

EVPP 108 - Introduction to Environmental Science I - Lecture - Fall 2021
EVPP 108 - Sections DL3 and DP1
On-Line, Asynchronous Lecture Course

Instructor: Dr. Kim Largen

8/23/21

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I. Instructor Contact Information**A. Lecture Instructor Contact Information**

Course Coordinator and Lecture Instructor: Dr. Kim Largen

- Office: No routine physical office presence due to predominate remote work during the Fall 2021
- Phone: No routine contact available via office phone due to predominate remote work during Fall 2021
- Mailbox: No routine access to physical mailbox due to predominate remote work during Fall 2021
- Email: klargen@gmu.edu
- Office Hours: All office hours will be conducted virtually via periodic sessions on variable days at variable times utilizing Blackboard Collaborate Ultra. Weekly office hours will be announced and posted on Blackboard at the beginning of each week.

Lecture Graduate Teaching

Assistant: Zachary Combs

- Email: zcombs@gmu.edu
- Office Hours: TBD

II. University-level Course Information**A. Course Administrative Details**

Title: "Introduction to Environmental Science I-Lecture"

Number: EVPP 108

Sections: DL3 and DP1

Credits: This lecture course is worth 3-credit-hours and is delivered entirely in the on-line, asynchronous format.

Meeting Days and Times: On-line, distance education, asynchronous

Blackboard: One Blackboard page

(titled "EVPP 108 Lecture - On-Line - ALL Sections - Fall 2021") will serve this course.

B. Course Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for this course.

C. Course Description

This course studies components and interactions that make up the natural systems of our home planet, and teaches basic concepts in biological, chemical, physical, and earth sciences in an integrated format.

This is an environmental science course, not an environmental studies course.

D. Mason Core Learning Objectives Fulfilled by the Course

EVPP 108 is a lecture-only course that fulfills the Mason Core - Explorations - Natural Science requirement for a 3-credit-hour non-lab science course.

The Mason Core - Explorations - Natural Science courses engage students in scientific exploration; foster their curiosity; enhance their enthusiasm for science; and enable them to apply scientific knowledge and reasoning to personal, professional and public decision-making.

To achieve these goals, students will:

- Understand how scientific inquiry is based on investigation of evidence from the natural world, and that scientific knowledge and understanding:

- evolves based on new evidence.
- differs from personal and cultural belief.
- Recognize the scope and limits of science.
- Recognize and articulate the relationship between the natural sciences and society and the application of science to societal challenges (e.g., health, conservation, sustainability, energy, natural disasters, etc.).
- Evaluate scientific information (e.g., distinguish primary and secondary sources, assess credibility and validity of information).

III. Course Materials

A. Required

1. Lecture

The following are **required** for this lecture course:

- a. **Access to a web-enabled device, with a webcam, capable of running the downloaded Respondus LockDown Browser and Monitor program** to utilize for accessing the required on-line course materials and for the completion of on-line coursework and exams. In order to complete the on-line exams, students **must** have access to a web-enabled device that 1) has a functioning web-camera, and 2) is capable of receiving and running the Respondus LockDown Browser

and Monitor program.

- b. **Access to Modified Mastering Environmental Science and the electronic version (etext) of the textbook *Environment: The Science Behind the Stories*, 7th edition. NOTE: if you still have valid access to the 6th edition of the etext and the associated Mastering Environmental Science and Learning Catalytics and that access will be valid for the duration of the current course, please contact Dr. Largen to discuss how you may be able to obtain access to the 7th edition version of the materials without making an additional purchase. You can purchase access to the required materials in the form of a single package either through the **GMU bookstore for approximately \$121.40** (see item *i* below) **OR on-line directly from the publisher through the link in the course Blackboard page for approximately \$94.99** (see item *ii* below).**
- i. **To purchase through the GMU bookstore for \$121.40**, find *Modified Mastering Environmental Science with Pearson EText - Standalone Access Card - for Environment: The*

Science Behind the Stories, 7th edition (ISBN: 9780135866047) and purchase it. This will provide you with a card containing an access code that you then **MUST REDEEM, following the instructions below:**

- Go to mymasonportal.gmu.edu and click on the "courses" tab in the menu along the left side of the page.
- Find and click on the course Blackboard page titled "EVPP 108 Lecture - On-Line - ALL Sections - Fall 2021" (*this might appear differently in your particular Blackboard course list*).
- In the menu area on the left side of the page, find and click on "Mastering Environmental Science, Learning Catalytics, and eText".
- In the white area that now appears to the right of the green menu you will see "MyLab and Mastering Course Home" which you will click on.
- Follow the instructions provided within this and

subsequent pages pertaining to redeem your access code.

- ii. To purchase on-line directly from the publisher directly through the link in the course Blackboard page for approximately \$94.99, follow the instructions below:
 - Go to mymasonportal.gmu.edu and click on the "courses" tab in the menu along the left side of the page.
 - Find and click on the course Blackboard page titled "EVPP 108 Lecture - On-Line - ALL Sections - Fall 2021" (*this might appear differently in your particular Blackboard course list*).
 - In the menu area on the left side of the page, find and click on "Mastering Environmental Science, Learning Catalytics, and eText".
 - In the white area that now appears to the right of the green menu you will see "MyLab and Mastering Course Home" which you will click on.
 - Follow the

instructions provided within this and subsequent pages to **purchase** the product "Modified Mastering Environmental Science with Pearson eText for Withgott, Environment: The Science Behind the Stories, 7th edition."

IV. Course Structure

A. Course Format

1. Recorded Lectures

The lectures for this course are pre-recorded in the format of a voiced-over PowerPoint presentation. Students will listen to the lectures in the order presented in each module. Each module will have a beginning and an end date and students can listen to the recorded lectures at whatever time they desire within the context of the dates of each module. In other words, students do not have to be on-line on a specific day at a specific time in order to listen to the lectures. The timing of listening to the lectures is constrained only by students needing to master the material prior to the exam (which occurs on a specific date) that covers the material in a given module.

2. Supporting Materials

The PowerPoints associated with each recorded lecture are available to students for use as a note-taking platform while

listening to the recorded lectures. A "learning guide" for each recorded lecture/PowerPoint presentation is also available for student use to organize the concepts in the lecture and challenge their understanding of the concepts. The use of the learning guides is **optional** and they will not be submitted or graded. In the face-to-face version of this course, students complete "in-class activities" to challenge their understanding of concepts and these activities are available for **optional** use by students in this on-line version of the course.

3. Assignments and Exams

Students will complete on-line assignments via the Mastering Environment Science® and Learning Catalytics® platforms associated with the etext publisher's website. These assignments are required and graded. Students will also participate in one required and graded on-line discussion via the Blackboard platform for each module. There will be three non-cumulative exams covering the material in modules 1-3 and a cumulative final exam covering the material in module 4 as well as modules 1-3.

B. Lecture Class Period

Since this is an asynchronous on-line course, there are no face-to-face meeting times and no specific days or times that you must be on-line, except

in terms of meeting assignment deadlines and completing on-line exams during the designated date and time periods. However, you should be aware that if this class were meeting face-to-face during the 15-week fall session, it would meet three times each week for 50 minutes each meeting, for a total of 2.5 hours of class time each week. Therefore, you should expect to spend ~2.5 hours per week on average listening to the recorded lectures and/or completing exams. Time spent studying or completing readings or assignments (whether the optional learning guides and extra credit assignments, or the required Learning Catalytics® question sets, Mastering Environmental Science® assignments, and discussions), would all be historically spent outside of face-to-face class time and, therefore, would be time spent in addition to the ~2.5 hours on average per week you will spend listening to recorded lectures. See section V. B. "Course Workload" for more information.

C. Lecture Schedule

The [lecture schedule](#) can be found at the end of this syllabus. This schedule lists for each module the titles of the recorded lectures (which reflect the topics covered), the date the materials become available, the etext readings, the date the assignments are due, an abbreviated list of assignments, and the date for each of the exams.

V. Grading and Coursework

A. Lecture Grade Basis

The course grade (for this 3-credit hour course) is based on a total of 700 points derived from performance on Mastering Environmental Science assignments, Learning Catalytics question sets, discussions, regular exams, and the final exam.

B. Course Workload

During a regular semester, a general rule of thumb for the amount of time that will be required outside of class time for a course is 1 to 3 hours per hour spent in class (1 hour outside class/one hour in class for "easy" courses, 3 hours outside class/one hour in class for "difficult" courses). Since this is an on-line course, the "class time" is replaced by listening to recorded lectures for an average of ~2.5 hours per week during the 15-week fall semester. Whether or not this course is "easy", "moderate" or "difficult" is dependent upon each student's background, interest, aptitude, study skills, time management skills, etc. Therefore, depending on where you fall within the spectrum of course difficulty, you should expect to spend between 2.5 and 7.5 hours each week on this 3-credit-hour course outside of "class" time (where "class" time is ~2.5 hours per week on average). Therefore, a general rule of thumb would be that if you consider this class is "easy," you could expect to spend, on average, a total of ~5 hours per week on the course, whereas if you consider this

class difficult you could expect to spend, on average, a total of ~10 hours per week on the course.

assigned based on the final total number of points accrued in lecture. Table 1 below shows how the final course point total translates to a final course grade that will be received.

C. Course Grading Scale

The final course grade will be

<u>Final Course Point Total</u>	<u>Final Course Average</u>	<u>Final Course Grade</u>	<u>Grade Points</u>
672 - 700	96% - 100%	A+	4.00
630 - 671	90% - 95.9%	A	4.00
616 - 629	88% - 89.9%	A-	3.67
602 - 615	86% - 87.9%	B+	3.33
560 - 601	80% - 85.9%	B	3.00
546 - 559	78% - 79.9%	B-	2.67
532 - 545	76% - 77.9%	C+	2.33
490 - 531	70% - 75.9%	C	2.00
476 - 489	68% - 69.9%	C-	1.67
420 - 475	60% - 67.9%	D	1.00
≤ 419	≤ 59.9%	F	0

D. Course Work and Grade Components

The lecture grade is based on the exams (regular and final), Learning Catalytics® question sets, Mastering Environmental Science® assignments, discussions, and extra credit.

Explanations of each of these components can be found in the sections (V.D.1-V.D.6) that follow. Table 2 below summarizes what portion of the course grade will be determined by each of the components of the course work.

<u>Course Work Component</u>	<u># Points</u>	<u>% of Grade</u>	<u>Comment</u>
Regular Exams	224	32%	Three non-cumulative, regular exams will be administered on-line, each worth 112 points. The lowest of these three grades will be dropped.
Final Exam	224	32%	A cumulative final exam will be administered on-line, available between 12:00am and 11:59pm on 12/10/21. The score on this exam cannot be replaced.
Learning Catalytics® question sets	94.5	13.5%	A total of ~200 points worth of Learning Catalytics questions are assigned but only 94.5 points will be counted.
Discussions	52.5	7.5%	Four discussions worth a total of 70 points are assigned but only 52.5 points will be counted.
Mastering Environmental Science® assignments	105	15%	A total of 130 points worth of Mastering Environmental Science assignments but only 105 points will be counted.
Total	700	100%	

1. **Regular Exams** (224 of the 700 possible points, or 32%)

There will be **three regular, non-cumulative exams**, each worth 112 points. The lowest of the three regular, non-cumulative exam grades will be dropped, such that up to 224 points of the 700 total points for the course will come from the two highest regular exam grades from this grade component for a total of 32% of the course grade (unless is found to have cheated on a regular exam, see explanation in next paragraph). Regular exams 1, 2 and 3 will cover the material in modules 1, 2 and 3, respectively. The material in module 4 will be covered in the cumulative final exam, along with the material from modules 1-3.

If a student is found by the Honor Committee to have cheated on any of the three regular exams, the minimum recommended sanction will be a zero on the exam on which they cheated and the revocation of the ability to drop the lowest of the three regular exam grades such that the total points for this grade component will be based on the average of the three regular exam grades rather than on the two highest of the three regular exam grades. For example, if a student received a score of 100% on exam 1 and 100% on exam 2 and was then found to have cheated on exam 3 and received **only** a sanction of zero on exam 3, that student would still

have a 100% average on regular exams after dropping the lowest of the three regular exam grades and would receive 224 out of the 224 points for regular exams. In other words, a student cheating on one regular exam would suffer no consequence to their grade as a result of having cheated if the only sanction were a zero on the regular exam on which they cheated. Under the course policy of a minimum sanction of both a zero on the regular exam on which a student cheated and the revocation of the ability to drop the lowest of the grades on the three regular exams, a student found to have cheated on a regular exam will experience a significant negative impact on their grade. For example, if a student received a score of 100% on exam 1 and 100% on exam 2 and was then found to have cheated on exam 3, the student would receive a score of 0% on exam 3 and the lowest grade on the three regular exams would not be dropped, leading to the student's average on regular exam grade component becoming 66.67% and the student would end up with a total of 149 out of 224 possible points for regular exams.

All three regular exams will be administered a minimum of 24 hours after the end of the module covering the material on the exam. Each new module begins immediately after the previous module ends, which means that the

class will be working on material in the new module when the exam for the previous module is administered. Each regular exam will become available at 12:00am Eastern time on the day it is scheduled and it will be due by 11:59pm Eastern time on that day. Each regular exam may be taken at any time during the 23 hour and 59 minute period that it is available but once it is opened, it must be completed within a 70 minute period (meaning students **cannot** open the exam, work on it for 10 minutes, close the exam and go do something else, and then reopen it and work on it again). The three regular exams will be administered on the following dates:

- Exam #1: 9/20/21
- Exam #2: 10/15/21
- Exam #3: 11/10/21

The regular lecture exams will be **closed-source** which means you are not permitted to receive assistance on the exam from ANY source. **Any student suspected on receiving assistance on a regular exam from any source will be refer to the Honor Committee on the basis of suspicion of cheating on the exam.**

ALL REGULAR EXAMS WILL BE ADMINISTERED ON-LINE VIA THE COURSE BLACKBOARD PAGE USING THE RESPONDUS & LOCKDOWN BROWSER AND MONITOR FEATURES. In order to complete the regular exams using these features, students

MUST have access to a web-enabled electronic device that has a **web-camera and can run the downloaded Respondus LockDown Browser and Monitor program.** If a student's personal web-enabled electronic device does not have a web-camera and/or cannot run the Respondus LockDown Browser and Monitor program, it is the student's responsibility to locate and utilize an electronic device that meets the requirements for completing the on-line exams.

Students are responsible for downloading and knowing how to use the on-line testing platform in Blackboard and the Respondus LockDown Browser and Monitor program (follow the instructions at "[How to Install and Use the Respondus LockDown Browser](#)") **before** taking the first regular exam and are responsible for resolving any technological issues **prior** to the end of the exam availability period so that the exam can be submitted by its due date and time.

To encourage students to make sure **prior to the first on-line exam** that they have a functioning web-cam and know how to use the on-line testing platform in Blackboard and the Respondus LockDown Browser and Monitor program, **a practice exam will be offered on-line for 5 points extra credit (due by 11:59pm Eastern time on 9/17/21).** The extra credit practice exam can be found in the

"extra credit" content area of the course Blackboard page.

When taking the on-line exams using the Respondus LockDown Browser and Monitor, students are prompted to conduct an "environment scan" prior to beginning each exam. Students who do not conduct an environment scan at all will be suspected of having cheated and will be referred to the Honor Committee. Students who fail to show a full 360° view of their work area, including the work surface, during the environment scan will have 25% penalty applied to their exam grade.

No make-up exams will be administered regardless of the reason a student fails to complete an exam during its scheduled availability period. If a student fails to complete a regular exam during its scheduled availability period, the student will receive a **zero** for that regular exam and the zero from the missed exam will be dropped as the lowest grade of the three regular exams.

2. Final Exam (224 of the 700 possible points, or 32%)

The final exam will be cumulative, covering the material from the three regular exams (which cover the material in modules 1-3) as well as the material from module 4.

THE FINAL EXAM WILL BE

ADMINISTERED ON-LINE VIA THE COURSE BLACKBOARD PAGE USING THE RESPONDUS LOCKDOWN BROWSER & MONITOR FEATURES. In order to complete the final exam using these features, students **MUST** have access to a web-enabled electronic device that has a **web-camera and can run the downloaded Respondus LockDown Browser and Monitor program.** If a student's personal web-enabled electronic device does not have a web-camera and/or cannot run the Respondus LockDown Browser and Monitor program, it is the student's responsibility to locate and utilize an electronic device that meets the requirements for completing the on-line exams.

Students are prompted to conduct an "environment scan" prior to beginning the final exam. Students who do not conduct an environment scan at all will be suspected of having cheated and will be referred to the Honor Committee. Students who fail to show a full 360° view of their work area, including the work surface, during the environment scan will have 25% penalty applied to their final exam grade.

The final exam is worth 224 points of the total possible of 700 for the course (32%). The grade for the final exam **cannot be dropped or replaced.**

No make-up final exam will be administered for the final exam

and if a student misses the final exam they will receive a zero for the final exam.

The final exam will become available at 12:00am on 12/10/21 and will remain available until 11:59pm Eastern time on 12/10/21. Once the final exam is opened, it must be completed within a single, 2 hour and 45 minute period.

Students who have more than two final exams scheduled on a given date may request that one of the exams be rescheduled. If you have more than two exams scheduled on the date of the final exam for this course you may request that the final exam for this course be rescheduled. If you make a request for the final exam for this course to be rescheduled, you must 1) make request the no later than 12/4/21, 2) provide documentation of the dates of the other two final exams scheduled for the same date as the final exam for this course, and 3) select a date in advance of (not after) the scheduled date of the final exam for this course that works for both the instructor and the student as a rescheduled date for the final exam. Missing the final exam due to having more than two exams on the same date and contacting the instructor about the issue after the fact will constitute a missed final exam and no make-up final exam will be administered.

3. Learning Catalytics® question sets (94.5 of the 700 possible points, or 13.5%)

Learning Catalytics® question sets are delivered via a function associated with the etext and Modified Mastering Environmental Science (the required course materials).

There are several Learning Catalytics® question sets associated with each module of the course. Students will complete each question set at their own pace within the date range and due date of each module. In other words, all Learning Catalytics® question sets associated with a given module are due by the end of that module. Students are welcome to work on Learning Catalytics® question sets while listening to the relevant recorded lecture.

Learning Catalytics® question sets **CANNOT BE SUBMITTED LATE OR MADE UP IF MISSED, regardless of the reason for the failure to complete the work in a timely manner.** It is the student's responsibility to:

- acquire and properly register the Learning Catalytics® feature of the etext;
- understand where to find the Learning Catalytics® question sets and how to properly use the system in order to answer the questions;
- resolve technical difficulties with the Learning Catalytics®

program by contacting and working with the publisher's support staff.

In recognition that students might fail to complete Learning Catalytics® question sets on occasion for a variety of reasons, **when calculating the final course grade, only 94.5 of the 200 points will be counted** such that missing some Learning Catalytics® question sets will not negatively impact this component of the course grade. **PLEASE NOTE: The purpose of this policy is to enable ANY LEARNING CATALYTICS® QUESTION SET MISSED FOR ANY REASON to be absorbed under a single policy.**

It is **not** structured in this manner so that frivolously missed question sets can be absorbed but then when unavoidably missed question sets occur (for reasons such as but not limited to illnesses, family obligations, court appointments, religious holiday observations, participation in school sanctioned activities such as athletics, forgetting an assignment, technical difficulties, etc.), students seek out waivers and exceptions to the policy.

Learning Catalytics® question sets will be graded based on participation at a rate of 90% and on correctness at a rate of 10%. That means if you answer a Learning Catalytics® question correctly, you get 100% of the credit for the question but if you

answer it incorrectly you get 90% of the credit for the question. The reason for this grading scheme is to encourage students to execute practice questions to test their understanding and recollection of the materials as they go through the recorded lectures and learning guides. This grading scheme rewards students for utilizing the Learning Catalytics® question sets as learning tools without disproportionately penalizing them if they are not fully grasping or recollecting all of the material immediately after hearing it presented in a recorded lecture.

Students will receive a single grade in the form of points earned for each Learning Catalytics® question set. The total point value associated with each Learning Catalytics® question set will vary based on the number of questions in each set. Most question sets will be worth 5-12 points.

Students are responsible for resolving any technical difficulties they are having with the Learning Catalytics® feature. Please visit [Pearson Environmental Science Help and Support](#) to begin the support process.

The availability and due dates for the Learning Catalytics® (LC) question sets are:

- Module 1 LC question sets (5 sets, 1.1-1.5, 50 total questions):

- Available: 8/23/21 at 12:00am
- Due: 9/17/21 by 11:59pm Eastern time
- Module 2 LC question sets (4 sets, 2.1-2.4, 35 total questions):
 - Available: 9/18/21 at 12:00am
 - Due: 10/12/21 by 11:59pm Eastern time
- Module 3 LC question sets (6 sets, 3.1-3.6, 50 total questions):
 - Available: 10/13/21 at 12:00am
 - Due: 11/7/21 by 11:59pm Eastern time
- Module 4 LC question sets (5 sets, 4.1-4.5, 65 total questions):
 - Available: 11/8/21 at 12:00am
 - Due: 12/4/21 by 11:59pm Eastern time

PLEASE NOTE: The correct answers for the Learning Catalytics ® question sets for each module will become available **after** the date/time they are due and will remain available for the duration of the course. This means that students will have at least 24 hours between the due date of a question set and the beginning of a regular exam pertaining to the material in the question set to determine the correct answers for any questions the student answered incorrectly.

4. Discussions (52.5 of the 700 possible points, or 7.5%)

There will be one on-line discussion for each module. For each discussion, students must post a personal response to the discussion prompt and comment on the personal responses of at least two classmates. Each discussion is worth 17.5 points with 12.5 points coming from the personal response to the discussion and 5 points coming from the comments on the personal responses of two classmates. **LATE DISCUSSION PARTICIPATION WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED REGARDLESS OF THE REASON FOR FAILING TO COMPLETE THE DISCUSSION BY ITS DUE DATE AND TIME (by 11:59pm Eastern on the date each module ends).** In recognition that students might miss a discussion, **when calculating the final lecture grade, only 52.5 of the 70 points will be counted.** This is equivalent to dropping the lowest discussion grade.

The availability and due dates for the discussions are:

- Module 1 discussion (discussion 1):
 - Available: 8/23/21 at 12:00am
 - Due: 9/17/21 by 11:59pm Eastern time
- Module 2 discussion (discussion 2):
 - Available: 9/18/21 at 12:00am
 - Due: 10/12/21 by 11:59pm Eastern time

- Module 3 discussion (discussion 3):
 - Available: 10/13/21 at 12:00am
 - Due: 11/7/21 by 11:59pm Eastern time
- Module 4 discussion (discussion 4):
 - Available: 11/8/21 at 12:00am
 - Due: 12/4/21 by 11:59pm Eastern time

A grading rubric will be provided for each discussion and students are encouraged to review the rubric prior to posting their discussion responses so that they can be sure that they have included all the required components.

Since commenting on the personal responses of two classmates is part of the discussion grade, it can be difficult for students to finalize their participation in the discussion if none of their classmates have yet posted their personal response. To encourage students to not wait until the last minute to post their personal response to the discussion, **two points of extra credit will be awarded to students who post their personal response to the discussion at least three days (72 hours) before the due date.** No extra credit will be awarded for commenting early on classmates' personal responses and no extra credit will be awarded for posting a personal

response before the due date but after the "extra credit for early participation" mark of 72 hours before the due date. Extra credit for early posting will be recorded separately from the grade for the discussion in an extra credit grade column.

5. Modified Environmental Science® Mastering Science® Assignments (105 of the 700 possible points, or 15%)

Students **must** have access to the *Modified Mastering Environmental Science®* website. Please see section III. A. 1. b. above for information about required materials for the course.

There are 10 Modified Mastering Environmental Science® (MES) assignments.

The availability and due dates for the MES assignments are:

- Module 1 MES assignments (1.1 - 1.2):
 - Available: 8/23/21 at 12:00am
 - Due: 9/17/21 by 11:59pm Eastern time
- Module 2 MES assignments (2.1- 2.3):
 - Available: 9/18/21 at 12:00am
 - Due: 10/12/21 by 11:59pm Eastern time
- Module 3 MES assignments (3.1- 3.2):
 - Available: 10/13/21 at 12:00am
 - Due: 11/7/21 by 11:59pm Eastern time
- Module 4 MES assignments (4.1-

4.3):

- Available: 11/8/21 at 12:00am
- Due: 12/4/21 by 11:59pm Eastern time

The Modified Mastering Environmental Science ® platform is integrated into the course Blackboard page and students who register their MES account via Blackboard (as instructed in section III.A.1. b.i-ii) do not need any additional course-specific information. IF you are prompted for a course ID, that means you are not following the correct path for registering your MES account, which is through the direct link titled "Mastering Environmental Science, Learning Catalytics, and eText" in the course Blackboard page. Students are responsible for the correct registration in the MES course associated with this class. In order to receive credit for your MES work, you must correctly register your MES access by going through the course Blackboard page.

It is the student's responsibility to resolve all technical difficulties with the technical support department of MES publisher. Please visit [Mastering Environmental Science Help and Support](#) to begin accessing the support process.

Late MES assignments are accepted but are penalized at the rate of 4.2% per hour regardless of the reason for them

being late, including technical difficulties. This penalty results in the assignment having rapidly diminishing point value after the due date and time, and no point value by the time the assignment is 24 hours late. Additional aspects of the grading of the MES assignments are as follows:

- There is no time limit for completing an MES assignment except within the context of its availability and due date and time.
- Students have 3 attempts to answer an MES question but there is a penalty applied to a question answered incorrectly before the last attempt. The penalty is based on the question type and the number of answer choices in the question. For a true/false question, all credit would be lost for the first incorrect answer. For a multiple choice question, the penalty is based on the number of answer choices, based on this equation: $100\% \text{ divided by } (\# \text{ answer choices} - 1)$. For example, the penalty for an incorrect answer for a multiple choice question with 5 answer choices would be 25% ($100\% / (5-1)$). For any other question type the penalty for answering incorrectly before the last attempt is 3%.
- There is a 2% bonus applied to a question answered without

opening a hint.

- There is a 3% deduction applied to a question for which a hint was opened.

The total point value of the 10 MES assignments is 130 points. The point value assigned to each assignment varies, as shown in the "Mastering Environmental Science - List of All Assignments" document and the module specific lists of MES assignments posted on the course Blackboard page. This information is also available within the MES platform. It is the student's responsibility to keep abreast of assignments and their due dates.

When calculating the final lecture grade, only 105 of those points will be counted. **PLEASE NOTE: The purpose of this policy is to enable MES assignments missed FOR ANY REASON (valid or not) to be absorbed under a single policy.** It is not structured in this manner so that frivolously missed question sets can be absorbed but then when unavoidably missed question sets occur (for reasons such as but not limited to illnesses, family obligations, court appointments, religious holiday observations, participation in school sanctioned activities such as athletics, forgetting an assignment, technical difficulties, etc.), students seek out waivers and exceptions to the policy.

Students are encouraged to seek assistance from the course instructor or graduate teaching assistant if they are having conceptual difficulties with any MES assignment.

6. Extra Credit (maximum of 55 points)

A limited number of extra credit opportunities will be made available, at the instructor's discretion. It NOT intended that extra credit enables a student who is failing the course due to overall poor academic performance to pass the course. The purpose of extra credit is to provide an incentive for students to partake of opportunities that cannot otherwise be provided in the context of the course, to provide an opportunity to be exposed to and learn material not otherwise covered in the course, to encourage certain important actions or behaviors in the course, and/or to experience the viewpoints of professionals other than the regular course instructors. Even though this in an on-line course, some extra credit opportunities will be on-line opportunities and others may be face-to-face opportunities.

The actions necessary in order to receive extra credit will vary by opportunity. Some opportunities involve an on-line assessment that will be the basis for the number of extra credit points received.

Some opportunities may involve attending an event and signing in and out on a sign-up sheet. Other opportunities may involve visiting a site or event and documenting your attendance via specific selfies that you will then post to the relevant folder in Blackboard.

The extra credit opportunities will be posted on Blackboard in the "extra credit" content area in a folder titled "Extra Credit Opportunities and Assessments" in a file titled "Extra Credit Opportunities List." It is the student's responsibility to check this list often. Sometimes opportunities become available on short notice. All extra credit due times are based on Eastern time.

Students may accrue a maximum of 55 extra credit points which will be applied to their lecture grade. **There is no guarantee made in advance that 55 points worth of extra credit opportunities will be made available during the semester.**

In the event that an extra credit opportunity involves attending a presentation, students are expected arrive on time, stay until the end, and to participate fully. Failing to participate fully will result in the student NOT receiving the full number of extra credit points possible for that opportunity. For example, showing up to a presentation and sleeping through it will result in the student not receiving the extra

credit points. Please note that there will be no "pro-rating" of points for attending only part of an event. To do so would encourage the practice of arriving late to or leaving early from a presentation which is disrespectful and rude.

Students are expected to exhibit exemplary behavior when attending any extra credit event!! Plan to arrive on time, stay awake and be attentive, and stay until the end of the event. Give the presenter your full and respectful attention (no chatting, no use of electronic devices, etc.). Any reports of inappropriate behavior by students in attendance at an event will result in 1) revocation of the extra credit points awarded to the offending student(s), and 2) the possible cancellation all remaining extra credit opportunities for all students in the course.

All provisions pertaining to the GMU Honor Code and academic integrity apply to all extra credit opportunities. Copying other's student extra credit work or falsifying information about attendance at an extra credit opportunity will result in the student being referred to the Honor Committee.

Students may not receive extra credit for activities or projects that are not on the "extra credit opportunity" list. In other words, please do not approach your

instructor to ask that some event that is not already on the list that you already attended be counted as extra credit for you. You are welcome to bring to the instructor's attention in advance any event that you become aware of that might make an appropriate extra credit opportunity and it is possible that it will be added to the list so that all students in the course have the theoretical possibility of taking advantage of it.

VI. Course Policies

A. Email Expectations

Students **must** use their [MasonLive email](#) account to receive important University information, including messages related to this class (see also "student privacy" below in section VII.D.). The instructor will **not** open emails if the sender is not identifiable/recognizable. The instructor will attempt to respond to emails within 48 hours but students must recognize that the instructor is not on-line 24/7. Clearly **stating the purpose of the email in the subject line and the course and section number you are in** will help the instructor provide a faster response to emails. The instructor will **not** give priority to emails requesting information that is clearly available in the syllabus or on Blackboard, and the response to such emails may be "see syllabus" or "see Blackboard."

B. Instructional Continuity in the Event of University Closings

Since this course is in the format of an asynchronous, on-line course that is partially self-paced, most university closures or delayed openings or early closings (**due to inclement weather or other reasons**) will **not change assignment due dates and times or exam dates and times**. Students should assume that the flow of lecture work, lecture assignment due dates/times, and exam dates/times will be **unchanged** as a result of university closures/delayed openings/early closures. In the event that assignment due dates/times or exam dates/times must be changed, students will be informed of the changes via Blackboard.

C. Grades in Blackboard

All course grades will be recorded in Blackboard and the calculation of the final course grade will be based on the grades reflected in the Blackboard grade book. Grades for the Mastering Environmental Science® assignments, Learning Catalytics® questions sets, and Dynamic Study Module® extra credit assignments will also appear in the gradebook associated with the Mastering Environmental Science and etext on-line platform. However, those grades will synchronize with the Blackboard gradebook and the grades in Blackboard will ultimately serve as the source of grades upon which the final course grade is based. It is the student's responsibility to monitor the

lecture grades recorded in Blackboard and to inform the lecture instructor in a timely manner of any perceived discrepancies. The following information and grades will be recorded for lecture in Blackboard:

- **Individual columns:**

- Learning Catalytics® questions: A grade column will be created for each Learning Catalytics® question set. Each of these columns will begin with "LC" followed by an indication of the module number, question set, and title; for example, "LC Mod 1.1 - Intro to Environmental Science and Scientific Method", where the first "1" indicates that this LC question set is associated with module 1 and the second "1" indicates that it is the first LC question set in module 1. These grades will be recorded as a point value. For example, if a Learning Catalytics® question set is worth 8 points and you receive 6 points, the value recorded in this column will be 6. It will not be recorded as a percent grade. Please note that the LC question set grade columns will not show up in Blackboard until after the due date for the question set has passed.

- Mastering Environmental Science assignments: A grade column will be created for each of the 10 Mastering Environmental Science assignment grades. Each of the columns will begin with "MES" followed by an indication of the module number, assignment number, and title; for example, "MES 1.1 - Introduction to Environmental Science and the Scientific Method AND Matter and Energy - Atomic Structure and Chemical Bonds", where the first "1" indicates that this MES assignment is associated with module 1 and the second "1" indicates that it is the first MES assignment in this module. Students will be able to see their MES grades in the MES program. Periodically, these grades will be transferred to Blackboard. Sometimes, the synchronization with Blackboard will be slow and if you check Blackboard too soon after submitting an MES assignment, the grade in Blackboard will not be up-to-date. If you encounter this, please check Blackboard again after a few hours have passed rather than contacting your

instructor immediately. If the grade has still not synchronized after a few hours, let your instructor know. These grades will be recorded as a point value. For example, if the assignment is worth 15 points and you receive a grade of 13 points, the value recorded in this column will be 13. It will not be recorded as a percent grade.

- Discussions: A grade column will be created for each of the four discussions. Each of these columns will begin with "discussion" followed by an indication of the module number with which the discussion is associated and the title of the discussion. Since there is only one discussion per module, there will only be one number following "discussion" in the column title. The grade for each discussion will be recorded as the number of points received out of the 17.5 points possible for each discussion. The extra credit for the early posting (minimum of 72 hours) of the personal response to the discussion will appear in a separate, extra credit grade column.

- Regular Exams: For each of the three regular exams, a grade column will be created. The title of the column will reflect the exam number and the due date and will show the point score (which is the number of points received out of the 112 points possible for the exam). For example, a point score of 103 (out of 112 possible) on a regular exam would be displayed in the grade column as 103. The grade reflected in the regular exam grade column does not reflect your percentage score on the exam.
- Final Exam: For the final exam, the grade column will reflect "final exam" in the title as well as the due date and will display the points received out of the 224 points possible for the final. For example, a point score of 205 (out of 224 possible) on the final exam would result in a score of 205 being recorded in the column. The grade reflected in the final exam grade column does not reflect your percentage score on the exam.
- Extra credit: A separate grade column will be created for each extra credit opportunity. Each

column will begin with "EC" followed by a brief a description to identify the opportunity and the number of possible points for the opportunity. The grade in each extra credit column will be in the form of a point value.

- **Total columns:** The following "total" columns, headed as shown below, will update automatically throughout the semester:
 - **"LC Total (max of 94.5)":** This column will show a running total of all points accrued to date on the Learning Catalytics® (LC) questions sets. Since Blackboard cannot "drop" any of the scores it is important to note that this column could show a total higher than the maximum 94.5 points from this grade component that will count toward the final course grade. A total of 200 points worth of LC questions will be administered.
 - **"MES Total (max of 105)":** This column will show a running total of all points accrued to date on the Modified Mastering Environmental Science (MES) assignments. Since Blackboard cannot "drop" any of the scores it is important to note that this

column could show a total higher than the maximum 105 points from this grade component that will count toward the final course grade since 130 points worth of MES assignments have been made.

- **"DISC Total (max of 52.5)":** This column will show a running total of all points accrued to date on the discussions. Since Blackboard cannot "drop" any of the scores it is important to note that this column could show a total higher than the maximum 52.5 points from this grade component that will count toward the final course grade since there will be 70 points worth of discussion points will be administered.
- **"EC Total (max of 55)":** This column will show a running total of all points accrued to date on the extra credit opportunities completed. Since Blackboard cannot "drop" any of the scores it is important to note that this column could show a total higher than the maximum 55 points from this grade component that will count toward the final course grade since more than 55 points worth of extra

credit opportunities may be made available.

- "Regular Exam Total (max of 224)": This column will show a running total of all points accrued to date on the three regular exams. Since Blackboard cannot "drop" one of the scores it is important to note that this column could show a total higher than the maximum 224 points from this grade component that will count toward the final lecture grade. After the third exam occurs, the instructor will drop the lowest of the three regular exam grades and this column will be changed to "Regular Exam Total (max of 224) AFTER Dropping Lowest Grade".

WARNING - IMPORTANT - PLEASE NOTE: It is important to note that Blackboard is NOT set up to calculate the total number of points accrued across all grade components of the course to date at any point during the semester OR to calculate the overall course grade at any point during the semester. Blackboard creates its own "total" column to which everything entered into Blackboard is added, regardless of the purpose of the values entered. Every attempt is made to hide this confusing column from student view. In the event that it can be seen by students it is important that students

IGNORE THE BLACKBOARD-CREATED "TOTAL" COLUMN.

It is the student's responsibility to understand the preceding paragraph. Failing to understand the preceding paragraph could result in a student mistakenly concluding that their course grade is much higher than it actually is.

VII. University Policies

A. Academic Integrity

EVPP 108 lecture is governed by the GMU Honor Code. Please refer to the [Office of Academic Integrity](#) website for a full description of the code and the honor committee process. All course work is expected to be completed INDIVIDUALLY. Copying classmates' work on any assignment or exam is considered **cheating** and a violation of the Honor Code. If an instructor discovers that two or more students have submitted work that is partially or entirely identical, all students involved will be reported to the Honor Committee with a minimum recommended sanction of a zero on the assignment. If a student is suspected of cheating on a regular exam, all students involved will be reported to the Honor Committee with a minimum recommended sanction of a zero on the exam AND the revocation of the ability to drop the lowest of the three regular exam grades, with their regular exam total being based on the average of their three exams scores applied to the total possible of 224 points for regular exams. For example, if a

student received a score of 100% on exam 1 and 100% on exam 2 and was then found to have cheated on exam 3 and received **only** a sanction of zero on exam 3, that student would still have a 100% average on regular exams after dropping the lowest of the three regular exam grades and would receive 224 out of the 224 points for regular exams. In other words, a student cheating on a regular exam would suffer no consequence to their grade as a result of cheating if the only sanction were a zero on the regular exam on which they cheated. Under the course policy of a minimum sanction of **both** a zero on the regular exam **and** the revocation of the ability to drop the lowest of the grades on the three regular exams, a student found to have cheated on a regular exam will experience the following impact on their grade: if a student received a score of 100% on exam 1 and 100% on exam 2 and was then found to have cheated on exam 3 resulting in a score of 0%, the lowest grade would not be dropped and the student's average on regular exams would become 66.67% ($200\%/3$) and student would end up with a total of 149 out of 224 possible points for regular exams. If a student is found to have cheated on the final exam, the minimum recommended sanction will be a zero on the final exam.

Violations of the Honor Code will not be tolerated.

Another aspect of academic integrity is the free exchange of ideas. It is expected that all aspects

of this class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions. When in doubt about any aspect of academic integrity as it pertains to this course, please ask for clarification.

B. Disability Accommodations

If you have a learning or physical difference that may affect your academic work, you will need to furnish appropriate documentation to the Office of Disability Services. If you qualify for accommodations, the ODS staff will give you a form that details your accommodations and you must provide your instructor with a copy of that form. In addition to providing your instructor with the appropriate form, please take the initiative to discuss your accommodations with your instructor at the beginning of the course, and as needed during the semester. If you have contacted the Office of Disability Services and are waiting to hear from a counselor, please inform your instructor. For more information on disability accommodations, visit the [Disability Services](#) website.

C. Diversity

The following is George Mason University's "[Diversity Statement](#)" from the [Stearns Center for Teaching and Learning](#) website:

"George Mason University promotes a living and learning environment for outstanding growth and productivity among its students, faculty and staff. Through its curriculum, programs,

policies, procedures, services and resources, Mason strives to maintain a quality environment for work, study and personal growth.

An emphasis upon diversity and inclusion throughout the campus community is essential to achieve these goals. Diversity is broadly defined to include such characteristics as, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, disability, and sexual orientation. Diversity also entails different viewpoints, philosophies, and perspectives. Attention to these aspects of diversity will help promote a culture of inclusion and belonging, and an environment where diverse opinions, backgrounds and practices have the opportunity to be voiced, heard and respected.

The reflection of Mason's commitment to diversity and inclusion goes beyond policies and procedures to focus on behavior at the individual, group and organizational level. The implementation of this commitment to diversity and inclusion is found in all settings, including individual work units and groups, student organizations and groups, and classroom settings; it is also found with the delivery of services and activities, including, but not limited to, curriculum, teaching, events, advising, research, service, and community outreach.

Acknowledging that the attainment of diversity and inclusion are dynamic and continuous processes, and that the larger societal setting has an evolving socio-cultural understanding of diversity and inclusion, Mason seeks to continuously improve its environment. To this end, the University promotes continuous monitoring and self-assessment regarding diversity. The aim

is to incorporate diversity and inclusion within the philosophies and actions of the individual, group and organization, and to make improvements as needed."

D. Student Privacy

Student privacy is governed by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Students must use their MasonLive email account to receive important University information, including messages related to this class (see also "email expectations" above in section VI.A.). See the website for [Office of The University Registrar](#) for more information.

E. Student Support Resources

There are many resources available to students at George Mason University to help facilitate student success. Some of those resources and links to the associated websites are provided below:

- [University Catalog](#)
- [University Policies](#)
- [Counseling and Psychological Services](#)
- [INTO George Mason](#) (program for international students)
- [Learning Services](#)
- [University Career Services](#)
- [University Writing Center](#)

F. Emergency Preparedness

George Mason University is committed to maintaining a safe learning environment. All members of the academic community should be familiar with the basic emergency procedures for a variety of situations

including severe weather, medical emergencies, and workplace and campus violence. Students are strongly encouraged to register their mobile phone to receive emergency notifications from [Mason Alert](#) in the event of a campus emergency. Please review the [Emergency Preparedness Guides](#) website.

G. Safe Return to Campus Requirements

All students taking courses with a face-to-face component are required to follow the university's public health and safety precautions and procedures outlined on the university Safe Return to Campus webpage

(<https://www2.gmu.edu/safe-return-campus>). Similarly, all students in face-to-face and hybrid courses must also complete the Mason COVID Health Check daily, seven days a week. The COVID Health Check system uses a color code system and students will receive either a Green, Yellow, or Red email response. **Only students who receive a "green" notification are permitted to attend courses with a face-to-face component.** If you suspect that you are sick or have been directed to self-isolate, please quarantine or get testing. Faculty are allowed to ask you to show them that you have received a Green email and are thereby permitted to be in class.

Students are required to follow Mason's current policy about facemask-wearing. As of August 11,

2021, all community members are required to wear a facemask in all indoor settings, including classrooms. An [appropriate facemask](#) must cover your nose and mouth at all times in our classroom. If this policy changes, you will be informed; however, students who prefer to wear masks either temporarily or consistently will always be welcome in the classroom.

LECTURE SCHEDULE - SEE NEXT PAGE

VIII. Lecture Schedule

The following schedule lists for each module the titles of the lecture (which reflects the topics covered), the date the materials become available, the eText readings, the date the assignments are due (and an abbreviated list of assignments), and the date for each of the exams. In the table, MES=Mastering Environmental Science assignments and LC=Learning Catalytics question sets.

Module #/Recorded Lecture Title (<i>topic</i>)	eText Readings	Date Materials Become Available (at 12:00am)	Due Date for Assignments (by 11:59pm Eastern)	Date of Exam (12:00am-11:59pm Eastern)
Module 1 1.1-Introduction to Environmental Science and Scientific Method 1.2-Matter and Energy - Atomic Structure 1.3-Matter and Energy - Chemical Bonds 1.4-Matter and Energy - Properties of Water 1.5-Matter and Energy - pH, Chemical Reactions, Thermodynamics, Enzymes	Ch. 1: 1.1.1-1.1.7, 1.2.1-1.2.2, 1.3.1-1.3.6; Ch. 2: 2.1.1-2.1.5, 2.2.1-2.2.3	8/23/21	9/17/21 MES 1.1-1.2 LC 1.1-1.5 Discussion 1	9/20/21 Regular Exam 1
Module 2 2.1-Matter and Energy - Membranes, Diffusion, Life's Building Blocks 2.2-Matter and Energy - Major Process of Life 2.3-Life: Origin, Characteristics, Cells, Classification 2.4-Life: Tour of the Kingdoms of Life	Ch. 2: 2.1.4, 2.2.3-2.2.5; Ch. 3: 3.1.8	9/18/21	10/12/21 MES 2.1-2.3 LC 2.1-2.4 Discussion 2	10/15/21 Regular Exam 2
Module 3 3.1-Physical Environment: Earth Origin, Age, Structure 3.2-Physical Environment: Plate Tectonic Theory Development 3.3-Physical Environment: Plate Tectonics 3.4-Physical Environment: Earthquakes 3.5-Physical Environment: Volcanoes 3.6-Physical Environment: Atmosphere Composition and Structure	Ch. 2: 2.1.1, 2.3.1-2.3.6, 2.4.1-2.4.5; Ch. 17: 17.1.1	10/13/21	11/7/21 MES 3.1-3.2 LC 3.1-3.6 Discussion 3	11/10/21 Regular Exam 3
Module 4 4.1-Physical Environment: Atmosphere and Ocean Circulation 4.2-Physical Environment: Climate & Biomes 4.3-Population Ecology 4.4-Community Ecology 4.5-Matter Flow and Energy Cycling	Ch. 3: 3.1.1-3.1.7, 3.2.1-3.2.3, 3.3.1-3.3.7; Ch. 4: 4.1.1-4.1.2, 4.2 (all), 4.3.1-4.3.2; Ch. 5: 5.1.1-5.1.4; 5.2.1-5.2.4, 5.3.1-5.3.10; Ch. 16: 16.1.1-16.1.6; Ch. 17: 17.1.3, 17.1.5; Ch. 18: 18.1.1-18.1.2, 18.1.6	11/8/21	12/4/21 MES 4.1-4.3 LC 4.1-4.5 Discussion 4	12/10/21 Final Exam