

Geography 1110; Spring 2012

**Our Hazardous Environment**

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Lecture:	MWF, 1:00 – 1:50 pm, JH 2211
Final Exam:	Friday, May 4th, 2012 from 2:45 to 4:45 pm

**Course Overview:**

A detailed understanding of physical environmental hazards that influence human health and habitation. Lectures focus on the causes, processes, and results of naturally occurring and human-induced geologic, hydrologic, and atmospheric events, such as earthquakes, mudflows, floods, hurricanes, soil erosion, and nuclear and toxic waste.

Prerequisites: None; a desire to learn more about geohazards, how and why they vary, how they impact humans and how we, too, may be affecting them.

**Attendance:**

*A student who misses more than 20% of the scheduled classes of a course (10 classes) will be subject to receiving a failing grade for the course;* how often a student attends class directly affects the comprehension of the course material and grades. You are strongly encouraged to attend class; your course grade will be significantly higher if you attend the lectures (and pay attention). The class meets from 1:00 – 1:50 pm on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

Attendance will be checked randomly in the form of in-class activities, extra credits will be given for these activities and for the students who didn't miss any classes. See extra credit section for a summary.

**Required Textbook:**

Natural Hazards: Earth's Processes as Hazards, Disasters, and Catastrophes, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition  
by Edward Keller and Duane DeVecchio  
ISBN-10: 0-321-66264-4

**Assessment:**

This course grade will consist of four tests (the last being the final exam). Please see extra credit section below for a summary of extra credit offered. Remember that you most likely will not attain a high grade if you do not regularly attend classes. Here's the weighting of points and the tentative dates of the four tests:

	<i>Date</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>1<sup>st</sup> Exam</i>	Feb 10th	20%
<i>2<sup>nd</sup> Exam</i>	Mar 7th	20%
<i>3<sup>rd</sup> Exam</i>	Apr 6th	20%
<i>Final Exam (cumulative)</i>	May 4th	30%
<i>Class presentation</i>		10%

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Total course points: 100%

**Class presentation Topics:**

- Earthquake in Haiti (January 12, 2010)
- Earthquake in Chile (February 27, 2010)
- Tsunami of the coast of Sumatra (2004)
- Tsunami and Nuclear Meltdown at Fukushima, Japan (March, 2011)
- Hurricane Katrina (2005)
- Missouri River Floods (2011)
- Global Warming and Asian Brown Cloud
- Wildfires in New Mexico (2011)
- Wildfires in Southern California (1993-2011)
- Formation of Providence Canyon, GA
- Variation of atmospheric O<sub>2</sub> throughout the Earth History
- Lake Nyos Carbonic Acid eruptions, Cameroon (1985)
- Cretaceous-Tertiary extinction

Guidelines for these projects will be provided sometime during late March.

**Grades:**

The following grading scale will be used to compute final grades:

A: 90% - 100%; B: 80% - 89.9%; C: 70% - 79.9%; D: 60% - 69.9%; F: < 60%
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**Course Outcomes:**

The Objectives and Outcomes of this course address VSU General Education Outcomes 4 and 7, posted at:

<http://www.valdosta.edu/academic/VSUGeneralEducationOutcomes.shtml>

- Students will express themselves clearly, logically, and precisely in writing and in speaking, and they will demonstrate competence in reading and listening. They will display the ability to write coherently in standard English; to speak well; to read, to understand, and to interpret the content of written materials in various disciplines; and to listen effectively and to understand different modes of communication
- Students will demonstrate the ability to analyze, to evaluate, and to make

inferences from oral, written, and visual materials. They will be skilled in inquiry, logical reasoning, and critical analysis. They will be able to acquire and evaluate relevant information, analyze arguments, synthesize facts and information, and offer logical arguments leading to creative solutions to problems.

The Objectives and Outcomes of this course address Environmental Geosciences Major Outcomes 1, 2, and 3 as shown in the 2010-2011 Undergraduate Catalog, p. 172.

- To provide a working knowledge of the basic research tools in physical and cultural geography, environmental research, and in digital cartography.
- To provide the knowledge required to evaluate and interpret environmental data, address and analyze regional environmental questions and synthesize and recommend solutions to a range of environmental problems.
- To provide the analytical and technical skills necessary for geographical research including: spatial and temporal analysis; digital and conventional mapping; and analysis and interpretation of data.

### **Policies:**

#### **University and Department Policies**

Please read the following carefully:

- The Physics, Astronomy and Geosciences Department at Valdosta State University adheres to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) in prohibiting discrimination against any qualified person with a disability. Students requesting classroom accommodations or modifications due to a documented disability must contact the Access Office for Students with Disabilities located in Farber Hall. The phone numbers are 245-2498 (V/VP) and 219-1348 (TTY).
- The Department of Physics, Astronomy, and Geosciences adheres to the academic honesty policies and procedures of VSU and requires all students enrolled in departmental courses to honor the same (see this policy at: <http://www.valdosta.edu/academic/AcademicHonestyPoliciesandProcedures.shtml>). Cheating and/or plagiarism may result in a failing grade for an assignment/quiz/test or for the course. Students who violate these procedures will be reported to the Academic Dean as outlined in the academic honesty policies and procedures. Please refer to the Student Handbook, Code of Ethics, for a complete explanation of the Valdosta State University Student Ethic Code.
- The Department of Physics, Astronomy and Geosciences at Valdosta State University does not tolerate sexual harassment. Please refer to Valdosta State University's official policy on sexual harassment found at the following web location: <http://www.valdosta.edu/legal/shp.shtml> for additional information.

## Class Policies

### ***Extra credits:***

Extra credit will be offered in the class:

- Forms:
  - In-class activities will be held randomly throughout the semester and will serve as attendance check. The results will be graded.
  - On-line quiz: students will have the opportunity to participate online quizzes each week within BlazeVIEW.
- Grades:
  - Each in-class activity and on-line quiz will be graded on a 0-5 scale, at the end of the semester, maximum 5 extra credits will be given according to the students' grades of these activities.
  - For those who didn't miss any attendance/in-class activities, 1 extra point will be added to your final grade ONLY IF it can upgrade your letter grades. E.g., if you score 89.0-89.9 in the class, one extra point will bring your grade from B to A.

### ***Make-up exams:***

- You can make up **ONE** non-final exam if there is a valid excuse.
- You need to present, and I will verify, a valid written excuse from a local physician (note that an appointment with a doctor is not a valid excuse for missing an exam) or from the Office of Student Affairs to be eligible to take a make-up exam.
- The make-up exam will be an essay-type test. The grade will have a base point that is the lower number of either your average grades of other two, non-final exams, or the class average of the exam. Your grades can vary higher or lower for up to 10 points from the base point, depend on the quality of the essay.
- A student missing two or more exams will receive an "F" for the course (made up one included).
- **Final exam:** *no make-up for any reason.*

***Cell phones*** are becoming a serious problem, please behave like an adult and refrain from using your cell phone for telephone calls or text messaging during class. Cell phones should be turned off during the class period. Any misuse of the cell phone may result in it being confiscated for the class period. The instructor will hold no responsibility for the confiscated cell phone. Emergency phone calls are an exception.

***Please respect your classmates!*** Please refrain from any disruptive behavior during class. Disruptive behavior includes but is not limited to: text messaging, talking on a cell phone, the use of computers unrelated to the class, cheating on quizzes/tests, talking in class, arriving after class starts or leaving before class ends, disruptive comments during lectures, and any non-class related activity such as studying for an exam or surfing the web. Note: when the instructor is lecturing, do not attempt to hold a non-course related conversation with the instructor. Disruptive behavior may result in your expulsion from

class for that day. Six (6) such expulsions will trigger the absence regulations outlined above and result in an “F” for the course.

The Student Success Center provides *free peer tutoring*. It also offers test preparation, time management, and study skills workshops as well as provides free professional academic advising. It is located in Langdale Residence Hall, and the phone number is 333-7570.

<b>Tentative class schedule (subject to change)</b>			
<b>Week of</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Chap.</b>	<b>Tests</b>
Jan 9th	Introduction to Natural Hazards	1	
Jan 16th	Understanding Earth	2	
Jan 23rd	Earthquakes	3	
Jan 30th	Tsunamis	4	
Feb 6th	Volcanoes	5	Feb 10 <sup>th</sup> , test #1
Feb 13th	Flooding/Streams, Erosion, and Deposition	6	
Feb 20th	Mass Wasting	7	
Feb 27th	Subsidence and Soils	8	
Mar 5th	Karst, ground water	8	Mar 7 <sup>th</sup> , test #2
Mar 12th	Spring break		
Mar 19th	Waves, Currents, and Coastlines	11	
Mar 26th	Wildfires	13	
Apr 2nd	Impacts and Extinctions	14	Apr 6 <sup>th</sup> , test #3
Apr 9th	Energy and the Atmosphere	9	
Apr 16th	Thunderstorms and Tornadoes, Severe Weather	9	
Apr 23rd	Climate change/group project	12	
May 4th	<b>2:45 to 4:45 pm</b>		<b>Final Exam</b>