

**ERS 103 – Dynamic Earth
Syllabus – Fall and Spring Semesters**

<u>Brightspace</u>	<p>About the Professor</p> <p><u>Scott E. Johnson</u>, Ph.D. School of Earth and Climate Sciences University of Maine 5790 Bryand Global Science Center Orono, ME 04469-5790 USA</p> <p>Phone: 207-581-2142 Fax: 207-581-2202 E-Mail: <u>johnsons@maine.edu</u></p>	<u>Brightspace</u>
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Course Description

This 3-credit undergraduate course explores Earth, examining the various processes that have shaped our wonderful planet and how they affect and interact with humans. After taking this course, your perception of the world around you will change. Next time you travel by air, you will be able to appreciate how mountains, rivers and deserts were formed, and why they are located where they are. While hiking, you will understand how the multicolored pebbles in a stream formed. Earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis and other geologic hazards will take on new meaning with your greater understand of the processes that cause them. We will explore climate change, considering the various natural and anthropogenic contributions. And we will examine where our natural resources come from, and why their supply is limited.

The Brightspace Learning System

Brightspace is a web-based software platform that provides a complete course management system. To log in, please use the link above or go to courses.maine.edu. When you register for a course that uses Brightspace, you will automatically be added to that Brightspace course. Once I make the course available to students, you should be able to see and access the course when you log into your Brightspace account.

Required Textbook

Understanding Earth (8th Edition) published by Macmillan. When you enroll in this course you automatically pay for access to the electronic textbook, so you do NOT need to worry about buying the book on your own. I have chosen the least expensive option for the book and it comes with *Read and Practice Assignments* that will definitely help you prepare for the exams. Once you enroll in this course, and I have opened student access to it on Brightspace, you will have automatic access to the Ebook through Brightspace.

Course Assessment - Please Read Carefully!!!

ALL STUDENTS IN THIS COURSE WILL TAKE THE EXAMS ONLINE THROUGH BRIGHTSPACE AND SUBMIT THE STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY AND ANY EXTRA CREDIT WRITING ASSIGNMENTS THROUGH BRIGHTSPACE.

1. Statement of Responsibility (4% of final grade/40 points)

The Statement of Responsibility assignment, which is worth 40 points. You will find it on Brightspace. By submitting this assignment, you are confirming that you accept your responsibilities as a student in the course.

2. Three Exams (96% of final grade/960 points)

There will be three, 40-question, multiple-choice exams based on readings from the textbook. Exams will be taken on-line. Each exam is timed - you will have 50 minutes to complete each one. The results will automatically be recorded. You will generally be able to access your results directly after you take the exam. **I strongly recommend** that you read the chapters very carefully taking notes and complete the *Read and Practice Assignments* on the Macmillan site in preparation for the exams.

* **Exam #1 = 320 points – To be available starting at 6 am Thursday in the designated exam week (see assignment schedule in Brightspace).** Covers Chapters 1 through 5. To be **completed by 11:30 pm on the following Sunday.**

* **Exam #2 = 320 points –To be available starting at 6 am Thursday in the designated exam week (see assignment schedule in Brightspace).** Covers Chapters 6, 7, 8 and 10. To be **completed by 11:30 pm on the following Sunday.**

* **Exam #3 = 320 points –To be available starting at 6 am Thursday in the designated exam week (see assignment schedule in Brightspace).** Covers Chapters 12, 15, 17, 18, and 19. To be **completed by 11:30 pm on the following Sunday.**

Please note: there are also three practice exams with 10 questions each that go along with the real exams. **These 10 questions will be on the real exams**, so you should definitely take the practice exams! **You can take them as many times as you want, and they do not count toward your grade.**

3. Extra Credit (worth up to 75 points)

You can complete extra credit assignments in Brightspace. Read up to 5 chapters from the textbook that we **do not** cover on the exams and write a review for each chapter focusing on what you have learned. **Each review should be at least 500 words and if properly done is worth 15 points.** Summarize the content of the chapter and describe your reaction, **in your own words.** All writing assignments are run through a plagiarism checker in Brightspace called *Turnitin Originality Check*. **You will receive ZERO points for ALL extra credit assignments**

that you submit if we find plagiarism in any of them. A full chapter has a lot of information in it, so focus on the aspects that you found interesting. The purpose here is to practice your writing skills, and your ability to summarize a chapter of information in 500 words. Please note that references, quoted text that is taken directly from the textbook, and information like your name, chapter, etc., are NOT counted in the word total. We only count what you have written about the reading. The grading of these reviews is all or nothing (no partial credit). Make sure it is at least 500 words, well written, and clearly on topic and you will get full credit (15 points). DO NOT submit a review that contains spelling and grammatical errors, or you will receive zero points for it. So, proofread it carefully. **Due no later than Sunday at 11:30 PM following the third and last exam (see assignment schedule in Brightspace).**

Determining your grade: Note there are no plus/minus grades!!! If you need some more points to get to the next letter grade, please consider completing some extra credit assignments.

1. Exams: 96% of grade (remember that you can find 25% of the questions in the practice exams so definitely use them to prepare for the real exams!)

Exam #1 320 points

Exam #2 320 points

Exam #3 320 points

2. Statement of Responsibility: 4% of grade

40 points

3. Extra credit assignments

75 points possible

TOTAL:

1000 points for exams and statement of responsibility (plus up to 75 points of extra credit)

Grading:

A = 900 or more points

B = 800 – 899 points

C = 700 – 799 points

D = 600 – 699 points

F = 599 or fewer points

On Academic Honesty - Please Read This Carefully!!!

Academic honesty is very important. It is dishonest to cheat on exams, to copy term papers, to submit papers written by another person, or generated by software or systems without the explicit approval of the instructor, to fake experimental results, or to copy or reword parts of books or articles into your own papers without appropriately citing the source. Students committing or aiding in any of these violations may be given failing grades for an assignment or for an entire course, at the discretion of the instructor. In addition to any academic action taken by an instructor, these violations are also subject to action under the University of Maine Student

Conduct Code:

https://www.maine.edu/board-of-trustees/wp-content/uploads/sites/12/2025/08/2025UMS-Student-Code-of-Conduct_2.pdf

Regarding PLAGIARISM: Without proper citation, taking the words of another writer directly as they are written from the textbook, websites, etc., is plagiarism. **Plagiarism is a serious breach of the Student Conduct Code**, so be sure that you understand what plagiarism is and that you do not plagiarize in your extra credit writing assignments. Violators will be reported to the appropriate authority for disciplinary action. In writing assignments, ideally we would like you to paraphrase what you have read entirely in your own words. If you use strings of words exactly as another person wrote them, you must put them in quotation marks and cite the source. For example, "At divergent boundaries, plates move apart, and new lithosphere is created" (p.xx). You don't have to put the textbook's authors and title at the bottom of your post as reference in this case, but if you use outside sources, please include references at the bottom of your post as well as citing them in parentheses at the end of the sentences. Do some research on how to properly paraphrase the writing of others if you do not already know how. [Here is a recommended website for better understanding plagiarism and paraphrasing.](#)

Course Schedule Disclaimer

In the event of an extended disruption of normal classroom activities, the format for this course may be modified to enable its completion within its programmed time frame. In that event, you will be provided an addendum to the syllabus that will supersede this version.

Observance of Religious Holidays/Events

The University of Maine recognizes that when students are observing significant religious holidays, some may be unable to attend classes or labs, study, take tests, or work on other assignments. If they provide adequate notice (at least one week and longer if at all possible), these students are allowed to make up course requirements as long as this effort does not create an unreasonable burden upon the instructor, department or University. At the discretion of the instructor, such coursework could be due before or after the examination or assignment. No adverse or prejudicial effects shall result to a student's grade for the examination, study, or course requirement on the day of religious observance. The student shall not be marked absent from the class due to observing a significant religious holiday. In the case of an internship or clinical, students should refer to the applicable policy in place by the employer or site.

Sexual Discrimination Reporting

The University of Maine is committed to making campus a safe place for students. Because of this commitment, if you tell a teacher about an experience of **sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, relationship abuse (dating violence and domestic violence), sexual misconduct or any form of gender discrimination** involving members of the campus, **your teacher is required to report** this information to Title IX Student Services or the Office of

Equal Opportunity.

If you want to talk in confidence to someone about an experience of sexual discrimination, please contact these resources:

For *confidential resources on campus*: **Counseling Center: 207-581-1392** or **Northern Light Primary Care, University of Maine: at 207-581-4000**. *Confidential Resource Advisor: 207-571-5372 (call or text)*. Or see the [Confidential Resource Advisor website](#) for a complete list of services and resources (open in a new window).

For *confidential resources off campus*: **Rape Response Services: 1-800-871-7741** or **Partners for Peace: 1-800-863-9909**.

Other resources: The resources listed below can offer support but may have to report the incident to others who can help:

For *support services on campus*: **Title IX Student Services: 207-581-1406**, **Office of Community Standards: 207-581-1409**, **University of Maine Police: 207-581-4040 or 911**. Or [see the Title IX Student Services website for a complete list of services](#) . Also, [Student Wellness Resource Center](#).

Students Accessibility Services Statement

If you have a disability for which you may be requesting an accommodation, please contact Student Accessibility Services, located at the Center for Accessibility and Volunteer Engagement at the UCU, 139 Rangeley Rd, um.sas@maine.edu, 207.581.2319, as early as possible in the term. Students may begin the accommodation process by submitting an accommodation request form online and uploading documentation at <https://umaine-accommodate.symplicity.com/public/accommodation/>. Once students meet with SAS and eligibility has been determined, students submit an online request with SAS each semester to activate their approved accommodations. SAS creates an accessibility letter each semester which informs faculty of potential course access and approved reasonable accommodations; the letter is sent directly to the course instructor. Students who have already been approved for accommodations by SAS and have a current accommodation letter should send it to me (Scott Johnson) privately as soon as possible.