Introduction
This class is about life on Earth. Life is tenacious and ubiquitous on the planet. Ironically, as humans continue to succeed at living and using resources we have become a significant force of change on the planet. Today, humans determine the course of many other species and existence of entire ecosystems. This happens whether we acknowledge it, understand it, or not. This class explores functioning of the biosphere on Earth and how humans are altering some of these functions.

Dr. Albrecht contact information:
Phone: 308 865-8713   Email: albrechtm@unk.edu
Office hours: MW 2:30 – 3:30, TTh 10:00 – 12:00 or by appointment

Textbooks:
Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Environmental Issues, Thomas Easton 16th Edition
**Course Objectives**

- See the boundaries of the field of Environmental Biology, especially versus Environmentalism
  - Particular attention to data-driven analysis
- Review basic geological, meteorological, and biogeochemical cycles on Earth
- Delineate the impact of humans on environmental systems of Earth
- Discuss new challenges and issues facing natural ecosystems from humans
  - Climate change
  - Conversion of land use by humans
  - Human and ecosystem water and energy needs of the present and future
- Practice of scientific writing emphasizing logic, structure, citation, and formatting

**Assignments and Grading**

**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>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tests</td>
<td>2 Tests over readings</td>
<td>70 each</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>Blackboard discussion, starting 3rd week, no grading last 3 wks of class</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total** 400

**Grading Scale**

The following grading scale will be used for this class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>99.00% to 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>92.00% to 98.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90.00% to 91.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87.00% to 89.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>82.00% to 86.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80.00% to 81.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77.00% to 79.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>72.00% to 76.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70.00% to 71.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67.00% to 69.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60.00% to 66.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Below 60.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tests**

These will be administered through Blackboard. If they are timed, objective tests they will be available from Friday the week they are assigned at 5 pm Central Time until Monday at 10 pm Central Time. The format will usually be multiple choice for these, but some quizzes will have other question types. If the test is take home it will be posted at least seven days before it is due.

**Course Policies**

The University of Nebraska at Kearney has a student handbook that is available online at this location: [https://www.unk.edu/offices/student_life/_files/student_handbook.pdf](https://www.unk.edu/offices/student_life/_files/student_handbook.pdf). This document outlines your responsibilities such as not plagiarizing or copying work from other students.
Participation
This class is online so 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.

Special Circumstances
Withdraw (W) and Incomplete (I) Grades:
Until the conclusion of the 10th week of the semester, you may withdraw from any class and receive a grade of "W." This grade does not count toward your grade point average and merely indicates that you withdrew from (or "dropped") the class. No instructor can withdraw a student from the roster; that is, if you stop coming to class the instructor cannot withdraw you from the class. The instructor will be forced to assign you a failing ("F") grade for the class. Withdrawing from a class involves filling out a simple form that the instructor and student both sign and returning this form to the registrar's office by the withdraw deadline.

Under very unusual circumstances, a grade of incomplete ("I") may be issued. An incomplete is not a substitute for a "W" (withdraw), and it is not a substitute for a poor or failing grade. An incomplete is issued if circumstances beyond the student's control prevent the student from completing the required work for the class by the end of the semester (example: student is hospitalized during final exam week). If you qualify for an incomplete grade, it is expected that you will receive this grade in all your classes. An incomplete grade will give you an extension to complete outstanding work only; it is not an opportunity to "start over" in the class. All outstanding work must be completed within one year or the "I" grade automatically converts to a failing ("F") grade. An incomplete grade will be considered only during the final six weeks of the semester, after the deadline for receiving a "W" has passed.

Students with Disabilities or Those Who are Pregnant
Students with disabilities or those who are pregnant 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 or those who are pregnant. To receive accommodation services for a disability, 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 brandtdl@unk.edu. For those needing accommodation due to pregnancy, you need to visit with Student Health. The following link provides information for students and faculty regarding pregnancy rights. http://www.nwlc.org/resource/pregnant-and-parenting-students-rights-faqs-college-and-graduate-students

Attached is the link to the above statement for your convenience. http://unkcms.unk.edu/offices/disability_services/
# Syllabus Biology 823 Environmental Biology

Abbreviations: W&L = Environment: the science behind the stories, Easton = Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Environmental Issues. Articles assigned are posted on Blackboard

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Lectures</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug 22</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>01 Class Intro</td>
<td>Introduction, W&amp;L Chap 1: Science &amp; Sustainability Intro to Environ Sci</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>02 Chap 01</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug 29</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>03 Chaps 2, 3</td>
<td>W&amp;L Chapters 2-5 Review: Earth, Evolution, Biodiversity, Comm. Ecology, Ecology</td>
<td>Plagiarism Assign Due Fri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>04 Chap 4, and 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept 5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>05 Chap 6</td>
<td>W&amp;L 6 Ethics, Economics, and Sustainable Development, Chap 7 Environmental Policy</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>06 Chap 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>07 Chap 08</td>
<td>W&amp;L Chap 8: Human Population and Hans Gosling Lecture and the most important lecture ever</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>08 Gapminder</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept 19</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>09 Chap 09</td>
<td>W&amp;L Chap 9: Soil &amp; Agriculture</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10 Chap 10</td>
<td>Chap 10 Ag, Biotech, and Future of Food</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept 26</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11 LLS</td>
<td>UN report: Livestock's Long Shadow</td>
<td>Test 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12 Chap 11</td>
<td>W&amp;L Chap 11: Biodiversity &amp; Conservation Biology, Chap 12 Forests &amp; Protected Areas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>13 Cha 12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14 Chap 13</td>
<td>W&amp;L Chap 13 The Urban Environment Easton Issues 1.1 and 1.3</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15 Easton 1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 17</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16 Chap 14</td>
<td>W&amp;L Chap 14 Environmental Health and Toxicology, Lead Case Study</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>17 Lead Toxicity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 24</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18 Chap 15</td>
<td>W&amp;L Chap 15 Freshwater Systems Chap 16 Marine and Coastal Systems</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>19 Chap 16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 31</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20 Chap 17</td>
<td>W&amp;L Chap 17 Atmospheric Science Easton Issues 2.3 and 4.1</td>
<td>Test 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>21 Easton 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>22 Chap 18</td>
<td>Chap 18 Global Climate Change Easton Issues 4.2 and 4.3</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>23 Easton 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>25 Chap 20</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Lecture Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Lecture</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nov 21</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>26 Wind Power</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Break Wind Energy Report</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 28</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>27 Chap 21</td>
<td>W&amp;L Chap 21 New Renewables</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>28 Chap 22</td>
<td>Chap 22 Managing Waste</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>29 Chap 23</td>
<td>W&amp;L Chap 23 Minerals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>30 Chap 24</td>
<td>Chap 24 Sustainable Solutions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 12</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Exam week:</strong> Final Exam due Dec 14&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; by 5:00 pm Central Time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Some wisdom from xkcd:

On the scale of human impact on Earth:

![Earth's Land Mammals by Weight](image1)

On the word sustainability:

![Frequency of Use of the Word "Sustainable"](image2)

---

The word "sustainable" is unsustainable.
Orientation to Albrecht Blackboard Use
Version 1.95 Fall 2016
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 a positive view is that the various methods will demonstrate a diversity of approaches and you as a student may observe what works and what does not for you. This information may be valuable in your future projects and careers. Please read this section of the syllabus as I try to clarify how I structure my classes.

For any reason please contact me with questions, also note that the UNK e-Campus website does provide tutorials on various subjects including Blackboard 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 very good universities. 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 classes. 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. For graded work this means 2 weeks or less.

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.

Here is a quick checklist of points that may help you succeed in the course, based on my experience as a graduate student and professor:

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 the reading? Do you understand how this reading fits into the discipline in general, and why it was assigned? Have you noted the author, date, and author’s institution of the paper in addition to the data, statistical tests, and concepts 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? Have you used the assignment itself, an index book section (if present), or another biology text you own? Wikipedia is also a good place to start, but not a good place to end.

3. Is the work you are turning in **reflective of you** as the professional you are working towards? Is the work well-researched? Do you have all the important concepts covered in your work? Is the organization of the paper clear and useful? Have you put in thought and work on the **figures** and tables to make them clear, professional, and are they referenced correctly? Has the work been proofread for grammatical, factual, spelling, and formatting errors? Do you know what formatting is desired by the professor and done it?

**Thoughts about the distance education experience**

I have been teaching online for over 10 years now. I think and there is a lot I could say about what I have seen but let me communicate my impressions of what works and what does not work in these classes, in the UNK Distance Master’s Program at least.

Like all education the attention and work put into a course results in better outcomes. There is no getting around this. However there are some elements that are particularly important online in my opinion.

Communication is key. Communicating with me and other students by email, discussion board post, Skype, or phone are critical to help replace the ‘in the hallway’ talks that happen before or after face-to-face classes.

Catching problems early is another important key. Items such as missing grades or lectures that were not clear or were not helpful need to be discussed immediately. Because I cannot see you the non-verbal cues of confusion, boredom, or resignation are not seen! It falls to the person taking the class to initiate conversation when the class is ‘getting away’ from you.
Finally I think the level of professionalism expected is critical. I see graduate level work as professional work. Every sentence written on discussion board or in a paper should stand up to review by professional peers: teachers and scientists specifically. I tend to address people formally (e.g. “Mr. Smith”). I do expect turned in work to be free of clerical errors and formatted as indicated in the syllabus. Much like dressing for success or practicing fitness skills to get better at an activity I think practicing a high level of professionalism in a course is a good way to reinforce those skills that may be useful in the workplace.

**Blackboard:**
The Blackboard Classroom (Bb) software is the main portal for the class work in the UNK Biology Distance Master’s program. Being familiar with Bb is helpful for success in the program. That being said different faculty use Bb differently. Here are the components I use the most:

1. **Course Documents:**
   a. This is where I place pdf files and video files that are the lectures for classes
   b. These files should be **downloaded** (not streamed) for printing out or viewing
   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, these are class materials and should be read and have notes made on them.

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 each discussion board is opened Monday around 9:00 am Central Time, and closed Sunday night around 10:00 pm Central Time (I reserve the right to change these times).
   d. Because discussion boards are important, posts will be graded.
      i. I expect at least two useful postings each week and not all 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 information, file attachments or web sites, and should be relevant to the current topic of discussion. References are encouraged.
      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 stating “I agree” with someone with someone by stating your reasoning. But be polite and constructive in your responses to other students and me.
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 opening them at Friday at 5:00 pm on the week they are assigned and closing them on the following 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’ to create a link through which you can upload your documents. This system has the distinct advantage over email in that papers go directly to a ‘space’ that is specific to one person for one assignment. Users 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 the Gradebook. The responsibility is yours to make sure assignments are in on time, uploaded correctly, and that the correct file is uploaded. If the wrong file is uploaded, 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.
      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 means I have to grade the assignment before you will see a grade. Any paper, and any test with subjective questions (such as fill-in, short answer) will have this symbol until graded.

![Image of a table with grades]

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% of grade if late, and 10% per 24 hour period after that.

5. Announcements:
   a. These are the text entries you see just below the class title when you enter a course on Blackboard
   b. I will post class information here, such as changes to the syllabus or answering a question that pertains to the class, or problems with Bb or UNK such as a power outage.
   c. Please check this area several times a week on your way to Discussion Board, Assignments, or Gradebook.

6. Scientific Writing folder in Course Documents
   a. I will include documents in Course Documents folder to help with scientific writing. I hope to see the highest level of scientific writing in assigned papers.
   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 a few 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 for feedback on sample writing!
Dr. Albrecht Class Policies
Version 1.8 Fall 2016

Introduction:
Every institution has its rules and policies and UNK and the Biology Department have them too. Because of the distance education environment the degree of communication between student and faculty 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. There is nothing quite like a conversation after class or in a hallway. Please be patient and allow more time than you might otherwise to get the solution you need. Here are the 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. Header information on the first page: name, class, date, assignment
   c. All text double-spaced with proper English spelling and grammar used. The writing should be simple, clear, scientific writing style. At the least this means: subject-verb-direct object structured sentences.
   d. Tables must be labeled at the top and have captions that explain them.
   e. Figures must be labeled at the bottom and have captions that explain them. No titles within the phase (graph) space which is the Excel default unfortunately.
   f. All work turned in should have correct references. All citations must be “(author year)” format in the text (including figures and tables if they are adapted from existing work) with a full citation at the end of the paper. Papers should be listed alphabetically by last name of first author.
      i. Citations are needed if textbook or lecture material is used (especially when quoted!). This is both the legal necessity and good practice for work beyond 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.
      iii. Each text citation should have a full citation in the Literature Cited section and each citation in the Literature Cited section must have at least one text citation.
   g. Failure of any of these policies will result in letter grade reductions. For those of use familiar with rubrics, these are level one issues.

2. Citation Style Examples:
   Books:
   
York. 206 pp.

**Computer Program:**


**Journal Article:**


**Website:**


3. **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 (Test & Certificate section) by the 5:00 pm Central Time on the second Friday of the semester. Every semester, even if you have done it before. Post a Word document containing a screenshot or scan into the Assignment link. 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 the text of problems) every time!
   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. Penalties include zeros on questions, or entire tests, or failing the class outright in addition to letters in the permanent files here at UNK
   d. Citation information for APA style is given at the UNK eCampus website [here](#)
   e. A quick rule: **more than 3 words in a row from any source must be referenced**
   f. Do not communicate with outside experts to answer tests. This definitely includes non-UNK websites. Assignments are meant to assess your knowledge, not that of others.
   g. Work individually unless directed into groups. Your work should be your own, and any personal pronouns used in your writing (which should be few in any case) should reflect this, i.e. no ‘we’ in assignments you work on by yourself!

4. **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
      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. 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 people in the program show great dedication 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 not 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 (recommended):
   ii. other maintenance software such as System Mechanic (my favorite), Symantec System Works, Glary Utilities
   iii. Malwarebytes Anti-malware

5. Online etiquette:
   a. **Please be respectful of others in the class, even 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 be attempted at times be used to make a point; however such attempts are often not understood via posts. Please try to remain clear and kind 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.