## Oceanography 320: Aquatic Pollution

**Fall 2012**  
**MWF 08:30-09:20**  
**MSB 315**

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**1st paper due to instructor**

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TEXT BOOK

Library card catalog number: TD420.L38 2000

GENERAL COURSE COMMENTS

This course is not particularly difficult if you have some basic background in chemistry and biology (i.e., introductory courses) as well as the formal course prerequisite (OCN 201). Students with no chemistry or biology background will be at a potential disadvantage, because class presentations and discussions will often invoke basic concepts from these subjects. If you have no background in chemistry or biology, you will likely need to spend additional time outside of class to obtain a basic understanding in some fundamental principles on your own. You are welcome to seek assistance from the course instructor (or tutors) as needed but not much time will be spent covering such material in class so as not to inconvenience the students who have the proper background.

Students are responsible for knowing and adhering to due dates for textbook readings and writing assignments unless notified otherwise by the course instructor. The schedule of lecture topics is tentative and current events and/or a keen interest by the class in material related to a given class topic may lead to changes in the lecture schedule. Significant schedule changes will be announced during class time and, once announced, become the responsibility of the students. Extreme deviations from the lecture schedule will be provided in the form of an updated syllabus on the web site or handed out in class, or by email to the students.

This course syllabus and some other limited information, including some old exams from the professor who wrote our textbook, (but not my old exams) are available on the OCN 320 website: http://www.soest.hawaii.edu/oceanography/courses.html

GRADING

Your grade in this course will be based on the total points you achieved in the course, curved relative to the rest of the class. Be aware that this course does NOT use the scheme of 90-100 = A, 80-90 = B, etc...that is commonly employed in many US high schools and colleges. Rather the scored tasks (quizzes, exams, papers, etc.) in this course are designed so that an average grade (i.e., C) is more likely to be in the 50-70 range. Further explanation will be provided in class. The important thing to remember is that:

Final letter grades will be based on numerical scores.
You are encouraged to find out how you are doing throughout the semester by requesting an “estimated” letter grade up to the time of your request, although a more accurate measure would be to examine the total points you have earned up to that date. Please do keep in mind that “estimated” letter grades on individual components are not averaged to yield a final letter grade.

The fraction of total points achievable in the various course categories is shown below:

- **a)** Periodic quizzes (10%)
- **b)** Midterm exam (20%)
- **c)** Final exam (20%)
- **d)** Three written assignments (i.e., term papers worth 30% total, or 10% each)
- **e)** One classroom presentation (10%)
- **f)** Classroom participation and reviewing (10%)

Quizzes will be unannounced and based partly on material previously covered in classroom lectures and partly on the assigned readings (i.e., the material that has not yet been covered in class). There will be NO MAKEUP on missed quizzes under any circumstances. Excused absences, however, will be factored into the total quiz score.

Exams will test student knowledge of the material covered in classroom lectures and the assigned textbook readings (some textbook materials and other assigned readings may not be repeated/discussed comprehensively in class but do remain your responsibility).

The first exam will cover the material covered in the time between the beginning of the course and the exam and the second exam will cover primarily material presented after the first exam. Although exams are not specifically designed to be cumulative, knowledge is, by nature, cumulative and comprehension of concepts learned in the first half of the semester will be important in mastering the second half of the subject matter.

Exams will include a combination of multiple-choice, true/false and fill in the blank questions, short (quantitative) problems and short essay questions.

**WRITING ASSIGNMENTS:**

The University of Hawaii “writing intensive” designation for a course is defined as a minimum of 20 pages of original writing during the semester. In this class the writing intensive requirement is met through three research/term papers and a student classroom presentation that includes written handouts prepared by the students. The twenty page limit excludes any figures, and reference lists in the term papers.

The student group classroom presentations will be on the topic related to your 3rd paper. More details on the format of the presentations are provided below.

Information presented in your research papers and the classroom presentation must be based on material derived from a minimum of three peer-reviewed publications from the scientific literature and any other material you wish to use. The course textbook, web sites, magazines, newspapers, etc. can be used as references to supplement the minimum
required peer reviewed articles. When using non-peer reviewed resources, it will also be necessary to discuss how objective, credible, or biased the opinions presented in these resources are. A portion of your grade on the papers will depend on the appropriate use/citation of references.

Students are to turn in complete drafts of the papers by dates specified in the syllabus for preliminary in class or take home peer-review (by fellow students). Final versions of the papers are due one week after return of the edited draft to the students, NO EXCEPTIONS.

Grades for late or incomplete paper outline will cause a reduction of your paper score by 10% of its value. Late submissions of the fully written papers will be reduced by 5% per class day up to a maximum of 50% grade reduction. Students will carry out an in-class peer review of the outlines of the papers (approximately 20-30 minutes of class time will be allocated for this purpose) and provide the author with feedback and suggestions. After peer review, students will prepare and turn in their papers to the course instructor. The course instructor will provide comments on style, grammar and content as necessary and grading will reflect the level of adherence to pre-set norms for these elements. Students are expected to pay careful attention to the nature and type of editorial comments (from both the in class peer review and the instructor reviews) so that they can improve their own skills.

If desired students can re-submit any graded paper for a second instructor evaluation and re-grading. Please be aware that unless there are substantive revisions and improvements to the paper, no additional points will be given.

The structure of your papers should include the following:

1) The title of your paper and your name (on the top of the first page)
2) An introduction. This should be one to two paragraphs, depending on the overall length of the paper. Its purpose is to introduce the topic of the essay. This/these paragraph(s) should inform the reader about what you will be writing and provide a brief layout of the rest of the paper. A key part of your introductory paragraph is to explain why the subject matter is important and worth presenting/discussing.
3) The body of your paper. In the body of your paper you will need to organize individual paragraphs sequentially in a logical manner so that the material in each paragraph follows from the previous paragraph and carries the reader from start to finish. Please be concise and avoid repetition.
4) The final summary paragraph. This paragraph provides the reader with a brief summary of the most important conclusions of your paper. It should also point out what information is missing and what additional work should/needs to be done on this topic.
5) The reference list. All sources of materials used in your paper including peer reviewed journal articles, books, newspaper articles, magazine articles and web-sources must be cited.
Some Hints to Help you Write

An instructor I had in college told us that the basic components of an oral presentation or a paper are such that: 1) you tell them what you are going to tell them, 2) you then tell them about the subject matter in question, and 3) you finish by telling them what you just told them… This seems pretty simple, but you will be surprised how many presentations and papers do not follow this simple format.

The writing assignments in this course have two primary objectives. The first is to help reinforce the concepts that are taught/discussed during the lectures as well as to allow you to obtain a more in-depth understanding of the material than is possible from simply listening to the instructor and/or reading the text book. The second objective is to help you improve your critical thinking and writing skills. It is well-known that one of the better ways to learn material is to write about it. Good communication skills are also very important in most professional occupations. I cannot overemphasize how many times I have been asked by employers, who were recruiting to fill job openings, how well an applicant wrote because they needed a person with “good communications skills”.

Unfortunately, as is the case with many things, the only way to get better at writing is to do it frequently… Practice makes perfect, as the old adage goes… The more you write, the better your writing will become and the easier it will become for you to write. Many of us may not initially like to write, but developing effective writing skills is a very important part of your professional training.

How to construct your papers:

Try to make the content of your papers follow a logical sequence. First introduce a problem and describe why it is of interest. Then present some known fact(s) (and/or data). Subsequently, present (one or more) hypotheses that have been advanced by those who have worked on the subject matter and try to present and evaluate, as much as possible, alternative hypotheses or arguments. In all cases, ensure that material in the early sentences and paragraphs lead to the subsequent discussion. Conversely ensure that material fits in and follows from what was previously stated/written (i.e., the paragraphs should not be a “brain dump” of random thoughts). Verify that the material in each paragraph relates to the introductory sentence of that paragraph. Also material in the next paragraph should follow logically from the last (transitory) sentence in the previous paragraph. Make sure that you let the reader know when you transition from one point to another or when you are explaining an opposing hypothesis/argument. Words such as “however”, “in contrast”, “nonetheless” help the reader realize that you are changing topics or presenting a differing opinion. The use of outlines, while sometimes seemingly very simple and not too exciting, may prove to be very helpful to organize your thoughts. This is why I am requiring you to prepared detailed outlines before you turn in your written assignments. As you begin to fill in an outline with increasingly more detail, you will find that its utility increases and that it can serve as a roadmap to the structure of your paper. If you take it to the extreme, the outline can become your first draft…

Your writing assignments should be concise and articulate. This is easier said than done and in order to achieve this goal you will likely have to edit your paper carefully and
repeatedly! The writing assignments of this course, however, should not represent an onerous time commitment on your part. Try to begin your writing assignments early (i.e., do not procrastinate) and do not worry too much about how well you write your first draft. Your first draft can be as simple as what I refer to as an “idea train”, where you just put down the ideas as they develop in your head and then build upon them. Once you have looked over your reference materials and jotted down relevant notes, you just begin to write thoughts that come to your head about the topic, without paying too much attention to grammar, structure or whether the ideas follow logically or not. I encourage you to prepare your first draft using word processor software on your computer. This will make it easier for you to edit and fill in missing material later, as well as re-arrange things that are not in a logical order. This fist draft will likely not be much fun or interesting for anyone else to read, but that is fine, at least at this stage of writing. Put the first draft away for a while (at least one day), then come back and re-read it and see if there are other things missing from your research. An important part of your first editing of the draft will be to eliminate material that just “hangs there” on its own and is inconsistent with the ideas you are trying to express. Unsupported thoughts should also be eliminated when editing your paper.

Once you have a second draft, have someone else read it and provide you with feedback. Room-mates, friends, significant others, instructors from other courses, etc. can help you significantly improve your writing because they are looking at your paper with fresh (and unbiased) eyes.

Use of references in your writing assignments:

Your writing assignments must be supported by a list of bibliographic references that describe the sources of material that you consulted. The use of relevant published references gives proper credit to the original authors of prior work whom you quote, and provides a historical timeline for the reader to examine at greater length if he or she desires. Keep in mind that peer-reviewed literature articles are much better references than popular literature or the internet/web because they have already been vetted as relevant and sound by others. These references are less likely to be subjective and/or biased and contain unsupported opinions than newspaper or magazine articles and web materials such as blogs, etc.

A good example of what not to use is an article that says: “Plaxo has been proven to be 60% more efficient in enhancing digestive function”… I ask: 60% more efficient than what? Who determined this and how? What is the source of this information and how do you know it is reliable?

For citations in your text, please use the style used in scientific publications, not liberal arts, history, English, etc. Each citation in the text should state the name of the author (or authors) followed by the year of publication. For example: A study of school children showed that using Plaxo as a food additive helped digestion (Smith and Jones, 2007). Alternatively you could say: A study conducted by Smith and Jones (2007) demonstrated that using Plaxo as a food additive helped digestion. If there are more than two authors the citation should be: Smith et al. (2007) or (Smith et al., 2007).
The references should be listed in alphabetical order with multiple entries by a given author listed in chronological order. Again, please use the scientific literature style. Here are some examples:


In the case of two papers by the same author(s) in a given year, please cite them in the text as, for example, Kawahara (1998a) and Kawahara (1998b) so as to differentiate them.

For non peer reviewed citations, please select a format and then use it consistently. You should, however, still cite by last name first, followed by first intitial(s), YEAR, then the rest of the info such as title, followed by the source of the info.

The following are the topics of your three writing assignment:
Each of your three term papers should be between 5 and 6 pages long double spaced, excluding references, graphs and tables. Please use Times Roman 12 pt font with your margins set at no more than 1 inch from each side as well as the top and bottom of the page. All papers must be turned in both electronically (MS word) and in hard copy. If you do not adhere to the above criteria you will lose points.

1) The nutrification of coastal waters: Hypoxic and anoxic zones

   The focus of this paper is to be on cause and effect relationships between land-derived (natural or anthropogenic) inputs of freshwater, suspended sediment and their associated nutrient loads on the coastal waters and, ultimately, primary productivity. It is strongly suggested that you use quantitative data to substantiate any arguments presented in your paper.

   Some starting points/reference papers are given below.


2) The importance of water resources for development and sustainability of societies.

Alternate topic: Ownership of water resources: Conflict over water rights.

Because this is a topic of both political and scientific interest, you may make more extensive use of newspaper, magazine and web resources but must still utilize at least two peer reviewed papers.


The below are random citations I found by doing a “water resources AND sustainability” search in Science Direct (www.sciencedirect.com), to which you have access on any UH computer.


Incorporating resilience into sustainability indicators: An example for the urban water sector. Global Environmental Change, Volume 18, Issue 4, October 2008, Pages 758-767 Anita Milman, Anne Short


Resources Policy, Volume 27, Issue 2, June 2001, Pages 139-140 P. Wouters, Alistair Rieu-Clarke


The below are random citations I found by doing a “water resources AND water rights AND water conflicts” search in Science Direct (www.sciencedirect.com)


3) For this paper, you will have two topical choices. They are:

**Water Quality in Urban Environments**

An alternate topic is: Water quality issues in conflict/war zones, following natural disasters (e.g., Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, Horizon deep water well disaster in the Gulf of Mexico), or in under-developed nations.

Keep in mind that the first topic is pretty straightforward as there is much peer-reviewed literature available (both for Hawaii and other urban settings). Some references on urban water quality in Hawaii that you might use are listed below.

The alternative topics are potentially of greater interest, but may be more difficult to put together coherently because there may be much less or no peer-reviewed literature available.


GROUP CLASSROOM PRESENTATION

This assignment is designed to provide students with the opportunity to develop their organizational, collaborative, and (oral) communications skills. As part of this assignment students will team up in groups of three or four to develop a 10-12 minute power-point presentation on the topic of the third paper. All students in each group are expected to participate in all aspects of the assignment. Students will prepare a handout of the powerpoint slides as well as an extended text outline (lesson plan) that includes more in-depth or supplementary information not covered thoroughly during the classroom presentation. The extended text outline should be on the order of three to four pages in length and include relevant (peer-reviewed) references for supplemental reading. The final exam will include questions from all student classroom presentations.

The handout material you prepare for this presentation will count towards your minimum twenty pages necessary to meet the “Writing Intensive” requirement for this course.

Students must adequately complete all writing assignments to pass this course, i.e., a letter grade of F for the ENTIRE COURSE will automatically be given to anyone who does not meet the writing and classroom presentation requirements, regardless of the number of points achieved on quizzes and exams.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

YOU (THE STUDENT) ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR GRADE

Because the syllabus is effectively the “contract” for this course, the successful student will read this document carefully and use it as a reference throughout the semester.

If you are like most of us who cannot remember everything we hear throughout our busy lives, it is important to write down information in a notebook dedicated to this class. This includes specific directions from the course instructor regarding assignments as well as the taking of notes during class. There is a positive correlation between note-taking and grades achieved in many courses and it has long been demonstrated that note-taking is a valuable memory and learning aid. Students who take detailed notes often achieve a greater final numerical score than those who do not.
In order to facilitate your note taking you will be provided with a summary printout of the class powerpoint presentation slides for each chapter/topic. **NOT ALL MATERIAL PRESENTED IN CLASS WILL BE ON THE HANDOUTS.** The powerpoint slides are NOT, by any means, all you need to know to obtain high scores on the quizzes and exams. Additional note-taking is critical. **To get the most benefit from your note-taking, you should also review your notes relatively soon after class (i.e., within the day) and expand or clarify them. This process will help you assimilate the subject material.**

When you have questions in class, do not hesitate to ask and, as necessary, follow up after class! If you have questions outside of class, please do your own research on the topic first so as to be prepared to ask informed questions and have a fruitful discussion.

Please plan your time carefully and appropriately. We are all busy and most of you are taking multiple courses, each of which likely requires work outside of class. **For this course, each class lecture session should generate a minimum of 2-4 hours of outside work, depending on your preparation for the course and writing skills.** It is imperative that you keep up in this class. If you cannot devote the time outside of class that is indicated above, maybe you should not be in this course. It is highly unlikely that you will be able to cram successfully and catch up one or two nights before an exam and do well!

Each of us has a slightly different learning style (hence a different ability to succeed following a particular approach)… if you know what works for you, by all means follow it. If your current approach for learning does not work you should try a different approach.

**Do not hesitate to consult the course instructor for help and advice, and remember that this course is for you.**

**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Upon completion of this course students will:

1) Be able to understand and explain to lay and technically skilled persons the underlying principles of primary productivity and eutrophication and how natural events and human induced changes impact these processes in fresh and coastal water bodies.

2) Be able to understand how different human activities affect the composition of natural waters (fresh and marine) and how to determine any consequent “cause and effect” impact on the welfare of the “biology”.

3) Be able to understand how to make informed decisions regarding stewardship of natural waters and how to minimize the adverse impacts of human activities on natural water bodies.

4) Through writing formal scientific papers and group oral presentations, students will have developed organizational, collaborative, and presentation skills that lead to improved oral and written communication skills.