The Blue Planet I Syllabus

Department of Oceanography

OCEA 2001 Fall 2025, Modified by Faculty Lockout

Dalhousie University operates in the unceded territories of the Mi'kmaw, Wolastoqey, and Peskotomuhkati Peoples. These sovereign nations hold inherent rights as the original peoples of these lands, and we each carry collective obligations under the Peace and Friendship Treaties. Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982, recognizes and affirms Aboriginal and Treaty rights in Canada.

We recognize that African Nova Scotians are a distinct people whose histories, legacies, and contributions have enriched the part of Mi'kma'ki known as Nova Scotia for over 400 years.

Course Instructor(s)

Name	Email	Office Hours
Paul Hill	paul.hill@dal.ca	By arrangement
Emily Sklar	Emily.Sklar@dal.ca	By arrangement

Course Description

This course provides a general survey of oceanography. It is designed to develop an understanding of the ocean and of the science of oceanography. Students learn about the geological, chemical, physical and biological processes at work in the ocean.

Course Prerequisites

None

Course Exclusions

OCEA 2000.06, OCEA 2850.06, OCEA 2851.03/OCEA 2852.03

Course Structure

Course Delivery

The course is delivered in a blended format. Core content is delivered with online videos. Class time is used for in-depth investigations of some topics, demonstrations and "In-the-News" lectures that link core content to stories that have had recent media coverage.

In-person attendance will not be monitored, but 20% of the final exam will be on the in-class material. In-class lectures will not be recorded, but any lecture notes or videos will be posted.

Three short assessments will be available asynchronously online each week. In-person attendance is required for the final exam, which will occur during the exam period.

Students connecting to online resources from outside Canada are responsible for ensuring awareness and compliance with any applicable laws in the country from which they are connecting.

Lectures

Tuesday and Thursday, 10:35 – 11:25 AM, Studley LSC-Common Area C242

Laboratories

None

Tutorials

None

Course Materials

- The required text for the course is *Oceanography and Marine Biology*, by D. W. Townsend.
- A digital version of the text will be available for purchase through Brightspace.
- Used hard copies of the text may also be used.
- Hard copies are no longer being printed by the publisher.
- There are no other required materials.
- Course content will be delivered through Brightspace: OCEA 2001 - The Blue Planet I (Sec 01) - 2025 Fall
- Students will need access to one of the following: laptop computer, tablet computer, smart phone or desktop computer.

- The Course Instructor and TA should be contacted via email.
- If a power or internet outage occurs during an online quiz, then contact the Instructor or the TA as soon as possible to report the problem. The quiz attempt will be reset.
- Students connecting to online resources from outside Canada are responsible for ensuring awareness and compliance with any applicable laws in the country from which they are connecting.

Assessment

Assessment will be through online quizzes delivered through Brightspace and a final exam. There are two types of online quizzes:

1. Learning Module quizzes;
2. Weekly Ocean Assessments (WOAs).

The Learning Module quizzes appear at the end of each Learning Module. The comprise 5 questions. Each question is designed to assess whether a student has attained one of the 5 Learning Outcomes for that Learning Module. Two attempts are allowed for each Learning Module quiz, and the mark for the quiz is based on the highest score for the two attempts. The Learning Module quizzes become available when the Module becomes available, at 8:30 AM on either Tuesday or Thursday. They are due one week later, by 5 PM. Students have 2 hours to complete each assessment, which is ample time for all learners. The lowest Module quiz score is dropped. Overall, the top 19 Learning Module quizzes account for 50% of the overall mark, so each one is worth just over 2.6%.

The Weekly Ocean Assessments (WOAs) are based directly on the text. Each WOA is based on the two assigned readings for the week. The purpose of these assessments is to promote engagement of the students with the text, which offers a fuller treatment of the material than is possible in each module's video units. They comprise 10 questions each. Only one attempt is allowed per WOA. WOAs become available on each Thursday, and they are due by 5 PM on the Friday of the following week. Students have 2 hours to complete each assessment, which is ample time for all learners. The lowest WOA mark will be dropped. Overall, the top 8 WOAs account for 20% of the overall mark, so each one is worth 2.5%.

There are no other assignments.

The final exam will be written, in person, during exam period, with the date and time arranged by the Registrar. The exam will have 20 short-answer questions, with one from each module. Each question will be worth 4 points. The questions will be on one of the identified Learning Outcomes from each module, and a list of these 20 Learning Outcomes will be provided to the students near the end of the term. The exam also will have 10 multiple choice questions based

on in-class lectures and activities. Each question will be worth 2 points. With these weightings, the Short Answer questions account for 80% of the final exam mark, and the questions on in-class material account for 20% of the final mark. In total, the final exam will account for 30% of the overall mark.

Assessment	Due Date	Weight (%)	Total (%)
Structure of the Earth Module Quiz	02.10.25	2.63	50
Continental Drift Module Quiz	07.10.25	2.63	
Plate Tectonics Module Quiz	09.10.25	2.63	
Marine Sediments Module Quiz	14.10.25	2.63	
The Water Molecule Module Quiz	16.10.25	2.63	
Sea Water Module Quiz	21.10.25	2.63	
Vertical Structure of the Ocean Module Quiz	23.10.25	2.63	
Light in the Ocean Module Quiz	28.10.25	2.63	
Atmospheric Circulation Module Quiz	30.10.25	2.63	
Ocean Weather Module Quiz	04.11.25	2.63	
Surface Ocean Circulation Module Quiz	06.11.25	2.63	
Deep Ocean Circulation Module Quiz	18.11.25	2.63	
Waves Module Quiz	20.11.25	2.63	
Waves in Shallow Water Module Quiz	25.11.25	2.63	
Other Types of Waves Module Quiz	27.11.25	2.63	
Tides Module Quiz	02.12.25	2.63	
Tides at the Shore Module Quiz	04.12.25	2.63	
Basics of Marine Biology Module Quiz	09.12.25	2.63	
Biological Production in the Ocean Module Quiz	11.12.25	2.63	
Classification of Marine Life Module Quiz	16.12.25	2.63	
Weekly Ocean Assessment 03	10.10.25	2.5	20
Weekly Ocean Assessment 04	17.10.25	2.5	
Weekly Ocean Assessment 05	24.10.25	2.5	
Weekly Ocean Assessment 06	31.10.25	2.5	
Weekly Ocean Assessment 07	07.11.25	2.5	
Weekly Ocean Assessment 08	21.11.25	2.5	
Weekly Ocean Assessment 09	28.11.25	2.5	

Weekly Ocean Assessment 10	05.12.25	2.5	
Weekly Ocean Assessment 11	12.12.25	2.5	
Final Exam	Exam period	30.0	30

Other course requirements

None

Conversion of numerical grades to final letter grades follows the Dalhousie Grade Scale

A+ (90-100)	B+ (77-79)	C+ (65-69)	D (50-54)
A (85-89)	B (73-76)	C (60-64)	F (0-49)
A- (80-84)	B- (70-72)	C- (55-59)	

Course Policies on Missed or Late Academic Requirements

Course assessments, apart from the Final Exam, are asynchronous. Module quizzes are available for 7 days, and Weekly Ocean Assessments are available for a minimum of 8 days. As a result, students with circumstances that keep them away from school for 3 days or less will still have time to complete their assessments. **Students will not be able to make up any missed work.** The lowest mark in each assessment category will be dropped.

Students with longer absences should coordinate with the Instructor and the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs Patricia Laws to make a plan for completing academic requirements.

Course Policies related to Academic Integrity

Students must complete all assessments by themselves.

Learning Objectives

The course is divided into 20 modules, and each module has 5 specific Learning Outcomes. These outcomes are listed at the beginning of each module, and a quiz at the end of each module is designed to assess whether the outcome has been attained. Since they are too numerous to list here, a summary for each module, except the Introduction module, is given instead.

At the end of the course, students should be able to do the following:

- Compare the physical and compositional layering of the Earth's interior.

- Explain the evidence for continental drift and seafloor spreading.
- Account for the major geographic features on the Earth's surface in the context of the theory of plate tectonics.
- Identify the types and distributions of marine sediments.
- Account for the unique properties of water based on its molecular structure.
- Describe salinity and its effects on the properties of water.
- Explain the causes and consequences of vertical stratification in the ocean.
- Describe the fate of light that enters the surface ocean.
- Explain the processes responsible for creating the large-scale patterns of atmospheric circulation on Earth.
- Review the role of the oceans in generating interesting and dangerous weather phenomena.
- Explain the processes responsible for large-scale patterns of surface-ocean circulation on Earth.
- Review the causes and consequences of thermohaline circulation on Earth.
- Describe the physical properties of waves.
- Describe the evolution of wave properties as waves approach the shore.
- Summarize the properties of waves in the ocean that have longer wavelengths than wind-generated waves and shorter wavelengths than the tides.
- Explain the equilibrium theory of the tides.
- Describe various processes that affect timing and height of tides at the shore.
- Describe the basics of the processes of photosynthesis, respiration, and growth in the ocean.
- Explain seasonal and geographic patterns of primary production in the ocean.
- Describe various schemes to classify life in the ocean.

Course Content

Module	Availability Date	Reading
Structure of the Earth	September 25	Townsend, pp. 48-56
Continental Drift	September 30	Townsend, pp. 62-84
Plate Tectonics	October 2	Townsend, pp. 84-98
Marine Sediments	October 7	Townsend, pp. 98-109
The Water Molecule	October 9	Townsend, pp. 112-126
Sea Water	October 14	Townsend, pp. 126-142
Vertical Structure in the Ocean	October 16	Townsend, pp. 142-146
Light in the Ocean	October 21	Townsend, pp. 150-155
Atmospheric Circulation	October 23	Townsend, pp. 155-171
Ocean Weather	October 28	Townsend, pp. 171-178
Surface Ocean Circulation	October 30	Townsend, pp. 178-185, Appendix, pp. A-5 to A-8
Deep Ocean Circulation	November 4	Townsend, pp. 185-189
Waves	November 6	Townsend, pp. 192-203
Waves in Shallow Water	November 18	Townsend, pp. 203-207
Other Types of Waves	November 20	Townsend, pp. 207-210
Tides	November 25	Townsend, pp. 210-218
Tides at the Shore	November 27	Townsend, pp. 218-223
Basics of Marine Biology	December 2	Townsend, pp. 226-233 and 246-249
Biological Production	December 4	Townsend, pp. 233-246
Classification of Marine Life	December 9	Townsend, pp. 249-257

University Policies and Statements

Recognition of Mi'kmaq Territory

Dalhousie University would like to acknowledge that the University is on Traditional Mi'kmaq Territory. The Elders in Residence program provides students with access to First Nations elders for guidance, counsel, and support. Visit or e-mail the Indigenous Student Centre at 1321 Edward St or elders@dal.ca. Additional information regarding Mi'kmaq and Indigenous Relations (including the Elders in Residence program, Land Acknowledgements, Understanding Our Roots, and much more) can be found at: https://www.dal.ca/about/mission-vision-values/mikmaq-indigenous-relations.html

Internationalization

At Dalhousie, 'thinking and acting globally' enhances the quality and impact of education, supporting learning that is "interdisciplinary, cross-cultural, global in reach, and orientated toward solving problems that extend across national borders." Additional internationalization information can be found at: https://www.dal.ca/about/mission-vision-values/global-relations.html

Academic Integrity

At Dalhousie University, we are guided in all our work by the values of academic integrity: honesty, trust, fairness, responsibility, and respect. As a student, you are required to demonstrate these values in all the work you do. The University provides policies and procedures that every member of the university community is required to follow to ensure academic integrity. Additional academic integrity information can be found at: https://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/academic-integrity.html

Accessibility

The Student Accessibility Centre is Dalhousie's centre of expertise for matters related to student accessibility and accommodation. If there are aspects of the design, instruction, and/or experiences within this course (online or in-person) that result in barriers to your inclusion, please contact the Student Accessibility Centre (https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/accessibility.html) for all courses offered by Dalhousie with the exception of Truro. For courses offered by the Faculty of Agriculture, please contact the Student Success Centre in Truro (https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/ssc.html).

Conduct in the Classroom – Culture of Respect

Substantial and constructive dialogue on challenging issues is an important part of academic inquiry and exchange. It requires willingness to listen and tolerance of opposing points of view. Consideration of individual differences and alternative viewpoints is required of all class members, towards each other, towards instructors, and towards guest speakers. While expressions of differing perspectives are welcome and encouraged, the words and language used should remain within acceptable bounds of civility and respect.

Diversity and Inclusion – Culture of Respect

Every person at Dalhousie has a right to be respected and safe. We believe inclusiveness is fundamental to education. We stand for equality. Dalhousie is strengthened in our diversity. We are a respectful and inclusive community. We are committed to being a place where everyone feels welcome and supported, which is why our Strategic Direction prioritizes fostering a culture of diversity and inclusiveness (Strategic Priority 5.2). Additional diversity and inclusion information can be found at: https://www.dal.ca/about/mission-vision-values/equity-diversity-inclusion-and-accessibility/about-office-equity-inclusion.html

Student Code of Conduct

Everyone at Dalhousie is expected to treat others with dignity and respect. The Code of Student Conduct allows Dalhousie to take disciplinary action if students don't follow this community expectation. When appropriate, violations of the code can be resolved in a reasonable and informal manner - perhaps through a restorative justice process. If an informal resolution can't be reached, or would be inappropriate, procedures exist for formal dispute resolution. The full Code of Student Conduct can be found at: https://www.dal.ca/content/dam/www/about/leadership-and-governance/governing-bodies/code-student-conduct.pdf

Fair Dealing Policy

The Dalhousie University Fair Dealing Policy provides guidance for the limited use of copyright protected material without the risk of infringement and without having to seek the permission of copyright owners. It is intended to provide a balance between the rights of creators and the rights of users at Dalhousie. Additional information regarding the Fair Dealing Policy can be found at: https://www.dal.ca/content/dam/www/about/leadership-and-governance/university-policies/fair-dealing-policy.pdf

Student Use of Course Materials

Course materials are designed for use as part of this course at Dalhousie University and are the property of the instructor unless otherwise stated. Third party copyrighted materials (such as books, journal articles, music, videos, etc.) have either been licensed for use in this course or fall under an exception or limitation in Canadian Copyright law. Copying this course material for distribution (e.g. uploading to a commercial third-party website) may lead to a violation of Copyright law.

Faculty of Science

Student Resources and Support

University Policies and Programs

Important Dates in the Academic Year (including add/drop dates): http://www.dal.ca/academics/important_dates.html

Classroom Recording Protocol: https://www.dal.ca/content/dam/www/about/leadership-and-governance/university-policies/class-recording-protocol.pdf

Dalhousie Grading Practices Policies: https://www.dal.ca/content/dam/www/about/leadership-and-governance/university-policies/grading-practices-policy.pdf

Grade Appeal Process: https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/grades-and-student-records/appealing-a-grade.html

Sexualized Violence Policy: https://www.dal.ca/content/dam/www/about/leadership-and-governance/university-policies/sexualized-violence-policy.pdf

Scent-Free Program: https://www.dal.ca/dept/safety/programs-services/occupational-safety/scent-free.html

Learning and Support Resources

General Academic Support – Advising (Halifax): https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/advising.html

General Academic Support – Advising (Truro): https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/ssc.html

Student Health & Wellness Centre: https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/health-and-wellness.html

On Track (helps you transition into university, and supports you through your first year at Dalhousie and beyond): https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/On-track.html

Indigenous Student Centre: https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/communities/indigenous.html

Mi'kmaq and Indigenous Relations: https://www.dal.ca/about/mission-vision-values/mikmaq-indigenous-relations.html

Elders-in-Residence (The Elders in Residence program provides students with access to First Nations elders for guidance, counsel, and support. Visit the office in the Indigenous Student

Centre or contact the program at elders@dal.ca or 902-494-6803: https://www.dal.ca/about/mission-vision-values/mikmaq-indigenous-relations/elders-in-residence-and-traditional-knowledge-keepers.html

Black Student Advising Centre: https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/communities/black-student-advising.html

International Centre: https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/international-centre.html

LGBTQ2SIA+ Collaborative: https://www.dal.ca/about/mission-vision-values/equity-diversity-inclusion-and-accessibility/about-office-equity-inclusion/community-specific-groups/lgbtq2sia-collaborative.html

Dalhousie Libraries: http://libraries.dal.ca/

Copyright Office: https://libraries.dal.ca/services/copyright-office.html

Dalhousie Student Advocacy Services: https://www.dsu.ca/dsas?rq=student%20advocacy

Dalhousie Ombudsperson: https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/safety-respect/ombudsperson.html

Human Rights and Equity Services: https://www.dal.ca/about/mission-vision-values/equity-diversity-inclusion-and-accessibility/about-office-equity-inclusion/human-rights-and-equity-services.html

Writing Centre: https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/writing-and-study-skills.html

Study Skills/Tutoring: http://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/study-skills-and-tutoring.html

Faculty of Science Advising Support: https://www.dal.ca/faculty/science/current-students/undergrad-students/degree-planning.html

Safety

Biosafety: http://www.dal.ca/dept/safety/programs-services/biosafety.html

Chemical Safety: https://www.dal.ca/dept/safety/programs-services/chemical-safety.html

Radiation Safety: http://www.dal.ca/dept/safety/programs-services/radiation-safety.html

Laser Safety: https://www.dal.ca/dept/safety/programs-services/radiation-safety/laser-safety.html