

Geog 4400 Student presentations

The course requires each student to give a 20 minute class presentation (15% of final grade) and to participate in class discussions throughout the course (5% of final grade). These will take place after reading week.

THEMES:

The themes are purposely broad to provide flexibility and freedom to choose a sub topic of interest to you but that will be distinct from the talks of others in the class. You are not expected to give a comprehensive talk on each theme; that would be impossible in 20 minutes! Please identify your first, second and third choice from the list and let me know asap. Themes will be allocated on a first come first served basis.

- 1) The collection, use and/or misuse of snow survey data
- 2) Water resource challenges in the Arctic
- 3) Flood risk prediction challenges in the tropics
- 4) The future of hydrometric monitoring
- 5) The future of remote sensing in water resource monitoring
- 6) The future of remote sensing in operational flood forecasting
- 7) Challenges in hydrological modeling
- 8) Challenges in hydraulic modeling

GRADING:

The mark for the class presentation will be based on a combination of instructor and peer evaluation. The instructor will evaluate all four criteria below, while student peers will provide a mark out of 10 for item 4 (clarity and effectiveness) only. The 4 elements of the evaluation are:

- 1) Suitability and relevance of the content to the chosen theme of applied hydrology.
Students will have flexibility over the choice of case study or content to be showcased but it must be informative and educational within an applied hydrology context; e.g. a brilliant and enlightening talk that discusses forest management practices that minimize susceptibility to insect mortality while maximising timber yield would score zero in this course for lack of relevance. On the other hand a talk using many of the same materials could score highly if it was presented within the context of how the same management practices impact bio-hydrological processes and downstream water yield or flood risk. A talk that presents material that is off topic or not relevant to the central theme, will lose marks. This is an important criterion because it will be used to scale all other marking criteria; i.e. if the talk is totally relevant with no superfluous information, then 100% of all other available marks will be totalised. If the talk is deemed only 50% relevant to the central topic being addressed, then all other marks will be halved. The following three categories (2-4) will be weighted equally to add up to 100% and then the final mark scaled according to the content suitability weight.

- 2) Organisation of the presentation. Students are free to choose their material and format for the talk. However, one approach that might keep things simple is to identify and present a case study on the chosen topic. This could be a single but comprehensive paper, in which case the talk may (but does not have to) involve a critique of a manuscript. Or, for example, it could be a summary of several studies undertaken at a single geographic location or region through time. It could even be a discussion of changing practices within a given jurisdiction over a long period of time. In all cases, however, it is expected that the talk will suitably introduce the topic and nature of the problem, providing enough relevant background so that the conclusions at the end follow logically and make sense to the audience. As with most reporting, it is typical to summarise the methods adopted in the case study (i.e. data collected, models used, analyses performed, etc) before key findings are presented. The end of the talk is as important as the beginning in that the audience must come away with a clear idea of the central message that the speaker is trying to get across. A high score in this category requires a logical and clear presentation that flows seamlessly where the audience is clear at all times as to what is being presented and why.
- 3) Use of appropriate and compelling visual aids, evidence and materials. This is the appropriate insertion of graphics, tables, diagrams, photos and cross referencing to studies (with citations) to provide compelling evidence in support of statements, assertions or arguments being made. While aesthetics is not a specific criterion here, it should be apparent that clean and clear presentation of visual aids will help the audience get the point being made more quickly than confusing, small, blurry or badly organised graphics. It is required that the presentation (PowerPoint or PDF slides) be handed in after each talk to assist with the evaluation.
- 4) Clarity and effectiveness of the actual presentation to the class. This is the most subjective element of the evaluation. It is an element of 'quality' that can be hard to define but most of us can sense. However, to put some parameters around this, the following pointers are worth bearing in mind. Is the talk clear and appropriately paced (i.e. not garbled, rushed, or too slow)? Is the presenter at ease with the audience? [Note: We all get nervous (yes, even profs 😊) but even a nervous speaker can give a brilliant and engaging talk...while over confidence can produce a dull talk.... often the nerves help ensure we do a good job!] Does the speaker engage the audience, through eye contact, gestures or some form of direct interaction? Does the talk get off to crisp start or does it labour to get to the point? Does it end punctually and at an appropriate pace or does the conclusion drag on an on or suddenly appear then disappear too quickly before the final "thank you / goodbye"?

Note: talks are allocated 20 minutes. However, you will not be penalised for ending slightly early or late (+/- 3 minutes). However, if talks end prematurely or go well beyond the allocated time this will indicate either poor organisation or lack of preparation on the appropriate amount of supporting material or ineffective delivery, and will be marked down accordingly.