

Marks Breakdown

Midterm	20%	
Final Exam	30%	
In-class Group Presentation	15%	
Briefing Note	15%	
In-class Assignments (3 x ~7%)	20%	* Revised Oct 23/17

The midterm test will take place during class, and is tentatively scheduled for Oct. 18. The final exam will also be held in class, on November 29, 2017. It is the student's responsibility to be available to take examinations in these scheduled times. Accommodation will only be made in the case of a serious emergency or illness, and documentation must be provided. There will not be a make-up midterm exam. If you miss the midterm, you will have the option to write a 50% final exam instead (provided proper documentation is provided). In exceptional circumstances only, an accommodation will be made for a missed final exam, at my discretion, provided the necessary documentation is provided.

Assignments

In-class (revised October 23/17 to 3 assignments)

Throughout the term there will be **three** mini-assignments, conducted in class. These will be used to highlight, test, and reinforce several topics that we will cover. Each assignment will be worth ~7% of your final mark, for a total of 20%. You will not need to do any preparatory work for these assignments, though there may be short take home components, to be handed in the next time we meet.

Group Presentation

The final 3 meetings of GEOG3200 will centre on student presentations on a range of topics related to terrestrial ecosystems, and their management. Students will work in pairs or small groups (no more than 3 students) to research, and summarize a topic, and show how the principles of terrestrial ecosystem ecology we have covered can further our understanding of the theme they have chosen. Groups are welcome to choose their own topics (they must be approved by the course director), or select from a pre-established list, which will be circulated in week 2 or 3. More details on the specifics of the presentation, marking, and expectations will follow on Moodle.

Briefing Note

One of the most challenging tasks many academics face is concisely summarizing complex scientific topics, so they can be quickly and accurately assimilated by lay-readers, stakeholders, and decision makers. In both the private and public sectors, one of the most powerful tools for conveying important information is the briefing note. Structured in such a way as to provide the critical information needed in order to make a decision rapidly and with the appropriate background, senior political appointees may read, and refer back to, many such briefing notes in a given day, on numerous disparate topics. Your assignment will be to **individually** write a briefing note on the same topic as your group presentation, to be handed in prior to the presentations. In addition to providing practice at writing these critical documents, this assignment should help organize your thoughts for your later presentation. The briefing note assignment will be due on Wednesday November 8th, and will be uploaded to Moodle directly

before 11:59 PM. Much more detail on how to write one of these documents will be provided during class.

Attendance and Participation

Classes will incorporate both lectures and active learning activities, in addition to being the location of the 4 mini assignments. While there is no formal mark for attendance in the class, I highly recommend you come to lecture regularly. I will provide lecture notes on Moodle, but these will be primarily skeletal in nature, and will be supplemented in lecture. Students are responsible for getting their own notes when they are absent from class. The dates of the in-class assignments will only be revealed the class before, and so it is paramount that you regularly attend, or speak with a colleague who was in class if you are absent, so you know the timing of evaluation.

Tentative Schedule and Course Topics

This table will be modified and updated throughout the term. Check on Moodle for the most up-to-date information.

Date		Topic(s)	Reading Reference
Week 1			
	Mon Sept 11	Introduction; Review: climate and ecosystem concept	Chapin et al. (2011) Chapter 1
	Wed Sept 13	Review: Climate, geology, soils, evaporation, and precipitation	Chapin et al. (2011) Chapters 2, 3, 4
Week 2			
	Mon Sept 18	Photosynthesis: carbon input into an ecosystem; gross primary production	Chapin et al. (2011) Chapter 4 (pp. 80-96), 5
	Wed Sept 20	Net primary production: Respiration, ecosystem production	Chapin et al. (2011) Chapter 6
Week 3			
	Mon Sept 25	Decomposition (the microbial loop)	Chapin et al. (2011) Chapter 7
	Wed Sept 27	Nutrient uptake by organisms	Chapin et al. (2011) Chapter 8
Week 4			
	Mon Oct 2	Nitrogen Cycle pt 1	Chapin et al. (2011) Chapter 9 (pp. 197-215)
	Wed Oct 4	Nitrogen Cycle pt 2 First in-class assignment	
Week 5			
	Mon Oct 9	Thanksgiving Monday – No Class	
	Wed Oct 11	Phosphorus: a critical element for land and water Important Details about Briefing Note and Presentation Assignments	Chapin et al. (2011) Chapter 9 (pp. 215-219)
Week 6			
	Mon Oct 16	The role of cations, and micronutrients	1. Chapin et al. (2011) Chapter 9 (pp. 219-222) 2. Carey and Fulweiler (2012) <i>PLoS One</i>
	Wed Oct 18	Midterm	
Week 7			
	Mon Oct 23	Bring in the biota!: trophic dynamics pt 1	Chapin et al. (2011)

	Mon Oct 25	Trophic dynamics pt 2 Second in-class assignment	Chapter 11
Week 8			
	Mon Oct 30	Community effects on ecosystem processes	Chapin et al. (2011) Chapter 12
	Wed Nov 1	No Class Meeting Time to work on briefing note assignment	None
Week 9			
	Mon Nov 6	Temporal and Spatial Heterogeneity Briefing Note Assignment Due	Chapin et al. (2011) Chapters 13 & 14 (very select parts)
	Wed Nov 8	Global biogeochemical cycles pt 1	Chapin et al. (2011) Chapter 15
Week 10			
	Mon Nov 13	Global biogeochemical cycles pt 2 Third in-class assignment	Chapin et al. (2011) Chapter 15
	Wed Nov 15	Presentation Day 1	None
Week 11			
	Mon Nov 20	Presentation Day 2	None
	Wed Nov 22	Presentation Day 3 (if needed)	None
Week 12			
	Mon Nov 27	Review	
	Wed Nov 29	In-class Exam	
Week 13			
	Mon Dec 4	No class	

York University Grading Summary

90%-100: A+

80-89: A

75-79: B+

70-74: B

65-69: C+

60-64: C

55-59: D+

50-54: D

40-49: E

0-39: F

Plagiarism

The University policy on academic honesty and plagiarism can be found at the following link, which I expect you to review.

<http://secretariat-policies.info.yorku.ca/policies/academic-honesty-senate-policy-on/>

As well, please see the online tutorial at: http://www.yorku.ca/tutorial/academic_integrity/

Resources

Counselling and Disability Services

N110 Bennett Centre for Student Services

416-736-5297

<http://cds.info.yorku.ca/>

York provides psychological and academic support services to all students, including personal counselling, crisis response and support, assistance in the development of learning skills, and specialized support for students with learning disabilities

Geographic Resource Centre (GRC)

S403 Ross Building

The GRC is a quiet research and study facility for students in the Dept. of Geography. Computers are available for student use, including internet access, access to digital course material, and MS Office software. Various textbooks are also available should students want to supplement their learning in the course.

Social Media

The Department of Geography at York University maintains an active social media presence to communicate with students:

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/YorkUGeography/>

Twitter:

<https://twitter.com/YorkGeography>