

**ES407 SENIOR SEMINAR
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Spring 2008 Term - Western Oregon University
1 CR W 11:00 AM - 12:50 PM Natural Sciences Bldg, Rm 218

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. S. Taylor
OFFICE HOURS: MW 3:30-5:30 PM
T 1-2 PM; By Appt.

OFFICE: RM 210 Natural Sciences Bldg
Phone: (w) 838-8398 (cell) 541-760-9216
e-mail: taylor@s.wou.edu
Web Site: www.wou.edu/taylor

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Students will conduct in-depth study and research on a broad-ranging topic in Earth Sciences. The topic for Spring Term 2008 is: "The Effects of Land-use and Forestry Practices on Geomorphic Processes in Western Oregon". The primary outcome of the course will be seminar-style presentations at the May 29, 2008 WOU Academic Showcase. Each student will prepare a 15-20 minute oral presentation for the event. The remainder of the term will involve background reading/research, group discussion, development of presentation skills, and preparing for the showcase seminar.

THE PROFESSOR'S PHILOSOPHY ON UPPER DIVISION EARTH SCIENCE / GEOLOGY COURSES:

The upper division Earth Science / Geology course sequence is designed for mature, serious students who are willing to work hard, play hard, have fun, and learn in-depth skills / concepts in a professional academic setting. By default, our student population is very diverse with a wide array of skills, interests, and career goals. The student population ranges from serious Earth Science majors with focused career objectives, to Environmental Studies minors to Science Education majors. As such, the professor is charged with serving a diverse array of student interests and career goals in the most professional manner possible. The problem-solving and technical skills acquired via training in the Earth Sciences are highly valuable (and marketable), regardless of career track. Students are expected to actively participate in the learning process and make a significant contribution to the academic integrity of the Earth Science program at Western Oregon University. The ultimate goal of the program is to provide graduates with the academic skills that will enable them to be highly competitive in graduate school or the career marketplace. *GO TEAM!*

REQUIRED READING:

Journal and assorted text readings to be provided by the instructor on an as-needed basis. Students will participate in weekly discussion sessions. It is absolutely imperative that all participants keep up on the reading assignments and be prepared for class each week.

CLASS WEB SITE:

All course materials will be posted on the class web site is at URL <http://www.wou.edu/taylor> ... and follow the links to the "ES407 Senior Seminar" home page.

The class notes, readings, instructions, and study guides are available as Adobe Acrobat Reader files (*.pdf file). Acrobat Reader is free and is installed on many campus PC's. For home installation, Acrobat Reader is also available for download at the class web site, but you will be responsible for properly installing the software (and will do so at your own risk!). Class materials will also be posted on the web site as the term progresses; check the web site weekly for new listings.

EVALUATIONS AND EXPECTATIONS:

Student performance will be evaluated on the basis of lab exercises, writing assignments, and two (2) exams. The following is a breakdown of evaluation points and letter grades:

Weekly Class Participation	50 pts	25%
Article Summaries / Class Assignments	60 pts	30%
Showcase Presentation	90 pts	45%
Total		200 pts 100%

Final Grading Scale

Percent Range of Total Points	Letter Grade	Percent Range of Total Points	Letter Grade
94-100%	A	77-79%	C+
90-94%	A-	73-76%	C
87-89%	B+	70-72%	C-
83-86%	B	67-69%	D+
80-82%	B-	63-66%	D
		60-62%	D-
		<60%	F

Class and Lab Assignments: Class and lab assignments will be worked BOTH during class time and outside of class time each week. You will have reading and homework assignments that **may** take up to 3 or 4 hours to complete outside of class time, maybe more in some cases, depending on your skill levels and ability. Please plan your schedule accordingly. Due dates for class exercises will be prescribed by the instructor. Late work will be accepted up to 1 week after the due date, but will be automatically assessed a penalty of -20% off the point total.

A Note About Incompletes: No incomplete grades will be given during the last week of class. If you have a problem that warrants an incomplete, make arrangements prior to the last week (no exceptions!!).

Journal Articles and Writing Assignments: Students are required to write a 500-800 word (~1-2 typed pages) summary for each of the assigned journal articles. This exercise is designed to enhance the writing skills of students. The format should include: (1) Introduction to the Problem / Issue, (2) Summary of Main Points, (3) Final Discussion of the Relevance of the Presentation / Field Trip to Environmental Issues in the State of Oregon, (4) References Cited, and (5) pertinent figures and tables (items 4 and 5 are in addition to the 1-2 type-written pages). It is important that you complete these weekly assignments, as you will be sharing your work with the other class members for follow-up discussion. Each student will take turns serving as "seminar leader", presenting a summary of their assigned paper, and leading discussions.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

Any student who has a disability that requires accommodation, please make an appointment to see me.

A NOTE ABOUT THE LAST WEEK OF CLASS:

Given that the Oregon University System employs the "quarter method" of academic scheduling, upper division courses are by nature "compressed" with much detailed information to cover in a relatively short period of time. Please note that most upper division text books are geared for courses at universities with a 16 week semester system (i.e. we are truly trying to pack 10 pounds of dirt in a 5 pound bag). As such, the 10th week of class is as critical to content coverage as the 1st week. Students should anticipate a full slate of "normal" activities during the last week of class, including lectures, lab exercises, written reports, etc. The class is not over until after the final exam! **Plan your schedule accordingly!**

CHANGE OF SYLLABUS - UNANNOUNCED HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS

The instructor reserves the right to modify the syllabus and class schedule at any time during the term. Students will be notified of such changes in a timely manner. The instructor also reserves the right to assign unscheduled homework / class assignments at any time. All students will be responsible for completing this work and it will comprise part of the final class grade.

TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE: This outline should be considered tentative at best. The following schedule may be modified as class ideas evolve throughout the semester.

<u>Week</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>Class Content</u>
1	Apr 2	Handout Syllabus / Reading Assignment; No class this week. Taylor off to Wyoming for Meeting: In-Class Reading Assignment
2	Apr 9	First class meeting; Debrief on reading assignment from Week 1.
3	Apr 16	Seminar Activities / Background Readings / Group Discussion Student Seminar Topics Assigned for Academic Showcase.
4	Apr 23	Seminar Activities / Background Readings / Group Discussion Draft Academic Showcase Abstracts Due
5	Apr 30	Seminar Activities / Background Readings / Group Discussion Final Academic Showcase Abstracts Due
6	May 7	Seminar Activities / Background Readings / Group Discussion Overview of Techniques for Scientific Talks and Presentations
7	May 14	Student Work Day / Presentation Preparation
8	May 21	First Draft of Student Presentations Due for Group Review
9	May 28	Student Seminar Presentation Practice Day Academic Showcase – Thurs. May 29, 2008 – Student Presentations
10	June 4	Open Schedule / Class Debriefing
11	Week of June 6	No class / no final
