

NRM 380 - SOILS AND THE ENVIRONMENT SYLLABUS

Fall – 2023

Zoom link for the Lecture:

Will be provided by instructor.

Course outline: The course offers fundamental knowledge in soil sciences, which include soil taxonomy, soil physics, soil chemistry, and soil biology and biochemistry both in theory and in applications. Briefly, five areas are covered in the lecture and labs, 1) soil physics and soil formation, 2) soil chemistry, 3) soil biology, 4) soil and plant nutrients and their management; and 5) soil contamination and erosion control. Lectures and laboratory work compromise each other so that what students learned in the lecture can be applied in the laboratory experiments. It is a step stone for students who are pursuing degrees in plant, animal and soil sciences, forestry science, biology, ecology, geography, natural resource management, and environmental sciences.

Lecture methods: Face to face or distance delivery through zoom. Online laboratory video is available in Blackboard.

Objective: NRM 380 introduces the fundamentals of soil science. Most examples and applications will be targeted toward non-agricultural areas, but agricultural consequences also will be outlined in the text and in lecture.

Lecture: Monday and Wednesday 8:00-9:00 AM (Arctic Health Research Building Room 183).

Lab: Wednesday 2:15-5:00 PM (O'Neill Room 359)

Text: Brady NC, Weil RR. 2016. The Nature and Properties of Soils, 15th edition. New Jersey: Prentice Hall. An expensive text, but an excellent reference now and into the future. Lecture notes are available in the Canvas and Blackboard.

Lab Manual: Van Veldhuizen, M. Zhang, D.W. Valentine, and C. Knight R., Knight, 2014. Soils and the Environment: NRM-380 Laboratory Handbook. It will be available in the Canvas and Blackboard.

Prerequisite: Chemistry CHEM 105x, ENGL 111, ENGL 211 or ENGL 213.

COVID-19 statement: Students should keep up-to-date on the university's policies, practices, and mandates related to COVID-19 by regularly checking this website:

<https://sites.google.com/alaska.edu/coronavirus/uaf/uafstudents?authuser=0> Further, students are expected to adhere to the university's policies, practices, and mandates and are subject to disciplinary actions if they do not comply.

Instructor	Office	Phone	E-mail	Office hours
Dr. Mingchu Zhang	O'Neill 321	474-7004	mzhang3@alaska.edu	MW 2:00-5:00 PM & by appointment

Lab assistant,
Nathan Simms

O'Neill 351

Students are expected to read, understand, and adhere to the academic honor code detailed in the [UAF Catalog](#). The University of Alaska is committed to providing equal access for students with disabilities. If you have a disability requiring special accommodations, please notify me during the first two weeks of class.

In order to save copying costs, these handouts and all lecture materials will be available through the UAF Blackboard site at <http://classes.uaf.edu>. If you cannot access these notes, please let me know.

Student outcome:

Upon completion of the class, students should:

- *Have a deep understanding the complexity of soil as a natural resource for food production and as an important component in natural ecosystem.*
- *Understand soil physical properties, and laboratory methods to measure those properties.*
- *Understand soil chemical properties and laboratory methods to measure those properties.*
- *Understand soil biological properties and laboratory methods to measure those properties.*
- *Have knowledge to differentiate a good soil management plan from improper ones.*
- *Be able to use soil web survey to collect soil information and use learned soil knowledge to develop soil management plans for different land uses.*
- *Be able to write a integrated soil technical report for a given area in US.*

NRM-380 SOILS GRADING POLICY

This is a "writing-intensive" course, meaning that a majority of the 768 total points available is based on written assignments and questions. One third of the grade for weekly lab reports and 20% of the final project grade will be determined by the student's ability to write in a clear, concise and correct manner. Each student will be responsible for scheduling at least one personal conference with the instructor concerning his/her writing ability and whether he/she should seek help from the Writing Center. Individual conferences should be scheduled following the first hour exam. Students are required to attend the classes and labs, which will be used to evaluate student performance. Grade will be deducted for late submission of assignments. Plagiarism or academic misconduct is zero tolerance in the class.

Points	Basis
300	Hour Exams (3 @ 100 points). Questions will include true-false, multiple choice, problems, and short answer essay. Hour exams generally will not be graded for writing proficiency unless otherwise indicated.
30	Pop quizzes (3 @ 10 points). These unannounced quizzes are to provide an extra incentive to keep up with reading (text and lab) and class participation. Quizzes will not be graded for writing proficiency unless otherwise indicated.
30	Problem sets (3 @ 10 points). These are to give you familiarity with certain kinds of calculations.
198	Lab Reports (11 @ 18 points). Of the 14 labs, 11 will require written reports. Each will be due at the beginning of the next lab, and will be graded 67% on content and 33% on writing. After lab reports have been graded and returned, students will have one week in which they may correct errors in content and/or writing to earn credit for up to 50% of the lost points.
200	Final Problem (8-10 page written report in lieu of exam). The paper will be assigned and discussed in lab on November 5, and will be graded 80% on content and 20% on writing proficiency. See lab materials for details.
740	Total possible points

Course grade assignments		
Percentage	Total points	Grade
≥ 97%		A+
92 - 96.9%		A
90 – 91.9%		A-

87 – 89.9%		B+
82 – 86.9%		B
80 – 81.9%		B-
77 – 79.9%		C+
72 – 76.9%		C
70 – 71.9%		C-
60-69%		D
<60%		F

Passing grade for the class is C-

Student protection and service

Every qualified student is welcome in my classroom. As needed, I am happy to work with you, disability services, veterans' services, rural student services, etc. to find reasonable accommodations. Students at this university are protected against sexual harassment and discrimination (Title IX), and minors have additional protections. As required, if I notice or am informed of certain types of misconduct, then I am required to report it to the appropriate authorities. For more information on your rights as a student and the resources available to you to resolve problems, please go the following site: www.uaf.edu/handbook/ OR GRADUATE STUDENT VERSION: Student protections and services statement: Every qualified student is welcome in my classroom. As needed, I am happy to work with you, disability services, veterans' services, rural student services, etc. to find reasonable accommodations. Students at this university are protected against sexual harassment and discrimination (Title IX), and minors have additional protections. For more information on your rights as a student and the resources available to you to resolve problems, please go the following site: www.uaf.edu/handbook/

For other information for student help and support, please use following link:

Lecture, exam, and homework schedule

Date	Lecture	Topic	Brady & Weil Chapter	Problems
28-Aug		1 Introduction to course and soils	1	The Soils Around Us
30-Aug		2 Soil Formation	2	Formation of Soils From Parent Materials
04-Sept		Labor Day		
06-Sept		3 Soil Structure	4	Soil Architecture and Physical Properties
11-Sept		4 Soil Water	5	Soil Water: Characteristics and Behavior
13-Sept		5 Water Relations & Hydrologic Cycle	6	Soil and the Hydrologic Cycle Soil Aeration and
18-Sept		6 Atmosphere & Temperature	7	Temperature 1
20-Sept		7 Soil Classification	3	Soil Classification
25-Sept		7 Soil Classification		
27-Sept		Catch up and review		
02-Oct	EXAM 1	Lectures 1-7, Chapters 1-7		
05-Oct		8 Soil Colloids and Clay Minerals	8	Soil Colloids: Seat of Soil Chemical and Physical Activity
9-Oct		8 Soil Colloids and Clay Minerals		
11-Oct		9 Soil Acidity	9	Soil Acidity
16-Oct		9 Soil Acidity	9/10	Soils of Dry Regions: Alkalinity, Salinity, and Sodicity
18-Oct		10 Soil Biology	10/11	Organisms and Ecology of the Soil
23-Oct		11 Soil Organic Matter	11/12	Soil Organic Matter 2
25-Oct		11 Soil Organic Matter		
30-Oct		Catch up and review		
01-Nov	EXAM 2	Lectures 7-11, Chapters 8-11		
06-Nov		12 Nutrient Cycling--N & S	12/13	Nitrogen and Sulfur of Soils
08-Nov		13 Nutrient Cycling--P & K	13/14	Soil Phosphorus and Potassium
13-Nov		14 Nutrient Cycling--Micronutrients	13/15	Micronutrients and Other Trace Elements
15-Nov		14 Nutrient management	14/16	Practical Nutrient Management
20-Nov		15 Soil Erosion	15/17	Soil Erosion and Its Control
22-Nov		Thanks giving holidays		
27-Nov		16 Soil Pollution		18 Soil chemical pollution
29-Nov		17 Permafrost	19	
04-Dec		Catch up and review		3
06-Dec		Exam 3 Lecture 12-17		

