PMU199Y1 – Climate Change: Software, Science and Society

Full year Sept 2012 to Apr 2013

http://www.cs.toronto.edu/~sme/PMU199-climate-computing

General Information

Instructor: Prof Steve Easterbrook, Bahen Center BA3259
e-mail: sme@cs.toronto.edu

TA: Daniel Levy;
email: dlevy@cs.toronto.edu

Seminars: Tuesdays 2pm-4pm, BA 2139
Tutorials: Thursdays, 2pm-3pm BA 2139
Instructor’s office hours: By appointment.

Recommended Texts

The two books I would most recommend for the course are:


For more background on the science of climate change, take a look at these online resources:


When searching for information on climate change on the web, be careful, as there is a lot of disinformation out there. We’ll discuss why during the course, and talk about how to assess the reliability of what you find. The various pages on wikipedia relating to climate change are pretty good.

I’ll post many other readings and pointers to websites as the course progresses.

Course Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites. No previous experience of programming, advanced mathematics or physics is needed. However, we will be touching on a number of technical issues from different fields of science – let the course instructor know if you feel you need more coverage of the background material.

Attendance at Seminars and Tutorials

We’ll use the Tuesday 2-hour seminar slot to introduce a new topic each week, and the Thursday 1-hour tutorial slot as a chance to ask follow-up questions, identify gaps in your understanding, and to identify interesting links between the course and other things you’re interested in. The Thursday slot is also a chance to talk about the assignments and practice your communication skills. Attendance at Seminars and Tutorials is mandatory. A central component of this course focuses on communication skills. If you’re not there to participate in the discussions, you can’t practice these skills!
Communication & Email Policy

Please use seminars and tutorials as your main opportunity to ask questions about the course. Major announcements will also be posted on the course website and course blog. NOTE: I typically receive hundreds of emails a day. I tend to read them quickly, but am much slower to respond (more than a week late is possible). Hence, I will not normally respond to email questions, unless it is an emergency. You may send me questions by email between seminars, and I will provide answers or clarifications in the seminars, rather than by responding by email.

Bear in mind that mail to me passes through a spam filter, and email sent to me from non-UofT addresses might not reach me. If you send me email, and I don’t address your questions in the next seminar, please ask about it - I may have forgotten, or I may have not received the email.

Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>Drafts Due</th>
<th>Final Version Due</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Presentation</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>A 10-minute talk (in teams of 2)</td>
<td>Oct 26, 2012</td>
<td>In class, week of Nov 9, 2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Briefing Note</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Write a succinct briefing on a key decision for a politician</td>
<td>Nov 23, 2012</td>
<td>Dec 4, 2012 (last day of term)</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Final Essay</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>1500 words. Topic to be announced</td>
<td>Mar 22, 2013</td>
<td>Apr 5, 2013 (last day of term)</td>
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An additional 10% of the grade is for course participation. Half of this (i.e. 5%) is for participating in seminars and tutorials, and the other half (i.e. 5%) is for participating in the course blog.

For all the assignments, submit a draft by the first date shown. We’ll then give you back comments within a week, so that you can revise it for a final version. Due dates for the assignments are firm. Assignments must be submitted electronically, by email, by midday (12pm) on the due date.

If you have questions about the grade your assignment received, please ask your TA. However, all requests for remarking must be made to Prof Easterbrook.

Teamworking

Assignments 2 & 5 will be done in teams of two people. If you encounter any problems working with your partners, please let me know as early as possible. Failure to submit the assignment because of an inability to get it together with your partner will not be accepted as an excuse!

Warnings

- Avoid plagiarism. Do not copy text from websites or from other students. If you get together with others to discuss an assignment, keep the discussions general, and don’t take notes. That way you will be more likely to focus on your own ideas when your write it up. See the course website for advice on plagiarism and teamworking.

- Extensions to assignment deadlines will only be granted in the case of documented medical emergencies. See http://www.utoronto.ca/health/forms/forms.htm