

EARTH SCIENCES 2150 : THE SOLAR SYSTEM AND PLANETARY SCIENCE: ORIENTATION INFORMATION FOR FALL 2023

Andrew Kerr, Department of Earth Sciences

This short document is provided to accompany some orientation materials for those registered or interested in registering for the course in the Fall Semester of 2023.

COURSE DELIVERY FOR 2023

The course will be delivered in a *hybrid mode* that will allow students to participate fully online, or attend in-person classes weekly, or opt for any desired combination. ***However, all students will be expected to do some independent learning from online materials.*** Remote delivery methods and materials were developed during the Coronavirus Pandemic, and it makes sense to continue using some of these as needed. Online class materials are provided using presentation files in Adobe PDF format and associated podcasts in MP3 format. Essentially, students can tune in to ***Radio Solar System*** individually or in groups, on their own schedules.

There will also be in-person classes most weeks, scheduled for Wednesday evenings (7.00 to around 8.30 pm). These will provide summary lectures for each module in the course, information on topical research in Planetary Science, and allow discussion/Q&A on course materials and issues. The summary classes will also be available online, and more detailed online classes (typically two per module) will provide additional information and explanation of specific topics. Optional online discussion/Q&A sessions will be scheduled each week and these are also open to all students. The timing for these will be determined as the course progresses. Additional optional online discussion/ Q&A sessions may be scheduled, according to needs and requests. If required, some in-person classes may be held via video/audio links.

Course assessments consist of online quizzes (multiple choice and true/false format) that *must be completed in a defined time slot* (most Wednesdays, from 8.30 pm to midnight). MUN regulations stipulate that assessments must at least overlap regular scheduled class times. However, the availability of quizzes can be adjusted (within limits) upon request for any students with timing conflicts related to other classes, work or circumstances. The weekly quizzes take no more than 40 minutes to complete; timing accommodations will be provided for students registered with the Blundon Centre. Learning 'crossword' assignments for the course have no defined time slot for completion, but they will have deadlines for submission. Students are invited to contribute to the course by researching and providing information on interesting new topics in Planetary Science, which can then be discussed as part of our sessions. This activity is not for credit, but rather a measure of your participation and interest.

The final examination date and its time slot will be set by the University, but availability can be adjusted (within limits) for students with timing conflicts. The online examination will include multiple choice and true/false questions related to all parts of the course, and a take-home component will require submission of short written accounts summarizing key concepts and material from the course. See the formal course outline for more information on assessment methods and dates.

EXAMPLE MATERIALS TO GET YOU STARTED

A short orientation presentation is supplied as a PDF file and an accompanying MP3 Podcast. You should download these materials, look at the presentation and listen to the Podcast. This will explain how things are intended to work with regard to the online components of the course.

Demonstration quizzes will be available in Brightspace (see below) from the first day of classes until September 20. There is no credit for completing these items, and no requirement to do so, but they will provide valuable orientation as to question types and formats. The content is a mixture of general knowledge that you should already have and some material related to Modules 1 and 2 of the course. You can attempt the demonstration quizzes up to 5 times, to facilitate learning, but of course the real quizzes will only allow one attempt. Answers to all questions will be made available online later, and can be discussed in weekly sessions.

An example of a “Learning Crossword” is also supplied, as a PDF file. These puzzles are not difficult, but they will make you think, and finding the answers will help in the learning process. The content resembles that of the demonstration quizzes; you likely will not know *all* the answers, but the point is that you will need to research them. An answer sheet will be available online in Brightspace on the first day of classes, and you can complete this as many times as you wish until September 20. The solutions to this and to all subsequent puzzles will be posted online. There are no marks for the Example Crossword – it is provided purely for orientation purposes.

BRIGHTSPACE COURSE SITE

All participants will need to use the EASC 2150 Course Site in the **Brightspace** Online Learning System. You will also need this for most other courses. If you have not used Brightspace, go to the MUN home page (www.mun.ca) and select <online learning> from the <Login> button. This will allow you to log in with your MUN ID and password. You should then see the EASC 2150 Course Site easily – it is the one with the picture of eight planets in a row. ***Pay particular attention to the <News and Announcements> Tab as this is where all important information is communicated to the class.*** Also pay attention to Calendar items, in order to keep your studies on track. ***It is recommended that the Brightspace Site be checked every day, including weekends. There will be announcements and reminders there on most days through the semester!*** The Brightspace Course Site will be open on September 6th, and will remain accessible until after the exam period.

MARKS AND RELATED MATTERS

For full details of the assessment system and for the scheduled dates of online quizzes, see the formal course outline. Students will be able to access their marks for individual grade items within Brightspace’s Gradebook as the semester progresses, but summaries of weighted marks and projections will ***not*** be available directly from Brightspace online. This is because processing and calculation is much easier and quicker if it is completed outside the online learning system. However, listings of marks, summary information and projections of likely grades will be provided to students to download in PDF format as the course progresses.

