

**Instructor:****Dr. Athena Owen Nagel****Information:**

- Please *email* the instructor through *MyCourses*. Please *refrain* from *making phone calls*, this method is a last resort and will only be used at the instructor's request.
- External email: [Amo58@msstate.edu](mailto:Amo58@msstate.edu), please use *only* for emergencies
- For all technical issues email the Center for Distance Education Help Desk: [help@distance.msstate.edu](mailto:help@distance.msstate.edu)
- For general inquiries about MSU, the program, change of address etc. email Joy Bailey at [JBailey@distance.msstate.edu](mailto:JBailey@distance.msstate.edu)
- MSU Bookstore 662-325-1576 or [msstate@bkstr.com](mailto:msstate@bkstr.com), <http://msstate.bncollege.com>
- Geosciences Fax (662) 325-9423
- Degree evaluations, degrees requirements email Mary Ann Dean at [Mary@geosci.msstate.edu](mailto:Mary@geosci.msstate.edu).
- Distance Learning Director: Dr. Kathy Sherman-Morris [kms5@geosci.msstate.edu](mailto:kms5@geosci.msstate.edu)
  - Textbook = Natural Disasters, Patrick Abbot, 10<sup>th</sup> Edition, ISBN 978-0-07-802298-2
- Quality Enhancement Program (QEP) Writing Institute: This course is part of the Maroon and Write QEP for Mississippi State University. We will implement various strategies to help you more effectively learn and practice, the content and skills need for your success in Natural Hazards. If you have any questions please feel free to ask, in our course discussion board or through email.

**Purpose, Goals, and Objectives of the Course:**

This course is designed to introduce students to many of the various types of Natural Hazards that occur in the USA and around world both meteorological and geological. The course is designed to give students a basic background in the most common types of natural hazards. This course is designed prepare broadcast meteorology students for their role to advise the general public about hazards that are potential, occurring, or have occurred.

**Method of Instruction:**

The course will be administered through the MyCourses website (<http://mycourses.msstate.edu>). The lectures, quizzes, grades, course information, contact with the instructor, etc. are all through MyCourses. If you have trouble access mycourses, you may email the instructor at her outside email address. For email outside of the course please include your course name, in the title of your email and be sure to type your whole name at the end of you message. Please check the MyCourses course page daily for updates. The **lectures** will be available through download and are MP4 files. These video files can be accessed through the Course Materials tool (left menu bar). Video may also be accessed at [mymedia.msstate.edu](http://mymedia.msstate.edu), you can log in there, if necessary using your net id and password. If there are technical problems watching the videos on-line, please email the instructor and/or the help desk. The PowerPoint presentation for each of the lectures is available under Course Materials in each specific unit.

**Office Hours:**

You may contact **Athena Owen Nagel**, at any time, via the MyCourses email tool, however the quickest response will be given between Monday through Friday from 9 am to 5 pm Central. If you email a question you should get a response within 24 hours (longer on weekends and holidays), if not please email again. Questions are always welcome at any time, but may take a little longer to answer outside of office hours and during school holidays.

School Holidays this semester are:

*January 16<sup>th</sup> Martin Luther King Day March 13-17<sup>th</sup> Spring Break April 14<sup>th</sup> Good Friday*

### **Syllabus Quiz:**

Successful completion of a syllabus quiz will **be required** by all students before access will be granted to the rest of the course material; this is to make sure students are familiar with all policies and procedures of the course. The syllabus quiz does not count towards the overall grade. Successful completion will be a score of 100% or higher. If 100% is not met, then the student may retake the quiz indefinitely until it is passed. Please email the instructor if you have any questions about the syllabus or the course policies.

The syllabus quiz is **due Jan 15<sup>th</sup>** by 11:59 pm Central Standard Time.

### **Student Responsibilities:**

**Preparation:** Students should feel free to ask questions during the course of each lecture and readings, as this is the best time to clarify anything that is confusing. Please prepare for each lecture by reading assigned material and by reviewing your notes. Each week's lecture will have an accompanying assignment and a homework quiz. Homework quizzes are due by date listed in the syllabus by 11:59 pm Central time on the dates listed in this syllabus.

**Attendance Policy:** Although there is no official attendance requirement other than the need to complete your quizzes, assignments, and exams, your online attendance is monitored through your participation time on our myCourses website. As with any class nonparticipation puts you at risk for failure. It is your responsibility to make a habit of checking the Course E-mails, Discussion Board and Announcements several times a week. Please log on a **minimum of twice a week**. Messages listed under Announcements are required reading for the course. You are also required to check your course email regularly for private messages from the instructor. You are also encouraged to contact the course instructor with your questions about current and upcoming course content. Online classes generally give you more flexibility in participating and competing assignments. However, it is also your responsibility to check the class regularly.

**Course Message (Email) :** Think of an e-mail message as a private conversation with the facilitator during office hours. This is how you should ask questions that are primarily applicable to you personally, or that you prefer not to post in a forum open to the class. The facilitator may on occasion send e-mail messages to more than one student, but students should use the course e-mail for one-on-one communication only. E-mail is also the venue for complaints, questions about the material that has already been graded, Questions that cannot be asked in such a way that it will not give away answers, and correspondence about topics that are generally related to the course but venture far beyond the level at which the class is studying. If you are looking for guidance about an answer, include your thoughts on the answers and why are you confused. It is a good idea to check the Discussion Board messages before e-mailing about the topic as the answer to your question may already be posted. Please wait to e-mail for clarification on specific exam questions until after the exam closes and is scored. It is our policy not to discuss examination questions while an exam is still available to other students.

**Discussion Board (Classroom)** This is your classroom, and as such it is the proper venues for questions that are of interest and/or benefit to the class as a whole. The discussion board is divided in to categories to keep topics organized, please post in the correct area. Please feel free to ask questions about quizzes or homework in the discussion board, before the quiz or homework is due. Please ask about the question specifically, as the numbers for everyone quizzes may not match and it will help expedite the process of answering the questions. **DO NOT** post answers or questions that are worded in such a way that answers are ruled out for you classmates for specific questions. Question that you need to ask that contain answers or your thoughts about question answers need to be asked in an email.

*Everyone is required to check the discussion board, at least twice each week*

**Announcements:** announcements are **required reading** for all students. Here the instructor will post important messages for the whole class or other information. You can review the announcements using tool link in the left hand menu, or under the announcements section of the home page.

**Grading:**

Grades will be based on assignments, papers, a midterm, and a final exam. Students cannot make up missed exams without a legitimate emergency documented excuse as per the University policy. The excuse must be approved by the instructor. The grade distribution is as follows:

- 20% Weekly Quizzes/Exercises
- 25% Midterm Exam
- 30% Final Exam
- 25% Quarterly Writing Assignments and Final Paper

Final letter grades will be assigned on a standard 10 point scale  
 Where > 90 is an A, 80-89 is a B, 70-79 is a C, 60 to 69 is a D and <60 is an F. Do not expect or ask the instructor for a curved grade. No extra credit will be provided for students.

**Lecture Topics and Readings (Subject to change):**

Date Available	Date Due for Quizzes	Topic	Readings
01/09	01/18	Intro/Weather & Climate	Prolog, Ch 1,9, & 12
01/10	01/25	Severe Weather and Lightning	Pg. 249-250, 255-262, 272-275.
01/11	02/01	Tornados	Pg. 262-272
01/18	02/08	Winter Weather and Heat	Pg. 250-254, 275-278
01/25	02/15	Hurricanes	11
02/01	02/22	Flooding	13
02/15	03/08	Plate Tectonics	2 & 3
03/01	03/22	Earthquakes	4 & 5
03/08	03/29	Tsunamis	8
03/22	04/05	Volcanoes	6 & 7
03/29	04/12	Mass Wasting	15
04/05	04/19	Fire and Asteroids	14 & 17

\*All Material becomes available at 8:00am Central Time Zone\*  
 \*\*All due dates are at 11:59 pm. Times & Dates are in Central Time Zone\*\*

- 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Writing Assignment Available 01/13/2017      Due 02/03/2017
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Writing Assignment Available 02/03/2017      Due 02/24/2017
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Writing Assignment Available 03/10/2017      Due 03/31/2017
- 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Writing Assignment Available 04/03/2017      Due 04/24/2017

Midterm Exam Dates                      February 24<sup>th</sup> – March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017  
 Final Exam Dates                            April 26<sup>nd</sup> – May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017

**Test Results and Grades:**

Test results and grades for quizzes, homework exercises tests, and exams will be available **after** each due date. Grades **will not** be released instantly, regardless of what has been done in other classes, even if the

exam or quiz is all multiple choice. The instructor needs time to review the quality of the questions and any issues or confusion, that may have arose during the quiz or exam period. Once the test results are released by the instructor, you can go to “my Grades” in the left hand course menu to see your grade.

### **Weekly Exercises:**

Weekly Exercises will be over the material in the reading and lecture (s) for that week. These exercises may consist of questions or small writing assignments or assignments that result in files that you have to upload for each week’s grade. You will be asked to do the weekly exercise then given a quiz in which you will provide the answers from the assignment. These quizzes **be timed**, so be sure to complete the exercise before taking the homework quiz. Instructions for each assignment will be posted weekly as we progress through the semester. If you have any questions about if your quiz was successfully submitted please email the instructor. All file upload will require the files be uploaded as PDFs. If you need help creating these please see the additional resources section or contact the instructor.

Late exercises will have points deducted at a rate of 10% of the points per day and **will be accepted at the instructors discretion**. **No late exercises** will be accepted after 2 days past the due date, without emergency documentation in line with the University policy.

**Quarterly Writing Assignments:** The semester has been divided into four quarters. There are approximately 3 “units” in each quarter. Each quarter a writing assignment will be given. These writing assignments will be available when each new quarter opens, as per the dates above and will be due at the end of the quarter and should be uploaded as a PDF file. Instructions and rubrics will be provided for each assignment as they become available. These assignments will relate to the course objectives and should help you build a back bone for your final (4<sup>th</sup> quarter) paper, in terms of experiences and examples.

### **Exams:**

Exams and assessments can be found under the Course Materials tool. You can only open an exam **one time** and you will only have **65 minutes** to complete it. If you log into an exam without submitting it within 65 minutes of login in, you will receive a zero for that exam. This includes accidental opening of the exam.

All exams will be a combination of questions types, but the majority of questions will be objective-based. All short answer questions found in any exam or on any quiz should always be in your own words. **Exams will be timed**. You will not be able to answer questions once time has expired. **Make sure that during an exam you repeatedly save your individual answers as you go.** Also when you sit down to take an exam; please make sure that you are in a position free from distractions. Remember that once you start the test, it has to be finished in the time period unless there is a documented emergency. Please prepare for all exams like you would in a normal class room setting. You will not have enough time to look up each item. Please **do not** take exams from your phone. This has caused many problems in the past.

If there are any problems taking the exam (loose power, internet crashes, etc.), please contact the instructor **and** the help desk immediately and indicate what type of problem is occurring. **If your computer or internet crash during an exam**, then you need to email the instructor and the helpdesk immediately. A decision to allow a retake will be based on a comparison of the time that the exam was interrupted with the time when the student emailed the instructor and verification of what happen.

Exams (midterm and Final) are open book. However, remember that since these are timed exams, time spent looking for the material can potentially take significant time away from answering the questions. Therefore, it is more important to know the material and the concepts rather than simply having the resources materials available. All essay or short answer questions must be in your own words. ***You are specifically forbidden to download, save, print or otherwise possess any exam from current or previous***

*class offerings, unless individually authorized to do so by the instructor. This is an honor code violation.*

**Emergency Documentation:** Online exams and homework exams are available for several days. Therefore in order to be excused from missing an exam deadline, you must provide a written note from a physician or Dean. The excuse must specify the severe problem that necessitated your inability to access an exam for 5 or more days. The excuse must be signed by the physician and be specific enough to document your medical condition and emergency. All excuses are confidential. Any excuse submitted will be then considered by the instructor and it will be determined if a makeup exam will be issued. If exams are allowed to be made up depending upon the reason the exam was missed penalties may be assigned to the exam, ranging from 20 to 35%. Please note that extension and/or retakes are not guaranteed, and must be requested in a very timely manner, not to exceed 2 days following the missed deadline. Make up exams must be taken as soon as they are given. Students cannot wait several days for a “more convenient” time to take the exam. Students who took their exams on time will be waiting on late students for their grades. Excused University absences include:

- Participation in an authorized University activity.
- Required participation in Military duties,
- Death in a Students immediate family.
- Participation in Legal proceedings or administrative procedures that require a students’ presence.

**Technical Issues:**

If you have technical issues you need to contact the instructor and the helpdesk, immediately in the case of any issues during timed exams (Review quiz and exam sections). Be sure to include any error messages you are given as this will be needed to diagnose your problem. See contact information the top of the syllabus as needed. If you should have severe computer problems during the semester, you may need to find an alternate computer to finish any timed or other assignments by the deadline. Students have used computers at work, public libraries, friend’s houses etc. in order to meet deadlines and not fall behind.

**Civility Policy**

At Mississippi State University civility between faculty and students is required during all communications. Similarly, all class members deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. Instructors reserve the right to remove inflammatory or prejudicial comments on bulletin posts or emails without prior notification, and take disciplinary action as needed. Repeat offenders may have access to the Discussion Board/Email revoked. Slanderous emails to the instructor or other students may be referred to the Dean of Students for possible academic dismissal. It is highly recommended that you wait at least an hour before hitting the “send” button on an email that is highly emotional or is full of anger. All email, discussion board and exam answers must follow standard rules of English grammar and punctuation.

**Student Support Services:**

If you have a disability that requires special accommodation, please contact the instructor as well as the office of Student Support Services within the first two weeks of class at <http://www.sss.msstate.edu/> or (662) 325-3335, so arrangements can be made to accommodate you. If you have any questions contact the instructor.

**Title IX:** MSU is committed to complying with Title IX, a federal law that prohibits discrimination, including violence and harassment, based on sex. This means that MSU’s educational programs and activities must be free from sex discrimination, sexual harassment, and other forms of sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know has experienced sex discrimination, sexual violence and/or harassment by any member of the University community, you are encouraged to report the conduct to MSU’s Director of Title IX/EEO Programs at [662] 325-8124 or by e-mail to [titleix@msstate.edu](mailto:titleix@msstate.edu). Additional resources

are available at <http://www.msstate.edu/web/security>, or at <http://students.msstate.edu/sexualmisconduct/>

### **Student Honor Code:**

The Honor code is as follows:

"As a Mississippi State University student I will conduct myself with honor and integrity at all times. I will not lie, cheat, or steal, nor will I accept the actions of those who do."

Upon accepting admission to Mississippi State University, a student immediately assumes a commitment to uphold the Honor Code, to accept responsibility for learning, and to follow the philosophy and rules of the Honor Code. Students will be required to state their commitment on examinations, research papers, and other academic work. Ignorance of the rules does not exclude any member of the MSU community from the requirements or the processes of the Honor Code. For additional information please visit: <http://www.msstate.edu/dept/audit/1207A.html>

**Each student will be required to electronically sign your acceptance of the MSU Honor code on each exam and assignment.**

Mississippi State University has approved this Honor Code and it applies to all students. The Honor code covers plagiarism, or the using of material, ideas, information, languages or writings from other sources without proper acknowledgement of the original source, this includes copying a source even if the source is cited, or copying of someone else's work and submitting it as the students own work, on papers, exams, or any other assignment. Cheating will not be tolerated and punitive measures will be enforced according to MSU policy. Author citations must be included for all written reports and assignments and plagiarism is considered to be cheating and will result in failure of the course, cheating on an exam will also result in failure of the course. Any of the following are also examples of cheating that will not be tolerated. This list is examples and is not to be considered exhaustive. Copying and pasting from one's own study guide to a closed note/book exam, obtaining and/or possessing a copy of an exam, a quiz, an assignment, a lab, or other course material from a previous course offering, . Taking exams, quizzes or other graded assignments while in or having been in communication with other students, this includes but is not limited to in mycourses, on skype, google+, facebook or other chats, on the telephone, or in person. Having or paying someone else to do your course work. In the event that cheating is believed to have occurred students may be asked to turn in hard copies or rough drafts of any and all work done in the course.

**The penalty for plagiarism and other honor code violations includes failure of an assignment, failure of a course, or dismissal from Mississippi State University.**

### **Tips on Succeeding in this Course:**

- 1) Plan your semester and work ahead. Distance learning is an excellent way to learn – but only if you are able to manage your time and work well outside the 'normal' structure of a classroom. One of the many benefits of distance learning is that you have the flexibility to view your lecture and attend class at your convenience. However, many students do not manage their time appropriately and rush through their assignments. It is critical that you manage your time and work ahead of schedule. (Most assignments are available for 3 weeks so that is plenty of time to budget) This will leave you time to ask questions; think about the material and study. In general, the students who earn the highest grades are those that are skilled at working ahead and budgeting their time.
- 2) Learn your way around myCourses. This class will likely be different from your other classes. Play around and navigate through the course in myCourses. Be sure to know what resources are at your disposal.

- 3) Participate in class. Ask questions about the material as you learn it. There is no such thing as a 'stupid' question. I always assume that if one student requires clarification on a concept, then there are likely others.
- 4) Your goal should be to learn the material. Strive for understanding -not just high grades. I write many 'application' questions on the exams so don't just memorize your notes. To excel in this class, you need to understand important concepts and be able to apply them.
- 5) To perform well on your exams, systematic study is preferable to cramming. Be sure to review your notes each week and be sure that you understand the key concepts being taught. Ask questions along the way if you need clarification on a specific concept. Don't wait until the night before your exam to review your notes.

**Course Evaluations:** The Course Evaluation is a series of survey questions related to your experience in the Distance Learning Program. This survey web link will be electronically emailed to you at your msstate e-mail account, not through mycourses, as they are sent out by the university not by myself or the program towards the mid to end of the semester. Please complete the survey and submit it. The survey is completely anonymous, and no personal information – name, net ID, password – will be revealed to the instructors or administration. Your responses help us to adjust the courses for better student experiences; therefore, your honest responses are extremely important to us. Please complete and submit the survey by the end of the semester and be sure to check your MSU e-mail account for the link to the evaluation survey.

There will also be anonymous surveys available that are specific to the course through the semester. A link will be made available in the course and an announcement will be made about this when the time comes. This allows students to provide feedback before the end of the course gives the instructor time to help change things when possible during the semester instead of just making things better for future students, which your feedback will also do.

**Overall Course Satisfaction:** If at any times you have a question or concern or feedback about this course, please email me as soon as possible so that we can resolve the issue. Many course changes have been directly attributed to past students' anonymous comments. I value your opinions and use your suggestions to constantly make this course better.

~ Thank you for enrolling in this course! ~