cultural landscape, worldwide;
2. In the second part of this course, you will learn how human beings influence the Earth by altering the natural landscape, worldwide;
3. During the entirety of the course, you will learn global geographic locations and become familiar with where natural disasters occur today, why they are increasing, and where they may occur in the future.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Instructional / Methods / Activities Assessments:

- A. Read each unit's overview, lab assignments, and textbook assignments.
- B. Complete an exam after each unit, beginning with Unit One.

Grading:

- A. Fifteen (15) unit exams; 100 pts each (100% of course grade).
- B. Each test will include questions from your lab assignments.
- C. No make-ups are granted. If you miss a test, you accept a zero.

Unit Assignments:

- Each unit exam will be closed prior to starting the next unit, and tests will be available within a designated 48-hour period that is posted in the Test Section under each Unit.
- Each unit exam is timed, and exams are open book. There are no make-up exams.
- You will have fifteen (15) unit exams; no Midterm and no Final will be given for this class;
- You have 48 hours to schedule a time to take your weekly tests; again, there are no make-up tests accepted after this 48-hour period;
- Make sure you are using a reliable Internet server; if your computer goes down during an exam, no extra make-up time will be granted. I suggest going to campus to take your exams to secure a reliable connection.

Grade Scale:

The grading for on-line classes is done by percentages, but at the end of the semester, the percentages translate into the following grade points:

- 90-100 = A
- 80-89 = B
- 70-79 = C
- 60-69 = D
- Below 60 = F

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

You will be utilizing various forms of learning tools available on-line, in your textbook, and in the library. You will be required to monitor specific websites throughout this course, and I will email you those links when applicable.

VERY IMPORTANT:

If you experience computer issues during a test, do NOT log out of your test - immediately contact eCollege or IT on campus so they can witness the issues occurring at that time using screen share. If you log out, no one can help you resolve any problems, and you will not get credit for missing the test. You cannot log on and retake the test.

Each unit's material will consist of:

- An overview of the unit topic, the unit objectives, and the unit lab assignment. When you click on a unit, you will be taken to the Unit requirements.
- Lecture consists of both instructor emails and your chapter reading assignments. Your unit assignments will be at the bottom of the lecture page, and details are within the assignment page for your lab requirements.
- A unit test will be required after each unit. The tests will be based on book material, recommended Internet resources, and world mapping assigned weekly for your lab credit. There will be no Mid-Term Exam or Final Exam. 100% of your grade comes from the unit tests, which include your lab credit.

- The weekly tests are open on **Tuesday and Wednesday** each week, so mark your test calendar for these test dates.
- **There is no extra credit offered for the on-line format, and no late tests are accepted.**

If the course software is new to you, it may help to go through the software tutorial. How to get started:

1. e-mail me to let me know that you are on line;
2. Read through the syllabus;
3. Click Unit 1 to read the unit overview;
4. Read your chapter assignments and the lecture notes for Unit 1;
5. Don't hesitate to contact eCollege with any questions – they are great.

The eCollege HelpDesk is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The HelpDesk can be reached by sending an email to helpdesk@online.tamuc.org or by calling 1-866-656-5511.

6. Daryl Tate in IT on campus is very helpful, also. You can work with him in person.

Important: when you quit a test session, always click on the "**Exit Course**" button at the bottom of your screen to save your work.

Note: students taking online classes at Texas A&M University-Commerce have the same rights as students enrolled in on-ground classes. The A&M-Commerce Student Guidebook details those rights and explains complaint and grievance procedures, as well as the Student Code of Conduct. Students have the right to appeal course grades, admissions committee decisions, or any adverse action taken by any *online* faculty against any student. The appeals process is the same for all types of appeals.

The student should first attempt to resolve non-tech problems directly with the involved faculty member.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

Interaction with Instructor Statement:

I have taught Natural Disasters at A&M Commerce since 2010, and have recently written a book about the recent Earth changes we are experiencing today. I maintain an interactive blog on current environmental events, and I will email you that blog link. This is a good way to maintain a current understanding of the global relationship that natural disasters create.

Lab Credit:

I assign weekly map exercises to be turned in each week. Map questions will be on your weekly tests. Have your map work available to reference during the tests. You can also post these maps on your personal or school website to show your class progress and understanding of current events.

I will average your lab grade from your weekly mapping, and will use this grade to replace your lowest test score. The lab grade will NOT be used to replace a missed test (0).

Weekly labs are to be turned into the Dropbox at the time you take your weekly test. No late labs will be accepted for a grade.

The tests for each unit will be given every week, and all unit tests will be open book. **The first test is scheduled for the end of the first week.**

The tests are timed, however, so you must know this material **before** each exam. No tests will be accepted late, after the unit test has closed.

I monitor my email regularly and I like to remain active with the class through email, so you can send me a message anytime. I typically answer you back within 24 hours, with the exception over weekends and holidays. Please feel free to email me at anytime to ask questions. You can email at Janet.Hull@tamuc.edu.

The time you spend for this course will be equal to the time spent for an on-ground course + lab credit. There are fifteen (15) units to complete for the course; one unit each week. **How you organize your daily schedule is completely up to you, but you must finish one unit each week.**

A unit test will be given after each unit. This course isn't hard, but it does consume a lot of time. If you don't get behind, you'll make it through O.K. **If you fall behind, there are no make-ups opportunities.**

COURSE OUTLINE

Course Content By Unit:

1. Human Disasters – Unit 1. Global geographic introduction into populations and their locations.

2. Internal Energy – Unit 2. Knowledge of the Earth’s internal processes enhances a deeper understanding of earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanoes, and violent storms.
3. Seismology – Unit 3. What is an earthquake? This unit requires understanding the different types of earthquakes, where they occur, and why.
4. Plate Tectonics – Unit 4. The theory of Plate Tectonics and crustal movement provides the core to understanding many natural disasters.
5. Earthquakes in US and Canada – Unit 5. Studying past earthquakes in USA and Canada helps us predict future disasters, and hopefully, prevents human devastation in North America.
6. Tsunamis– Unit 6 (**skip to Chapter 8**). Earthquakes cause tsunamis, which are one of the most damaging natural disasters on Earth. Not every earthquake spawns a tsunami, and Unit 6 (Chapter 8 in your book) explains how they form and their dangers.
7. Volcanic Eruptions - Unit 7 (**back to Chapter 6**). Unit 7 introduces how a volcano forms, and where they are found along plate boundaries. Unit 7 requires daily monitoring of current volcanic eruptions.
8. Volcanoes From the Past - Unit 8 (**Chapter 7**). You will learn about past volcanic eruptions to increase awareness for what can occur again in the future.
9. Weather and Climate – Unit 9. This unit introduces the mechanics driving the atmosphere, our climate and local weather. Before weather patterns can be understood, the energy systems fueling our air and water must be studied.
10. Tornadoes and Storms – Unit 10. This unit introduces how tornadoes and thunderstorms form.
11. Hurricanes – Unit 11. This unit introduces how hurricanes form and where they are the most common.

12. Climate Change – Unit 12. With the knowledge you have gained from the previous unit studies, this unit brings all the current issues of climate change to the forefront.
13. Floods – Unit 13. One of the biggest disasters caused by climate change is flooding. This unit explains why and where floods occur worldwide.
14. Fire – Unit 14. Human beings do not always start wildfires. Nature, through lightening and climate changes, ignite some of the most deadly wildfires known to man. These disasters occur when humans build neighborhoods and cities within natural areas prone to wildfires.
15. Space Objects- Unit 15 (Chapter 17). This unit introduces the types of extraterrestrial objects that can impact the Earth and cause global natural disasters. (Chapter 17 in your book)

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES
--

Course Specific Procedures:

On-line courses are dependent on your course syllabus. Make sure you read the syllabus carefully! **The #1 key to success on-line is to keep up with your assignments every day. Do not procrastinate on any assignments or you will fall behind.**

University Specific Procedures:

ADA Statement

Students with Disabilities:

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning

environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Gee Library- Room 132

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See *Code of Student Conduct from Student Guide Handbook*).

A&M-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.