Selected Topics: Paleoclimatology ESCI 4490  
Department of Physical & Environmental Sciences  
Spring 2020

A. COURSE INFORMATION

Course number/section: ESCI 4490.011  
Class meeting time: Monday and Wednesday 02:00 – 03:15 PM  
Class location: CS – 103  
Course Website: bb9.tamucc.edu

B. INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Dr. Valeriu Murgulet  
Office location: CS 205  
Office hours: Tuesday 11:00 am – 01:00 pm; Wednesday 09:00 am – 12:00 pm or by appointment  
Telephone: (361) 825-6023  
e-mail: valeriu.murgulet@tamucc.edu  
Appointments: Please email instructor directly for an appointment, or if you have any questions or concerns.

C. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Catalog Course Description  
Reconstruction of Earth’s climate system through time using natural archives and proxy evidence. Focus is mostly towards the Quaternary, though longer time spans will be considered, too. Mixed format with lectures, hand-on activities involving paleoclimate data sets, and seminar-style readings and discussions.

D. PREREQUISITES AND COREQUISITES

Prerequisites  
GEOL 1403 – Physical Geology  
Corequisites  
none

E. REQUIRED TEXTBOOK(S), READINGS AND SUPPLIES

Required Textbook  

F. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES AND ASSESSMENT

Assessment is a process used by instructors to help improve learning. Assessment is essential for effective learning because it provides feedback to both students and instructors. A critical
step in this process is making clear the course’s student learning outcomes that describe what
students are expected to learn to be successful in the course. The student learning outcomes
for this course are listed below. By collecting data and sharing it with students on how well
they are accomplishing these learning outcomes students can more efficiently and effectively
focus their learning efforts. This information can also help instructors identify challenging
areas for students and adjust their teaching approach to facilitate learning.

By the end of this course, you should be able to:
1. discuss the methods by which past climates are studied and reconstructed,
2. define the aspects of Earth’s climate that leave evidence in the geological record,
3. evaluate how several proxies (chemical, physical, and biological) are developed and
   employed to determine past climate conditions.

G. INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND ACTIVITIES

The class will meet on Mondays and Wednesdays throughout the semester in the classroom to
cover the Paleoclimatology topics. Lecture power point slides, class exercises, discussions will
be used while in the classroom.

H. MAJOR COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

The following assessment tools will be used:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>% of FINAL GRADE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exam 1</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam 2</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paleoclimate Data Assignments</td>
<td>20</td>
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I. COURSE CONTENT/SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK OF</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>CHAPTER(S)</th>
<th>ASSIGNMENTS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01/21</td>
<td>Overview of Climate Science</td>
<td>Chapter 1</td>
<td>Read Chapter</td>
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<tr>
<td>01/27</td>
<td>Earths Climate System Today</td>
<td>Chapter 2</td>
<td>Read Chapter</td>
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<tr>
<td>02/10</td>
<td>Climate Archives, Data, and Models</td>
<td>Chapter 3</td>
<td>Read Chapter</td>
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<tr>
<td>02/17</td>
<td>CO₂ and Long-Term Climate</td>
<td>Chapter 4</td>
<td>Read Chapter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Chapters</td>
<td>Assignment</td>
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<tr>
<td>02/24</td>
<td>Plate Tectonics and Long-Term Climate</td>
<td>Chapters 5</td>
<td>Read Chapter</td>
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<td>03/02</td>
<td>From Greenhouse to Icehouse: The Last 50 Million Years</td>
<td>Chapter 7</td>
<td>Read Chapter</td>
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<td>03/09</td>
<td>Spring Break – No classes</td>
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<td>03/16</td>
<td>Orbital-Scale Changes in Carbon Dioxide and Methane</td>
<td>Chapter 12</td>
<td>Read Chapter</td>
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<td>03/23</td>
<td>The Last Glacial Maximum</td>
<td>Chapters 13</td>
<td>Read Chapter</td>
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<tr>
<td>03/30</td>
<td>Climate During and Since the Last Deglaciation</td>
<td>Chapter 14</td>
<td>Read Chapter</td>
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<tr>
<td>04/06</td>
<td>Millennial Oscillations of Climate</td>
<td>Chapter 15</td>
<td>Read Chapter</td>
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<tr>
<td>04/13</td>
<td>Climate Changes During the Last 1,000 Years</td>
<td>Chapter 13</td>
<td>Read Chapter</td>
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<tr>
<td>04/20</td>
<td>Climatic Changes Since 1850</td>
<td>Chapter 18</td>
<td>Read Chapter</td>
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<tr>
<td>04/27</td>
<td>Causes of Warming over the Last 125 Years</td>
<td>Chapter 19</td>
<td>Read Chapter</td>
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<tr>
<td>04/22</td>
<td>Article Readings and Discussions</td>
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<tr>
<td>04/27</td>
<td>Article Readings and Discussions</td>
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<tr>
<td>05/04</td>
<td>Article Readings and Discussions</td>
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<td>05/13</td>
<td><strong>Final Exam</strong> (comprehensive): 01:45 – 04:15 pm</td>
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Note: Changes in this course schedule may be necessary and will be announced to the class by the Instructor. The assignments and exams shown are directly related to the Student Learning Outcomes described in Section F.

J. COURSE POLICIES

**Attendance/Tardiness**

Lecture attendance is not required but it is strongly advised. Poor attendance will result in missed lecture material and may reflect in less than desired class performance and/or unsuccessful class completion.

**Late Work**

There is no provision for making up late and/or missed work. It is also your responsibility to obtain notes and announcements from fellow students in the event you miss a class.

**Extra Credit**

None
Cell Phone Use
Not allowed in the class.

Food in Class
Not allowed in the class.

Missed Exams/Quizzes
Exams can only be taken during the scheduled time, except in cases of emergencies. Documented proof is required of such emergencies. There will be no make up exams or quizzes for unscheduled and unexcused absence. Make-up exams cannot be taken after the graded test has been given back to the class.

Participation
Group discussion and collaboration are encouraged during lab exercises.

K. COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY POLICIES

• Academic Integrity (University)
  University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in a failing grade.

• Classroom/Professional Behavior
  Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, as an academic community, requires that each individual respect the needs of others to study and learn in a peaceful atmosphere. Under Article III of the Student Code of Conduct, classroom behavior that interferes with either (a) the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of the peace and is subject to disciplinary sanction outlined in article VII of the Student Code of Conduct. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including classrooms, electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

• Statement of Civility
  Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi has a diverse student population that represents the population of the state. Our goal is to provide you with a high quality educational experience that is free from repression. You are responsible for following the rules of the University, city, state and federal government. We expect that you will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation or disability. Behaviors that infringe on the
rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

- **Deadline for Dropping a Course with a Grade of W (University)**
The grade of W will be assigned to any student officially dropping a course by Friday, April 8, 2016. Please consult with the instructor before you decide to drop to be sure it is the best thing to do. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, visit the Office of the University Registrar for the Course Drop Form that must submitted. No student is eligible to receive a W without completing the official drop process by this deadline. Please consult the Academic Calendar (http://www.tamucc.edu/academics/calendar/) for the last day to drop a course.

- **Grade Appeals (College of Science and Engineering)**
As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules website at http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html, and the College of Science and Engineering Grade Appeals webpage at http://sci.tamucc.edu/students/GradeAppeal.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the chair or director of the appropriate department or school, the Office of the College of Science and Engineering Dean, or the Office of the Provost.

- **Disability Services**
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call (361) 825-5816 or visit Disability Services in Corpus Christi Hall 116.

If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

http://disabilityservices.tamucc.edu/
• **Statement of Academic Continuity**
  In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane and classes could not be held on the campus of Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi; this course would continue through the use of Blackboard and/or email. In addition, the syllabus and class activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities (i.e., emails, web sites, and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of the closing of the physical campus. However, students need to make certain that the course instructor has a primary and a secondary means of contacting each student.

L. **OTHER INFORMATION**

• **Academic Advising**
  The College of Science & Engineering requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. The Academic Advisor will set up a degree plan, which must be signed by the student, a faculty mentor, and the department chair. Meetings are by appointment only; advisors do not take walk-ins. Please call or stop by the Advising Center to check availability and schedule an appointment. The College’s Academic Advising Center is located in Center for Instruction 350 or can be reached at (361) 825-3928.

**GENERAL DISCLAIMER**

I reserve the right to modify the information, schedule, assignments, deadlines, and course policies in this syllabus if and when necessary. I will announce such changes in a timely manner during regularly scheduled lecture periods.