

ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE AND MANAGEMENT OF LARGE RIVERS

GRG 356T (37795), FALL 2009

Instructor: Professor Edgardo Latrubesse

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Office: GRG 118

Class time: T-TH 9:30-11AM

Office hours: T-TH 11-12AM

Description

Large rivers are essential to global environments and require an interdisciplinary analysis. This course provides an interdisciplinary perspective on the **physical** geography of large rivers. Because many of the largest rivers are located in the tropics, the course will emphasize large tropical rivers, particularly in South America. The course will stress the importance of considering geologic and human controls on fluvial systems and the challenges for management. The course exposes students to both theoretical and applied fluvial geomorphology, and students will gain exposure to basic skills used to analyze fluvial systems through reading discussions and laboratory assignments. Specific topics to include land degradation, deforestation, river engineering, flood processes, sedimentology; floodplains management, ecohydrology, Quaternary fluvial geomorphology and paleohydrology.

Format:

Each week we will discuss a different theme. Several students will identify articles related to an environmental change management issue, and then use the papers to lead the discussion at the end of the semester. The article will be placed in a folder for all students to consult. Each student must lead one discussion during the semester. This will require several students to bring in different articles related to large rivers. Students must have their article approved by the professor.

Text, Readings, and Lectures

This is a seminar style (discussion) course combined with traditional tests. Course readings will include journal articles from the course web site, and brief readings and figures distributed in class. Students are expected to have read before class and will be held responsible for readings on examinations.

Grading

2 exams and 1 paper @ 30%, 10% participation in class

Exams:

Cover assigned readings (hard copies and internet), class lectures and discussion. The final exam is the oral defense of the paper.

Papers:

One short (3500 word maximum) on an approved topic. Each paper will consider a different large river basin, and integrate an "environmental change issue" (e.g., climate change, management, water quality, subsidence, sea level rise, erosion, etc...) to the physical framework.

Policies

a) Attendance

This course is intensive and complex. This is due, primarily, to the amount of topics and material to be covered during the semester. You are required to attend all classes and arrive on time. It is, therefore, my philosophy that your success in this course will surely vary directly with your class attendance. Be aware of the fact that attendance will be taken on a daily basis and this information can be used in the computation of your final class grade (see Grading policy below). Do not routinely arrive 5 minutes late to class with the excuse that parking was a problem (the obvious solution is to routinely depart 5 minutes earlier).

Lateness: Late papers will be just accepted with a valid justification as exposed below (see absence examination policies).

Laptops are NOT allowed except with prior permission and in exceptional situations.

b) Academic Integrity

The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility.

Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community. Each student in this course is expected to abide by the University of Texas Honor Code (see University guidelines on Academic Dishonesty (section 11-802).

In this class, there is zero tolerance for students who violate university rules on scholastic dishonesty with all suspected cases turned over to the University's Dean of Students office. Penalties for scholastic include possibility of failure of course and dismissal from the University. Since dishonesty harms the individual, fellow students and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be **STRICTLY ENFORCED** in this class. Any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit will be the student's own work. Using other person's work without appropriate citation is plagiarism.

c) Disabilities

The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. Present the letter to the professor at the beginning of the semester so that needed accommodations can be discussed. The student should remind the professor of any testing accommodations no later than five business days before an exam. For more information, contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 471-6259, 471-4641. <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>.

Course management

Course materials and grade will be posted on Blackboard. Students are required to consult this website frequently. Selected materials from different textbook, journals and pdf versions of power points presentations will be provided through Blackboard.

Examination Absence Policy

If you miss an exam or presentation and you have a valid written excuse, you will be given an opportunity to make up a similar exam or some activity but with different questions or approach that previously applied. In order to be allowed to makeup the exam you will need to present to Prof. Latrubesse a copy of a valid written excuse. If you miss more than one exam due to valid written excuses, you may be asked to take an incomplete and to complete the course requirements the following semester.

What is a valid written excuse?

- Doctor's note. This note should specifically say that you were unable to come to class because of a verified illness. It must be signed.
- Note from athletic department, music department, etc. asking for an excuse due to a university function. These notes need to be presented well before the exam.
- Military Service activation note.
- Trial or jury duty note.
- Religious holy day. Religious holy day conflicts must be brought to the attention of Prof. Latrubesse in advance. Please check the syllabus calendar to be sure that your religious holy days don't conflict with exams. If there is a conflict: please provide a written, signed request before the end of the second week of class.
- If you do not have a valid excuse, you will receive a zero for that exam.

► *All notes must be on letterhead, signed, include a contact name and phone number.*

UT policy on email notification

Instructor to student email is a recognized and accepted form of official communication here at the University of Texas. For the University policy, read this. It is critically important that (1) you make sure to have your current and most frequently checked email address on file in UT Direct and (2) you check it on a daily basis. I will send class email frequently during the semester and you'll be given updates and notices in references to lectures as well as exams.

Religious Holidays

By UT Austin policy, students must notify the professor of a pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day in special if it is coincident with the date of a test.