

De Anza College
Physical Science, Mathematics & Engineering Division
Meteorology 10, Weather & Climate Processes

Section(s):	45737, Spring 2026
Instructor:	Alicia T. Mullens (She/Her)
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Office Hours:	M/W 11:30-1:20pm – S48A (On Campus) T/Th By Appointment - Online
Classroom:	Online (100% Asynchronous)
Prerequisites:	None (Some basic math skills may be helpful)

Introduction

This syllabus is like the “Terms of Service” that you agree to when you download any app off the internet. However, this is much shorter and I actually expect you to read it! Our first quiz will be heavily based off of it! Your continued enrollment is your agreement to abide by the terms and conditions outlined in this syllabus.

Course Description

Welcome to the wonderful world of Weather! Regardless of if a friend/counselor recommended this class to you, or you signed up because of RateMyProfessors, I’m really glad you’re here! This course will cover all of the fundamental concepts behind the weather we see in our everyday lives. This includes atmospheric structure/composition, heat and radiation, forces that affect wind, humidity, atmospheric stability, precipitation and clouds, extreme weather and climate change. We’ll also cover areas of interest such as the California Drought, El Nino/La Nina, and potentially any major weather events that occur during the quarter.

Course Website and Communication

Everything you will do on this class will be posted/submitted on the course’s Canvas webpage. You are expected to log on to the course webpage at least two times a week. I will also make all communication (announcements/reminders/emails) through Canvas.

Textbook and Course Materials:

1. **Recommended:** “Essentials of Meteorology” by C. Donald Ahrens 7th edition (older editions are fine!). I also have copies on reserve in the school library.
2. Computer with reliable internet connection and browser that meets Canvas’ minimum requirements (Info: <http://www.deanza.edu/online-ed/students/>). If you need access to any technology tools during this quarter, check out my list of resources in Appendix C of this syllabus.

Contacting Me

If you need to get a hold of me for any reason, please email me at mullensalicia@fhda.edu or through the Canvas Messenger. I check my email continuously during the office hours scheduled above, often during business hours, and less often at nights/weekends. **If, you do not hear from me within 24 hours (48 hours over the weekend), please re-send your email. I can't stress this enough... I always try to respond to an email, but depending on when I get it, it might slip through a crack, so please re-send if you don't receive a response within 48 hours... To repeat, if you don't hear from me within 48 hours, please re-send your email... I've had students email once, not follow up for a month, and then say "I emailed you, but you never responded." I promise you I'm not trying to ghost you... I just get really busy at times... it's okay to bump your email up the list.**

Online Class: What's the Difference?

Because this is an online class, you are allowed to study/watch lectures/attempt assignments at your own leisure. However, online classes can be difficult, simply because they require more discipline than a traditional lecture. There are no meetings that you have to be present at... but you still need to be regularly involved in the class to succeed.

Assignments: This class will consist of a **10 modules**, and **the Final Exam**. Each module will consist of a discussion forum, a series of video lectures, reading assignments, an activity, and a quiz. Expect each module to take approximately 5 hours, not including time spent studying/preparing for the class. We will do one module each week. The module for each week will be posted no later than **12am the Saturday** of the week and due by **11:59pm the following Friday**. In order to be prepared for the module quiz, I strongly recommend that you complete the module discussion and activity PRIOR to attempting the module quiz.

In addition to Module Activities, Module Quizzes and Exams, 100 points of your grade are determined by weekly participation in that's week's Module Discussion forum. In order to get full credit for participation, you must make two posts a week (one by Wednesday and one by Friday) of the following:

1. **Ask a content-related question onto the discussion board**
2. **Answer someone else's question on the discussion board**
3. **Post something course related that you just came across (an article, story, or weather event that you just experience), with an explanation.**
4. **Any of the 3 items above must be at least 50 words in length and have substance to them (I won't count posts such as "cool story!" or "that's awesome!" towards your participation requirement).**

A rubric for Module Discussion Posts is available in Appendix B of this Syllabus.

A Word of Warning: While you are free to work on the modules at your leisure, I **strongly** urge you to **not wait until the last minute to submit a module assignment**. If anything causes you to submit any module activity after the deadline, regardless of reason, you will still be assessed a late penalty. Also, you are completely responsible for making sure that your work is submitted properly. **PLEASE READ: It is assumed that you are completing your course work at home, in the United States, ON A COMPUTER (not your phone) with a high speed internet connection and access to Canvas and Zoom. I am not responsible if you run into any technical issues due to being elsewhere or not having access to the internet, OR a computer (it is an online class afterall).**

Getting off to a good start: Because it often takes a little time to get accustomed to online classes, nothing is due until the conclusion of the 2nd week of class (Friday, April 17th, 2026). However, I still expect you to begin working on class material as soon as the quarter begins. For census purposes, I must drop anyone who hasn't logged on or completed any work by 11:59pm on Sunday, April 19th. I cannot not make exceptions to this policy (I've had students do absolutely nothing in the first two weeks of the course, get dropped, and then come to me begging to be let back in... unfortunately I'm not allowed to do that, so please make sure you do something prior to April 20st)!

Attendance/Punctuality: You are expected to log in to the course website **at least twice per week**, and that is the bare minimum. You will be dropped from the course if you fail to log on for the first time by Sunday, April 20th, you fail to log on at least once each week, or if you fail to turn in at least one module activity in a two-week period. Regardless, if you choose drop the course, it is your responsibility to do so. If you fail to drop before the deadline, I will have to award you a grade, most likely an FW.

Issues/Grievances: While I try my best to make this class a positive learning environment, there is always the chance that either something I or someone else in class does might not sit well with you; if that is the case, I am more than happy to hear any grievances brought to me both in private and respectfully (while I'm happy to discuss any complaints or grievances, I refuse to be addressed in a disrespectful and unprofessional manner). I've found that 99.9% of any issues that arise are easily settled (and to everyone's satisfaction) by a brief (and respectful) conversation. Pet Peeve: Saying something is "unfair" is not the way to solve your problem...

Assignments and Grading

Module Discussion (11 @ 10 points each, lowest dropped)...	100 pts
Module Activities (11 @ 20 points each, lowest dropped)...	200 pts
Module Quizzes (11 @ 20 points each, lowest dropped)...	200 pts
Final Exam...	100 pts
Total...	600 pts

Grading Scale:

>90%=A, 88-89.9%=A- 80-87.9%=B, 78-79.9%=B- 65-77.9%=C, 55-64.9%=D, < 55%=F

Note: I reserve the right to adjust this scale, but only to benefit you.

Also note: An "A" isn't the only acceptable grade! B's aren't bad!!

Grading Criteria and Discussion Forum Policies: A general criteria and policies for the discussion forums are available as an appendix of this syllabus.

Late/Makeup Policy: I'm piloting something a colleague of mine has done in the past this quarter... For every module, I will make an automatic one-week extension available. Here's how it will work:

- **One week:** The extension gives you an extra week to complete an assignment from the published due-date.
- **It's automatic:** you do not need to request it, just utilize it.
- **No late penalties:** The assignment will show as "late" on Canvas, but I will not assess any late penalties.
- **Doesn't apply to the Final Exam:** I cannot offer this for the final because the term ends right after the final is due.

Sounds pretty good, huh? But there is one HUGE catch:

- **No other extensions, makeups, or anything like that will be granted, regardless of reason!!! I will be STRICTLY adhering to this. You are still expected to turn in work by the published deadline, and should only be using the automatic extensions in the event of an emergency... if you choose to use them otherwise, that's your prerogative, BUT I will not be granting any other extensions!**

One other word about grades: I really see myself as a fair, enjoyable (if not overly corny) enthusiastic teacher who just wants to see you succeed. But success isn't measured by some stupid letter on a transcript (believe me, grades mean a lot less than you think they do... even to schools like Berkeley!), it's measured by learning and growing. One frustrating thing I've noticed a lot more recently has been, at the end of the term, getting a slew of emails from students about "how important my grade is to me," only to go back over the past few months of communications to see that they never once asked for help on an assignment, trying to understand a concept, or even just to check in and see if there is something they can do better. While I'm eager to help you get an A in the class, **you have to be just as eager to EARN an A in the class**... that means, for the next 12 weeks, I expect you to (at the very least) be open to learning about our atmosphere, weather, and the many aspects of it that affect our lives and, frankly, are pretty cool! So I expect you to reach out for help, express interest in learning the stuff, and not just coasting by only to panic about your grade in the last week. Forgive how frank I'm being here... I just need to put my foot down about this... I promise you that I want you to be successful! Also, if you reach out to me after the term, ignoring all announced deadlines, and don't even remember the subject (I'm not kidding... that happened once!), I won't take your request for a higher grade seriously. Not trying to be mean... just honest!

Important Reminders: While these policies represent the "letter of the law," I will, in many cases, be gracious within reason. As we have adjusted to a "post-COVID" learning environment, I've had situations where requests of leniency have become more extreme, and downright unreasonable, so I want to be clear here:

1. You are responsible for all content, assignments, and deadlines, EVEN IF YOU HAVEN'T BEEN LOGGING IN. Saying "oh, I haven't been here in the past two weeks" isn't a valid excuse (unless you have a legitimate, documented reason). If you need to miss a class session, I strongly recommend making a friend and having them fill you in on what you missed (at least in terms of assignments, etc). I assume there will be a course discord set up by one of your classmates (hopefully not to share answer keys)... use it!
2. My late policy is ONE WEEK after the deadline... any exceptions to that must be discussed with and approved by me (and only in extenuating circumstances, where it is clear that you were not able to meet the deadline for a valid reason). Emailing me in week 9 asking if you can make up an assignment from week 3 is NOT okay, and such requests will be denied... I'm not trying to be mean... just fair!
 - a. Seriously... I've had people email me in the last week or two of the course asking if I'll accept work from the first few weeks... the answer is no. I bake a lot of forgiveness (dropped assignments, extra credit) into my grading, so, to quote the Beatles, if you missed something from earlier in the course, "Let it be!"
 - b. Even worse, some have started making it a habit to wait until after I've finalized grades to ask me to accept work (after the term has ended). I simply can't do that... it's not fair to the rest of the class, nor me.
3. Once I announce a deadline in class (or on Canvas), you are expected to write it down and keep track of it... any additional reminders are a courtesy, and should not be relied on. I'll always try to give a reminder, but I'm also human.

All of this being said, I seriously try to be gracious... I just want to make sure that I'm establishing a proper boundary, as a well trained therapist would say. If you need to miss a bunch of class, or encounter an issue, please reach out to me, and I'll work with you... but don't wait until after things have settled down to do so... the moment you need help, let me know!

Dropping

I will drop you if:

- You miss more than one complete module
- or-
- You fail to log on at least once a week for two consecutive weeks.

Otherwise, if you choose to drop the class, you must do so on your own.

The Deadline to Drop this class with a W is Friday, May 29th

Other Policies

Disabilities: If you need any accommodation due to a disability (note taker, etc.), please don't hesitate to let me know and I'll be happy to help! All accommodations will need to be made through Disability Support Programs and Services (DSPS), which is located at RSS-141, or online at <https://www.deanza.edu/dsps/>.

Academic Integrity: I will NOT tolerate cheating or plagiarism of any kind! **This includes copying stuff off the internet, or submitting work under a phony name to get "answers" prior to making an actual submission!** While you're allowed (actually, encouraged) to work together) on assignments, you must turn in your own work, and in your own words! The first offense results in a grade of "0" on the assignment and a stern warning. Any subsequent offense results in a report filed with the college.

Final Grade Changes: At the end of every term, almost without fail, at least one or two students approach me to ask for additional work/some leeway with their grade to earn a higher grade. While I appreciate the gravity that grades can have, I need to both be fair to the rest of the class (I don't think other students would appreciate it if I just bumped another student's grade without merit, or gave them extra work without making it available to the rest of the class) and maintain my own academic integrity (i.e. I can get in trouble for awarding grades that were not earned), so I must deny all requests for a higher grade, except in instances where I made a mistake. However, I am more than happy to help you earn a good grade if you reach out to me for help before the end of the term. There will also be plenty of extra credit during the course.

TL;DR: Engage in the class, try your best, turn in your work on time, don't cheat/copy off of others/submit identical written work, and reach out whenever you need help and I promise you that I won't let you fail this class! Everything else is just details (still read them because I will adhere to them, but the gist is above)!

Important dates/deadlines:

Deadline to Add: 4/18

Deadline to Drop with Refund: 4/19

Deadline to Drop with a W: 5/29

Holidays: 5/25 (Memorial Day), 6/19 (Juneteenth)

Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	4/6-4/10	Module 0: Introductions, Due 4/17
2	4/11-4/17	Module 1: Introduction to the Atmosphere, Due 4/17
3	4/18-4/24	Module 2: Temperature and Heat, Due 4/24
4	4/25-5/1	Module 3: Moisture and Clouds, Due 5/1
5	5/2-5/8	Module 4: Stability and Precipitation, Due 5/8
6	5/9-5/15	Module 5: Wind and Atmospheric Circulations, Due 5/15
7	5/16-5/22	Module 6: Circulations, Monsoon, El Nino, Due 5/22
8	5/23-5/29	Module 7: Fronts and Mid-Latitude Cyclones, and Weather Forecasting Due 5/29
9	5/30-6/5	Module 8: Thunderstorms and Tornadoes, Due 6/5
10	6/6-6/12	Module 9: Hurricanes and Superstorms, Due 6/12
11	6/13-6/19	Module 10: Fire Weather, Due 6/19
12	6/20-6/26	Module 11: Global Climate Change, Due 6/26 <i>Final Exam Opens on 6/22 and due 6/26</i>

NOTE: This schedule is tentative and Subject to Change for any reason

Appendix A

Grading Rubric: While each assignment/exam/activity is different, I always use the following guidelines when I award points (I don't "take points off," I award points):

The maximum number of points are awarded for work that is:

1. Clearly written and answers the question.
2. Detailed and thorough, leaving no doubt that you understand the material.
3. Submitted following directions and is on time.
4. Accurate (aka your answer is correct)

A reduction in the number of points awarded (aka "points taken off") happens when:

1. You don't put your name on the assignment (5 points for an exam, 1 point for all other assignments).
2. You don't show your work... *Always show your work and provide evidence.*
3. You don't follow directions, or you don't answer the question.
4. You don't explain your answer: Whenever I say "list and explain/describe," an explanation or description is required in order to earn maximum credit.
5. You include irrelevant/incorrect information. There is such as thing as saying too much (I call this "throwing everything onto your paper and expecting credit for what sticks").
6. Using an unverified or inappropriate source (i.e. Wikipedia, Quora, etc).
7. The work is copied from a source and not put in your own words. A quote or "blurb" is okay, but when the majority of your answer isn't actually your work, it's not fair to award you points for someone else's work. When the work is copied from another student or a source without proper credit given, this also becomes an academic dishonesty issue (see my policy on academic dishonesty).
8. The submitted work is poorly written or unclear. Always proofread your work!
9. The work is submitted late, or missed due to unexcused absences.

I will share any other details regarding a specific assignment prior to attempting/submitting that assignment. Please note that whenever I grade an assignment, I approach it from an "I know nothing" standpoint, meaning that your job on every assignment in this course is to teach me the material (you know 90% of what you can teach). A lower number of points are awarded when there are holes in your explanation, major details are left out, or the information is inaccurate.

Discussion Forum Guidelines

Module Forums: Each module will include a discussion forum. Here, you can post questions that you have about course material, answer other student's questions, post anything interesting (weather related) that you come across, or just engage in general discussion about the course. You are expected to participate in this forum by making 11 posts throughout the quarter (One for each module, worth 5 points each) and 11 responses throughout the quarter (One for each module, worth 5 points each). **Please note that you must make at least one post and one reply per module... You can't wait until the final module forum, make 22 posts and get full credit!** Your posts will be graded using the following rubric:

Grading Rubric:

- 5pts: Post was made by 11:59pm Wednesday of the week the module is due, and is at least 50 words in length. Post either asks a question related to the corresponding module or shares/describes something interesting (any sources are cited) and weather related. The post is thoughtful, well written, and is of substantial meaning to the discussion as a whole. The post doesn't just regurgitate course material, but expresses your understanding and reflection of the material.
- 3pts: Post was made after Wednesday, post was made on the last day the forum was open, or post was less than 50 words in length. Post neither asks a content/course related question, nor describes any links/content shared (author just posts a link with no description or explanation). The post is overly short (just a few words) or full of "fluff" with little, if any substance. The post may just regurgitate course material without adding any reflection or understanding to the forum.
- 0pts: Post is either plagiarized, not related to weather/climate in any way, or is non-existent.

Reply/Comment Rubric:

- 5pts: Reply/Comment was made by 11:59pm Friday night of the week the module is due. Comment is based primarily on course material and facts or personal experience rather than opinion, and any criticism of the response of the original author is constructive and helpful.
- 3pt: Comment is largely opinion based and draws from little, if any, course material or personal experience –or- comment is overly critical of original author.
- 0pts: Comment either attacks original author, provides no meaningful response (like, "cool, man"), is plagiarized, or non-existent.

Note: While opinions or personal experience are welcome (and encouraged) in the forum, I will not tolerate disrespect, foul language, or personal attacks (geared towards myself or other students) of any kind. Any student who trolls, insults, publicly airs grievances (forums are not the place to complain about losing a point on an assignment), or uses the forums in an inappropriate manner will be subject to disciplinary action (either a reduction in grade, banning from the forums altogether, dropped from the class). Keep all posts tactful and related to the course.

TL;DR: Your first post is due by 11:59pm the Wednesday the module is due, and your reply to another post is due by 11:59pm that Friday. Each post must be at least 50 words long and contributes to the overall discussion. Failure to follow these guidelines will result in a reduction of points awarded (or as students call it, "points taken off")

Syllabus Addendum on use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) – Spring 2026

Artificial Intelligence (AI) use in learning is a relatively new and rapidly changing topic in higher education, and one that requires careful consideration from both me (your instructor) and you (my students). At the request of several students, I've adopted a restricted policy on AI using language provided by the De Anza College Academic Senate which I feel best balances the usefulness of AI in this class with the need for original student-generated work:

“Policy on the Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

The limited use of generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) is permitted to help you with your research, but it IS NOT permitted as an end result. All use of AI must be cited. I may also ask you to write a reflection on why and how you used AI and what you learned from doing so. If you turn in work that uses AI beyond these parameters, it will be considered a violation of De Anza College's Academic Integrity Policy as outlined in the College Catalog here:

https://www.deanza.edu/policies/academic_integrity.html“

In short, while I allow you to use AI to help you research/study, the work that you turn in at the end of the day must be YOURS and YOURS ALONE. Turning in AI-generated work, especially work that hasn't been adopted/proofread/made your own, and trying to pass it off as your own will be considered a violation of the my academic honesty policy, along with De Anza's Academic Integrity Policy. My hope is that there will be minimal opportunities to use AI dishonestly in this course, but there may/will be times where using AI for dishonest purposes is tempting, and so I want to stop it before it becomes an issue.

Student Learning Outcome(s):

- Analyze and explain the objective techniques used by synoptic meteorologists and climatologists to forecast our planet's weather and to predict future changes in our planet's climate.
- Assess and critique the impact of meteorology and climatology as sciences on local, national and international economic, environmental, ethical and political issues including climate change.

Office Hours:

M,W 11:30 AM - 1:20 PM
T,TH 7:00 AM - 10:00 PM

S48A
Zoom,Canvas