Environmental Science  
Biology 823 Fall 2012

Instructor: Dr. Marc Albrecht  
Office: 317 Bruner Hall of Science  
Phone: 308 865-8713  
Email: AlbrechtM@unk.edu

Regular office hours are M 1:30 – 2:30, Tues 10:30 – 12:30, Thur 1:30 - 2:30 Central Time  
or by appointment  
Schedule: Online, Fall Semester  
Text: Environment: The Science Behind the Stories by Withgott and Brennan 3rd ed  
and Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Environmental Issues 13th ed by Easton

Course Philosophy  
This class is about life on Earth. Life did not inevitably happen here, but now that it has, it is tenacious and ubiquitous. Ironically, as humans continue to succeed at living and using resources we ourselves have become a significant force of change on the planet. Today, humans determine the course of many other species and existence of entire ecosystems by our actions. This class explores functioning of the biosphere on Earth and how humans are altering some of these functions.

Course Objectives  
- Define the field of Environmental Biology  
- Define Science as a way of knowing  
- Familiarize students with basic geology, meteorology, and biogeochemical cycles  
- Become more familiar with the impact of humans on environmental systems of Earth  
- Discussion of new challenges and issues facing natural ecosystems from humans  
  - Climate change  
  - Genetic Engineering  
  - Water and energy needs of the present and future  
- Examination of important and current issues in environmental science from multiple points of view  
- Practice of scientific writing emphasizing structure and formatting

Course Expectations  
- All readings done on time, assignments turned in on time  
- Participation in online discussions by  
  - thoughtful consideration of what is said in lecture, texts, and by others  
  - articulate writing in discussion boards  
  - flexibility and open-mindedness in world views
**Course Grading**

The graded work in this class is summarized below

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plagiarism</td>
<td>Plagiarism Quiz</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>Weeks 2-12</td>
<td>20 pts for 10 weeks</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>Paper 1</td>
<td>30 pts</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>Blackboard discussion</td>
<td>5 pts for 10 weeks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>70</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Points</strong></td>
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<td><strong>355</strong></td>
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**Grading Scale**

The following grading scale will be used for this class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Minimum Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>99-100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>92-98%</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-91%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>82-86%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-81%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>72-76%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-71%</td>
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<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69%</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>60-66%</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>below 60%</td>
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</table>

**Quizzes**

These will be administered through Blackboard, typically they will be available from Friday at 5 pm Central Time to Monday at 10 pm Central Time. The format will usually be multiple choice, but some quizzes will be differently structured.

**Course Policies**

The University of Nebraska at Kearney has a student handbook that is available online at this location: [http://www.unk.edu/uploadedFiles/admin/vcsa/StudentHandbook.pdf](http://www.unk.edu/uploadedFiles/admin/vcsa/StudentHandbook.pdf). This document outlines your responsibilities such as not plagiarizing or copying work from other students.

**Participation**

This class is online, participation is expected in discussion boards every week. A minimum of 2 substantial posts every week is necessary for full participation credit. A ‘substantial’ post means one that is more than “I agree”. A post should contain a thoughtful question, useful information, or well-articulated comment. Questions about class assignments that are not clear are important but are not considered participation. A question about something already answered in the reading only demonstrates that you have not read carefully enough – but other students may help you.

Other aspects of discussion boards to remember:

- I will read all posts
- Anything you post is an obligation to everyone else in the class to read, this will take their time and effort. Please remember that many other people will be reading what you post, so make every work and sentence worthwhile.
- Discussion boards are a good learning tool when people participate.
- In general: everyone must be respectful however of each other’s views. People have different views. Exploring these views is often an opportunity to learn about one’s own as well as those of others. It is difficult, but often exploring these areas is how social discourse moves forward.
Just be respectful. Online emotions as complex as irony, sarcasm, and self-deprecation are often hard to discern. Using emoticons helps with this problem, but is not a cure-all.

**Writing**
The ability to communicate scientifically is an important tool in the arsenal of any graduate student. I believe there are two pillars to scientific writing. The first is writing mechanics. By this I mean everything from grammar, to properly formatted scatterplots, to consistently writing simple declarative sentences. These elements need to be executed properly so that readers not familiar with your work can understand and follow the technical details presented. The second pillar is the logical structure of a paper, that is, the way the pieces fit together: the sentences, the paragraphs, the paper sections. See material I have written and collected in the Documents/Scientific Writing folder.

I am assigning a paper for this class. Please check your understanding of how to cite sources in papers. I take citation and plagiarism seriously and will take off some or all points from papers with consistent citation and plagiarism problems. See the Graduate Outline document, in Online Master’s Blackboard group/Documents folder for details on in text and end of paper citation. All facts must be cited, with both in-text and full citations in a literature cited section at the end of the paper. In-text citations should be (author, year) format. End of paper citations should be in a common bibliographic form such as CSE, see here. For plagiarism, see this page and take the quiz! I will assume everyone has viewed this page and understands plagiarism as I (and Indiana University) define it. Please forward to Blackboard before the second Friday of the term.

Please note that the papers are to be complete, and error-free, not an outline, incomplete, or partial in any way. They should be your best effort on the topic in the scientific writing style.

**Students with Disabilities**
Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact me for a confidential discussion of their individual needs for academic accommodation. It is the policy of the University of Nebraska at Kearney to provide flexible and individualized reasonable accommodation to students with documented disabilities. To receive accommodation services, students must be registered with UNK Disabilities Services Coordinator, David Brandt, in the Academic Success Office, 163 Memorial Student Affairs Building, 308-865-8214 or by email brandtdd@unk.edu.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Lecture</th>
<th>Book Readings</th>
<th>Other Readings</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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<tr>
<td>20-Aug</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>00 Intro + Sagan</td>
<td>Assigned readings should be done early in the week</td>
<td>Sagan: Baloney Detection Kit</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>01 Chap 01</td>
<td>W&amp;B Chap 1: Intro to Environ Sci</td>
<td>Sagan: Dragon in My Garage</td>
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<td>27-Aug</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>02 Chap 02</td>
<td>Easton: 1, 2, 3 Precautionary Prin, Sust Develp, Ecosystem Serv</td>
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<td>02b Easton 1-3</td>
<td>W&amp;B Chap 2: Environ Ethics and Choices What is sustainable?</td>
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<tr>
<td>3-Sep</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>03 Chap 03</td>
<td>Labor Day</td>
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<td>03b Easton 6</td>
<td>Easton: 6 Pollution Rights Trading</td>
<td>W&amp;B Chap 3: Environmental Policy</td>
<td>Quiz 2 Friday</td>
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<td>10-Sep</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>04 Chap 04</td>
<td>W&amp;B Chap 4: Chemistry to Energy to Life</td>
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<td>04b Easton 8</td>
<td>Easton: 8 Drilling in ANWR</td>
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<td>05 Chap 05</td>
<td>W&amp;B Chap 5: Evolution, Biodiversity, Pop Ecology</td>
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<td>17-Sep</td>
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<td>06 Chap 06</td>
<td>Easton: 4 Biodiversity protection</td>
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<td>06b Easton 4</td>
<td>W&amp;B Chap 6: Species and Community Ecology</td>
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<td>24-Sep</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>07 Chap 07</td>
<td>W&amp;B Chap 7: Environmental Systems and Ecology</td>
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<td>07b Easton 13</td>
<td>Easton 13: Falling Human Birth Rate</td>
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<td>08 Chap 08</td>
<td>W&amp;B Chap 8: Human Population</td>
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<td>1-Oct</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>09 Chap 09</td>
<td>W&amp;B Chap 9: Soil &amp; Agriculture:</td>
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<td>09b LLS</td>
<td>UN report: Livestock’s Long Shadow: summaries and maps</td>
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<td>8-Oct</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10 Chap 10</td>
<td>W&amp;B Chap 10: Agriculture, Biotech</td>
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<td>11 Chap 11</td>
<td>W&amp;B Chap 11: Conservation Biology Biodiversity</td>
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<td>15-Oct</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12 Chap 14</td>
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<td>12b Atrazine</td>
<td>W&amp;B Chap 14: Environmental Health &amp; Toxicology:</td>
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<td>22-Oct</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13 Chap 15</td>
<td>Easton 16 DDT, 17 Environ mimics</td>
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<td>13b Easton 16</td>
<td>W&amp;B Chap 15: Freshwater Resources</td>
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<td>28-Oct</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14 Chap 16</td>
<td>W&amp;B Chap 16: Marine and Coastal systems: Fisheries</td>
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<td>14b Easton 15</td>
<td>Easton 15 Marine reserves</td>
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<td>15 Chap 17</td>
<td>W&amp;B Chap 17: Atmospheric science and air pollution:</td>
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<td>5-Nov</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16 Chap 18</td>
<td>W&amp;B Chap 18: Global climate change</td>
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<td>Quiz 10 Friday</td>
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<td>16b Inconvn Truth</td>
<td>W&amp;B Chap 18: Proxy indicators, ice cores, IPCC report</td>
<td>Inconvenient Truth</td>
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<td>18 Chap 20</td>
<td>W&amp;B Chap 20: Conventional Energy Alternatives:</td>
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<td>19-Nov</td>
<td>14</td>
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<td>Review, catch-up time</td>
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<td>26-Nov</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19 Chap 21</td>
<td>W&amp;B Chap 21: New Renewable Energy Alternatives:</td>
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<td>19b Readings</td>
<td>Hazardous Waste Readings</td>
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<td>20 Chap 22</td>
<td>W&amp;B Chap 22: Waste Management:</td>
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<td>3-Dec</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21 Chap 23</td>
<td>W&amp;B Chap 23: Sustainable solutions: Case study: Ball State, recycling, reduce, energy</td>
<td>Chap 23: Green building, conservation</td>
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<td>10-Dec</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td>Exam week</td>
<td>Final Exam due Wed Dec 12th at 5 pm CST</td>
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Orientation to Albrecht Blackboard Use
Version 1.7 Summer 2012
UNK Biology Department

Introduction:
The UNK Biology Distance Master’s program has a number of faculty participating. Part of the experience and challenge of the program is that, as in other professional situations, faculty are different from each other. Different faculty have different lecture styles, different discussion board expectations, different grading priorities, and even different methods to deliver class material. I realize this might be confusing for people, but hopefully the various methods will demonstrate what works and what does not for you in your own future careers. Please read this section as I try to clarify how I use Blackboard in this class.

Please contact me with any questions; also note that the UNK e-Campus website does provide both Video Tutorials and Atomic Learning Tutorials on using Blackboard, Lotus notes, and MS Word see this page.

A note about Expectations:
I approach this program with the goal of providing, as closely as possible, the level of experience I was fortunate enough to experience in my graduate career at some of the best universities in the country. This means that generally my expectations are high. I will do my best to find, present, and interpret material I think is important and appropriate for the subject area of the class. I will also do my best to explain how the process of science works including experimental design, statistical testing, writing, and thought processes. I will also work to be as available as possible, and turn around Blackboard, emails, and graded work as quickly as I can. Unfortunately I often have lots going on like everyone does. Two busy parties trying to communicate can be frustrating.

There is responsibility on your part as well to meet both the letter and spirit of assignments. It is my hope and expectation that everyone in this program is here because they enjoy biology and wish to become more knowledgeable and proficient at teaching or researching in this area.

Let me give some examples of what this means to me, based on my experience as a graduate student:

1. Have you prepared for class? Have you read the material, not just once but twice? Have you looked up authors, concepts, or words you were not familiar with before attending class? Do you understand how this reading fits into the discipline in general, and why it was assigned? Have you noticed the author, date, and institution of the paper in addition to the data, statistical tests, and concepts supported in the paper?
2. Before asking an entire class what a word means have you tried to look it up? Did you try to find the word from appropriate, professional, recognized sources? Wikipedia is a good place to start, but not a good place to end. Never use Wikipedia as a reference in a paper in this class.
3. Is the work you are turning in reflective of you as the student you are trying to be? Have you proofread the document for grammatical, factual, spelling, and formatting errors? Do you know what formatting is desired by the professor? Is this paper well-researched? Do you have all the important concepts in the paper? Is the organization of the paper clear and useful? Have you put in thought and work to figures, tables to make them clear and referenced?
Blackboard:
The Blackboard Classroom software suite is the main portal for the class work in the UNK Biology Distance Master’s program. Being familiar with this program is helpful for success in the program. To be more precise, the following components are the ones I use the most:

1. Course Documents:
   a. This is where I place pdf files and wmv files that are the lectures for classes
   b. These files should be downloaded (not streamed) for viewing or printing out
   c. Some of these files are large and should be downloaded on fast internet connections
   d. I may post other papers here as well as book sections or links to other sites I think are useful

2. Discussion Board:
   a. This section of Blackboard is how you will communicate with me and each other in the class.
   b. In my classes Discussion Board is an important part of the class experience, there are lot of points associated with participation on Discussion Board
   c. Typically (I reserve the ability to change this section if needed), each discussion board is opened Monday around 9:00 am Central Time, and closed Sunday night around 10:00 pm Central Time.
   d. Because discussion boards are important, posts will be graded.
      i. I expect at least two (2) useful postings each week and not on Sunday night.
      ii. The quality of your contribution. This is a somewhat subjective category, but the more thoughtful your comments the better the quality of discussion will be. Your comments should be at least a few sentences. Conciseness and clarity are necessary to keep the work load for this class to a reasonable level, i.e.: page long postings are discouraged. Your comments should be supported with specific details, file attachments or web sites, and should be relevant to the current topic of discussion.
      iii. How well you interact as classmates. Your responses should demonstrate that you are aware of the discussion that has been taking place. Go beyond either “agreeing” with someone or “disagreeing” with someone by stating your reasoning. But be polite and constructive in your responses to other students and myself.

3. Assignments:
   a. Many, if not all the assignments in the class will appear here, so please find this area of Blackboard
   b. There are two types of assignment functions I use most:
      i. Tests: these are timed tests, typically multiple choice tests that are available for a limited amount of time. That time frame is usually Friday at 5:00 pm to Monday at 10:00 pm Central Time. These tests are to be completed online within a time limit (e.g. 30 minutes) once started.
      ii. Papers: I use the ‘assignment function’, the name is unfortunate, but this is a link through which you can upload your documents. This system has the distinct advantage over email in that your papers go directly to a ‘space’ that is yours alone and you will see a green exclamation point in the Gradebook for the assignment when you have uploaded the document.
         1. This function also can be set to be available for a limited amount of time. Papers are typically due Mondays at 10:00 pm Central Time. Typically I post the assignments at least 1 week ahead of the deadline.

4. Gradebook:
   a. This is the area of Blackboard where grades are recorded and displayed, these are the actual grades I use, so check your grades often.
b. Note the **symbols** in Blackboard. The responsibility is yours to make sure assignments are in on time, and uploaded correctly, and that the correct file is uploaded. If the wrong file is loaded, or the file is late, penalty of at least 10% will be assessed.
   
i. Empty assignment: this means no file has been uploaded, or test taken according to Blackboard. You **do not** want see this if you have taken a test or uploaded a file.

   ![Image]

   ii. Green exclamation point: this means that Blackboard has received a file, or that a test has been taken. A file that is uploaded may still be corrupt, or a person could still have uploaded the wrong file, but whatever it is, Blackboard has it. This is fine, with the two exceptions given above, and it means I have to grade the assignment before you will see a grade. Any paper, and any tests with subjective questions (such as fill-in, short answer) will have this symbol until I graded.

   ![Image]

   iii. Red exclamation point: this symbol is **bad**. This symbol means that a file failed to upload correctly, or a test failed while being taken. This symbol means that you and I need to talk by email, phone and figure out a solution. This needs to be done **before** the due date of the assignment. If you do not contact me before the due date, late penalties will be assessed of 10% per day.
5. Announcements:
   a. These are the text entries you see just below the title for the class when you enter Blackboard
   b. I will post class information here, such as changes to the syllabus or answering a question that is coming up repeatedly.
   c. Please check this area several times a week on your way to Discussion Board, Assignments, or Gradebook.

6. Other Features:
   a. There are other features of Blackboard that I use from time to time, such as Wimba, External Links, and SafeAssignment - so please look around at the program.

7. Scientific Writing
   a. I will include documents in Blackboard/Course Documents folder to help with scientific writing.
   b. I encourage everyone to work on improving their writing skills, as I continue to work on mine. Everyone in the program should have at least some papers from primary journals from other classes or your own reading. If not, get a few from the UNK library collection that you have access to as a UNK student. Recent papers from a major journal should be read for style, voice, formatting. Such examples will show you how to build sentences, tables, figures, paragraphs, references and abstracts. Everything you need to know is there. Also, you can always ask!
Dr. Albrecht Class Policies
Version 1.5 Summer 2012

Introduction:
Every institution has its rules and policies, and UNK and the Biology Department do have them. Because of the
distance education situation, the degree of communication between me and you can be difficult, and
misunderstandings do happen. Please keep in mind talking over the computer is not the same as face to face –
several types of communication are lost. Please be patient and allow more time than you might otherwise to
get the solution you need. To try to help get ahead of some questions here policies that will be in place for this
class.

Policies:
1. Paper formatting: All work turned in for this class should have the following
   formatting
   a. Size 12 font, 1” margins all around the page, page numbers present, no right justification
   b. All text double-spaced with proper English spelling and grammar used.
   c. Tables must be labeled at the top and have captions that explain them.
   d. Figures must be labeled below and have captions that explain them.
   e. All needed citations must be (author year) format in text (including figures and tables) and
      fully cited at the end of the paper. See Section 2 below for more information on this.
      i. Citations are needed if textbook or lecture material is used or quoted. This is both the
         legal necessity and good practice for work outside the class.
      ii. Full citations should be in a References section at the end of each paper and follow
          these formats, reverse indented, and alphabetical by author:

Books

Computer Program

Journal Article

Website
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. 2006. Livestock impacts on the environment. URL:
2. Plagiarism and Cheating:
   a. Please see and complete this page - I require everyone in the class has visited this site, take the quiz and send me a completion certificate by the 5:00 pm Central Time on the second Friday of the semester. Every semester, even if you have done it before. Send a scan to the column on Blackboard, secondarily fax it to the Biology Department (call Judy for fax number). The reason? So everyone knows exactly what plagiarism is. All sources in anything turned in for this class must be cited, including figures and anything taken from class texts (such as copying word problems) every time they should be.
   b. Also see the UNK Student Handbook for UNK policy statement on plagiarism
   c. I consider plagiarism a scourge and a stain on science and detrimental to the progress of humanity. I will treat any plagiarism seriously including giving zeros on questions, or entire tests (which often drops a student one letter grade or more), or failing the class outright in addition to letters in the permanent files here at UNK
   d. For more information see the Graduate Outline document in the Online Master’s Blackboard Group. This group should appear at the lower right of your Blackboard login page; contact UNK Helpdesk if you do not see this group.
   e. Citation information for APA style is given at the UNK eCampus website here
   f. A quick rule: more than 3 words in a row from any source must be referenced
   g. Do not communicate with outside experts to answer tests. Tests are meant to assess your knowledge, not that of others.

3. Late work/technical difficulties:
   a. Late work will be subject to the following grade reductions:
      i. 10% reduction of grade for any work submitted after stated deadline until 24 hours after the stated deadline
      ii. A further 10% grade reduction for each 24 hour period past the stated deadline
   b. I understand that online classes demand attention to deadlines on top of those already present. However, this graduate program is not a self-paced one. This program is structured to academic terms and time frames (such as breaks) as the brick and mortar University of Nebraska system. In general I am impressed at the dedication of students in this program and hope this tradition continues.
   c. Technical difficulties are part of the reality of the online world. Given that truism, do NOT wait to submit assignments until the last minute or hour of a deadline. Both you and I cannot be responsible for failures of power, computers, computer networks, or even Blackboard. Do no procrastinate; turn assignments in early, so there is time to resubmit if there are any problems.
   d. Important: please install and run some sort of anti-virus and anti-malware software on your computer. This is for all of us in the class, so that viruses are not spread through the class:
      i. Microsoft Security Essentials
      ii. AVG (free) or similar anti-virus software, run weekly
      iii. (recommended): other maintenance software such as System Mechanic (my favorite), Symantec System Works

4. Online etiquette:
   a. Please be respectful of others in the class, and me. It is easy to be more confrontational via electronic post than in person. I understand conversations may become heated, and irony, even sarcasm may at times be used to make a point; however, please try to remain civil at all times.
   b. Posts I deem as offensive or inflammatory towards others, or me, will be removed from the discussion boards. If this becomes a continuing problem, grade reductions may result. I will keep copies of such posts.