



ENVS 103.01W – Natural Disasters
COURSE SYLLABUS: SUMMER 1 – 2026

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Elizabeth McElrath
Office Location: Online
Office Hours: By Appointment
University Email Address: elizabeth.mcelrath@etamu.edu
Preferred Form of Communication: Email
Communication Response Time: 24 – 48 hours

COURSE INFORMATION

MATERIALS – TEXTBOOKS, READINGS, SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS

Inclusive Access:

This is an Inclusive Access (IA) course with D2L being integrated with McGraw Hill Connect. Students should not need to purchase the course text or Connect access, as it is included with student fees during course registration. This decision was made to provide students with Connect access to assignments from the first day of class and to offer students access to materials at a cheaper rate. For those that choose to purchase Connect access and the textbook separately, the textbook details are included below.

Textbook Required:

Natural Disasters. Abbott, Patrick L. Twelfth (12th) Edition. 2023 McGraw Hill with Connect Access

Software Required:

A dependable online server and computer hardware

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Scientific principles and case studies of natural disasters, including those related to geological, meteorological, biological, cosmological, and man-made hazards and disasters. Note, this can be used to fulfill a core curriculum science requirement.

Learning Objectives

1. Distinguish between natural hazards and natural disasters.
2. Explain the underlying causes of various natural hazards.
3. Analyze the impacts and consequences of natural disasters.
4. Recognize key components of effective pre-disaster planning.
5. Identify critical response activities following natural disasters.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

MINIMAL TECHNICAL SKILLS NEEDED

You will be utilizing various forms of learning tools available on-line, using your textbook, on-line lectures, and class discussions.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

This course will be completely online, with no face-to-face meetings. There is no set “lecture” meeting time. There will be blocks of material posted to correspond with each assigned chapter which will include PowerPoints and assorted guidance for what to study. Testing will be conducted online, through D2L. **There will be due dates for blocks of material**, so you will need to keep up with work through the semester.

Note that you are expected to allot adequate time to regularly study the material on your own. You are expected to read all textbook chapters corresponding to topics covered. It is also strongly recommended that you read the preface of the textbook, with hints on how to best use it. We will not use every chapter of the textbook so be sure to keep up with the posted guidance for each section! If you have difficulty with the material, feel free to contact me *as soon as you can* for advice on how best to improve.

MCGRAW HILL CONNECT ACCESS

This is an Inclusive Access (IA) course with McGraw Hill Connect. Connect will be used to complete all of the homework assignments listed. The cost of Connect access is included in the fees for this course, unless the student chose to opt out. For students that opted out of Inclusive Access, McGraw Hill Connect MUST be purchased to complete the course. This Connect course has been LMS integrated into the D2L course. You will be able to click on links to complete registration for the course (an instruction video is included under the McGraw Hill Connect module in D2L). Please follow instructions given in the video to complete McGraw Hill Connect course registration.

Connect Assignments for the course can be found in the Unit modules in D2L.

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LATE WORK POLICY

Please note that assignments have due dates (the Calendar can help you keep track of these), It is the student's responsibility to keep track of due dates. Late work is only accepted for a week past the due date. Failure to complete assignments by the due dates will result in a zero for the assignment. You will have assignments for each chapter covered. Each assignment consists of a Smartbook assignment and a quiz. Your grade will be based upon the total of all of those scores combined (that is, you will have one grade for each assignment). Assignments will remain available for students to use to study for tests, although points cannot be earned after the due date.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES OR TIPS FOR SUCCESS IN THE COURSE

You will be required to regularly login to your D2L courses and the online class resources (details to come). You **MUST** take email communication seriously- it's the only way I can ensure you are able to access all your materials. There will be no "attendance" recorded in the traditional sense, but I will check for your activity at the website and email communication- but I will rely on YOU to communicate in a timely fashion *especially* if you are having any problems.

GRADING

Final grades in this course will be based on the following scale:

A = 90%-100%

B = 80%-89%

C = 70%-79%

D = 60%-69%

F = 59% or Below

Weights of the assessments in the calculation of the final letter grade.

Assignments	30%
Quizzes	30%
Exams	40%
TOTAL	100%

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EXAM INFORMATION

- Five (5) Unit Exams will be given; one (1) exam each week worth 100 pts each (100% of course grade)
- No Mid-term exam
- No Final Exam
- Your only exams are Unit Exams
- I drop your lowest exam grade
- No extra credit assignments are available but I do offer extra credit by 1) dropping your lowest test grade and 2) if you take all 5 exams, I will give you 2 points extra credit on your final average
- Each exam must be completed before starting the next unit.
- Each exam is timed - I allow ample time for each exam and exams are open book
- No exams can be taken after the due date - if you have a conflict when the tests are open, I can work with you if you contact me before the tests close.
- If an exam is missed, documentation of a valid emergency is required to make up the exam.
- This course has no proctoring requirement.

Course Outline/Calendar

Course Content By Unit

1. Week 1 – Unit 1 – Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4
2. Week 2 – Unit 2 – Chapters 5, 6, 7, 8
3. Week 3 – Unit 3 – Chapters 9, 10, 11, 12
4. Week 4 – Unit 4 – Chapters 13, 14, 15, 16
5. Week 5 – Unit 5 – Chapters 17, 18

Course Specific Procedures/Policies

All assignments and exams will be open from the first date of the semester, but they will all have a fixed due date. I do not reopen exams nor reschedule make-up times if you have not contacted me to reschedule within 2 days of the missed exam. If an emergency comes up during the scheduled test times, I will work with you to reschedule if documentation of a valid emergency is given.

Given the fast pace of this course, students are encouraged to work ahead. You are advised to complete assignments before attempting exams, to help better prepare for the exam material.

I do not offer extra credit assignments for this class.

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TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

LMS

All course sections offered by East Texas A&M University have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements

LMS Requirements:

<https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>

LMS Browser Support:

https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm

Zoom Video Conferencing Tool

https://inside.tamuc.edu/campuslife/CampusServices/CITESupportCenter/Zoom_Account.aspx?source=universalmenu

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@etamu.edu.

Note: Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a TAMUC campus open computer lab, etc.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor.

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here:

<https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

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STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES FOR COURSE

CWID and Password

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@etamu.edu.

Technology-Related Issues

Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a ETAMU campus open computer lab, etc.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS AND SUPPORT

Minimal Technical Skills Needed

Students will need reliable computer and internet access for this course. Students must be able to effectively use myLeo email, myLeo Online D2L, and Microsoft Office.

Learning Management System (LMS) – D2L

All course sections offered by East Texas A&M University have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are the technical requirements:

- View the [Learning Management System Requirements Webpage](#).
- Learn more on the [LMS Browser Support Webpage](#).

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found on the [Brightspace Support Webpage](#).

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COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

Interaction with Instructor Statement

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your instructor. Correspondence will always be through university email (your “myLeo” mail) and announcements in myLeo online (D2L). You will not RECEIVE email through D2L, so be sure to check your ETAMU email for communication. Students are encouraged to check university email daily.

Include the Following in Emails with Instructor:

- Course name and subject in the subject line
- Salutation (Good afternoon, Dr. Jackson)
- Proper email etiquette (no “text” emails – use proper grammar and punctuation)
- Student name and CWID after the body of the email (possibly add to student signature on email)

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The [Code of Student Conduct](#) is described in detail online in the [Student Guidebook](#).

Students should also consult the [Rules of Netiquette Webpage](#) for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum.

ETAMU Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy, please view the [Attendance Webpage](#) and the [Class Attendance Policy](#).

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Academic Integrity

Students at East Texas A&M University are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

[Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty University Procedure 13.99.99.R0.03](#)

[Undergraduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty University Procedure 13.99.99.R0.10](#)

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

Use of Artificial Intelligence

East Texas A&M University acknowledges that there are legitimate uses of Artificial Intelligence, ChatBots, or other software that has the capacity to generate text, or suggest replacements for text beyond individual words, as determined by the instructor of the course.

Any use of such software must be documented. Any undocumented use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty (plagiarism).

Individual instructors may disallow entirely the use of such software for individual assignments or for the entire course. Students should be aware of such requirements and follow their instructors' guidelines. If no instructions are provided the student should assume that the use of such software is disallowed.

In any case, students are fully responsible for the content of any assignment they submit, regardless of whether they used an AI, in any way. This specifically includes cases in which the AI plagiarized another text or misrepresented sources

Students with Disabilities-- ADA Statement

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:

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

East Texas A&M University

Velma K. Waters Library Rm 162

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

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: studentdisabilityservices@etamu.edu

Website: [Office of Student Disability Services](#)

Nondiscrimination Notice

East Texas A&M University 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.

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in East Texas A&M University buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and ETAMU Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all East Texas A&M University campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

East Texas A&M Supports Students' Mental Health – Counseling Services

The Counseling Center at East Texas A&M University, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit www.tamuc.edu/counsel

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Mental Health and Well-Being

The university aims to provide students with essential knowledge and tools to understand and support mental health. As part of our commitment to your well-being, we offer access to Telus Health, a service available 24/7/365 via chat, phone, or webinar. Scan the QR code to download the app and explore the resources available to you for guidance and support whenever you need it.



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