

**Geography 236: Human Modifications of Natural Environments**  
**Spring Semester 2008**  
**Tue/Thu 12:30-1:45 PM**  
**CLAS Building, Room 434**

**Instructor: Luc Claessens**

Office Location: CLAS 432  
 Phone: (860) 486-2086  
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 Office Hours: Tuesday, 11-12  
 Thursday, 2-3

**Teaching Assistant: Scott Hastings**

Office Location: CLAS 419  
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**Course Description**

This course provides an introduction to the past, present, and future impacts of humans on Earth. Topics include anthropogenic impacts on vegetation, animals, soils, water, landforms, and the atmosphere, and possible future impacts as a result of global climate change. Particular attention is paid to the interconnections among environmental systems and the influence of human activities.

**Textbook (required)**

Goudie, Andrew. 2006. *The Human Impact on the Natural Environment: Past, Present, and Future*. Sixth Edition. Blackwell Publishing. ISBN: 978-1-4051-2704-2 [Available at the UConn Co-op.].

**HuskyCT and Email Communication**

Course material is distributed through HuskyCT. There you will find weekly lecture notes and other handouts, archives of course related emails and your grades. Student support for HuskyCT is provided by the Learning Resource Center (LRC), Level I of the Homer Babbidge Library (6-1187). I will send out weekly emails using campus email; please make sure that your UConn email address is current.

**Grading Policy**

Mid-Term Exam	Tue, Mar 18	20 %
Final Exam	Finals Week	20 %
Quizzes	Approx. weekly (~8 total) (2 lowest grades will be dropped)	20 %
In-Class Exercises	Approx. weekly (~13 total) (2 lowest grades will be dropped)	5 %
Project 1: Group Presentation	In-class presentation	10 %
Project 2: Group Project	Report and in-class presentation	25 %

There are no Extra Credits. There will be no curving of grades. Final course letter grades will be based on the standard 10 percent scale, which will include adjustments for +/- grades.

**Exams**

The mid-term exam will be on material covered through the most recent lecture. The final exam will be partially comprehensive; it will be on material covered since the mid-term, plus Chapter 7. All exams must be taken at the scheduled times. Make-up exams will not be administered, unless you: (1) contact me before the exam (phone/voicemail); and (2) provide a valid and certified medical excuse. Otherwise, you will receive a grade of zero for the exam that you missed. Absences due to conflicts with employment schedules and/or scholastic activities are not considered adequate excuses for missing exam. In case of emergency, you must provide adequate supporting evidence for the absence.

## **Quizzes**

Quizzes will be administered approximately every week, and will be on material covered in the previous week. Quizzes cannot be made up. However, your two lowest quiz grades will be dropped. This should accommodate absence due to sickness, emergency or scholastic activity. I won't make any special arrangements if you happen to miss more than two quizzes, except for long-term medical absence (a valid and certified medical excuse must be presented within 1 week).

## **In-Class Exercises**

In-class exercises will be administered approximately every week. These include video exercises and group discussions. Exercises cannot be made up. However, your two lowest exercise grades will be dropped. This should accommodate absence due to sickness, emergency or scholastic activity. I won't make any special arrangements if you happen to miss more than two exercises, except for long-term medical absence (a valid and certified medical excuse must be presented within 1 week). Exercises are not graded (attendance only).

## **Project 1: Group Presentation**

Group presentations will be held approximately every week, and will focus on a case-study on the particular topic that is covered that week in class.

## **Project 2: Group Project**

A group project will be conducted over the course of the semester. The group project will focus on a local example related to Human Modifications of Natural Environments. The end product will be a written report and an in-class presentation, scheduled for the last week of classes.

## **Expectations of Students**

### Participation and Attendance

You are expected to attend and actively participate in all lectures. Part of your grade is from quizzes and in-class exercises, so it is in your best interest to attend lectures regularly. Note that the above grading policy allows for limited absence. However, if you regularly miss class and/or assignments, you are responsible if your final course grade gets affected. Please do not contact me about making special arrangements, except in the case of long-term medical absences as explained above.

### Academic Misconduct

Academic Misconduct in any form is in violation of the University of Connecticut's *Responsibilities of Community Life: The Student Code* and will not be tolerated. This includes, but is not limited to: copying or sharing answers on tests or assignments, plagiarism, and having someone else do your academic work. Depending on the act, a student could receive an F grade on the test/assignment, F grade for the course, and could be suspended or expelled from the University. Please see the Student Code at <http://www.dosa.uconn.edu/> for more details and a full explanation of the Academic Misconduct policies.

## **About the instructor**

I am an Instructor in Residence in the Department of Geography. I do research on the interactions between hydrology and ecosystem processes, with particular interest in the effect of changes in land-use and climate. I have worked in hydrology (watersheds, evapotranspiration, land-atmosphere interactions), biogeochemistry (nutrient loading and processing) and water resources engineering (flood control, water conservation, irrigation).

## Course Outline and Reading Assignments (Tentative) – Geography 236

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings</b>
Week 1 Jan 22	Introduction	Chapter 1
Week 2 Jan 29	The human impact on climate and the atmosphere	Chapter 7
Week 3 Feb 5	The human impact on vegetation	Chapter 2
Week 4 Feb 12	The human impact on vegetation (cont.)	Chapter 2
Week 5 Feb 19	NO CLASS – Work on Group Project	
Week 6 Feb 26	Human influence on animals	Chapter 3
Week 7 Mar 4	The human impact on the soil	Chapter 4
Mar 10-14	NO CLASS – Spring Break	
Week 8 Mar 18	<b>Mid-Term Exam</b>	
	The human impact on the waters	Chapter 5
Week 9 Mar 25	The human impact on the waters (cont.)	Chapter 5
Week 10 Apr 1	Human agency in geomorphology	Chapter 6
Week 11 Apr 8	The Future – Introduction; Coastal environments; Hydrologic impacts	Chapter 8, Chapter 9, Chapter 10
Week 12 Apr 15	NO CLASS – Work on Group Project	
Week 13 Apr 22	The Future – Cryosphere; Drylands; Conclusion	Chapter 11, Chapter 12, Chapter 13
Week 14 Apr 29	Group Projects Presentations	
Finals Week May 5 – May 10	<b>Final Exam (Tue, May 6, 3:30-5:30 PM)</b>	

### Disclaimer

The above schedule, policies, and assignments in this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances or by mutual agreement between the instructor and the students.

### Some Useful Phone Numbers

- Counseling and Mental Health Services: 486-4705 (after hours: 486-3427) [www.cmhs.uconn.edu](http://www.cmhs.uconn.edu)
- Career Services: 486-3013 [www.career.uconn.edu](http://www.career.uconn.edu)
- Alcohol and Other Drug Services: 486-9431 [www.aod.uconn.edu](http://www.aod.uconn.edu)
- Dean of Students Office: 486-3426 [www.dos.uconn.edu](http://www.dos.uconn.edu)