

SIO 217a Atmospheric and Climate Sciences I: Fall 2011 Atmospheric Thermodynamics

Course Introduction

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Text: *Thermodynamics of Atmospheres and Oceans*, J. A. Curry & P. J. Webster (1999)

This course is part of an integrated 3-quarter series (SIO 217 A, B, C). In this first quarter, we examine the structure of the atmosphere and the processes that contribute to that structure. Although it is formally a lecture course, we will encourage student participation in asking questions, discussing answers, and solving problems. This form of teaching recognizes that students come to class with prior knowledge on the topics to be studied. In particular, the Scripps Climate Sciences program is designed to bring students with disciplinary training in other subjects into the CS core courses.

This form of teaching also stresses the similarity between the learning experience and the research experience. We learn by formulating questions and discovering the answers to them. This is very different from rote memorization of facts, lecture notes and pages of text. This class will not be a pure lecture course; it will involve **intensive student participation**, e.g., on group homework projects to be presented in class and in reports. Here are my expectations:

Come to every class. Buy the text. Always bring it to class. **Take your own notes** in addition to the posted slides. Study the assigned reading in advance. I will generally not simply repeat the material in the text. Be an active participant in class; do not just sit and listen. There are 10 weeks in the quarter, and we will try to cover 10 chapters of the text, thus about a chapter per week. **The ten chapters we will study are 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 12, and 13. In several chapters, I will specify some of the material to skip.**

Expect an occasional surprise quiz on the readings. I will give guidance in advance on which material is most important. Be prepared to discuss the material you have studied. In particular, always know the definitions of every word in the assigned portions of the text. Quizzes and the mid-term and final exams will include definitions. Explore Curry's web site <http://curry.eas.gatech.edu/Courses/5225/index.html>. Download the errata file and the answers to homework file. Check out the links for each of the topics as we take them up. Formulate questions as you study, and bring them to class for us all to discuss.

Old lecture notes and exams from previous years are posted at <http://aerosol.ucsd.edu>. Lecture notes from this year are posted after each lecture. Quizzes are not announced in advance and cannot be made up. Exams are announced in advance and cannot be rescheduled. Grading will be approximately as follows:

Homework and in-class participation: 40%.

Mid-term exam and surprise quizzes: 30%.

Final exam: 30%.

IMPORTANT: In this course, you must not remain silent. You must speak as well as listen. If English is not your first language, consider taking courses and making use of other opportunities to improve your English. Start now. You cannot succeed in this course if your spoken or written English prevents you from expressing yourself fluently. Much more importantly, your future as a scientist will depend critically on your English language skills. Work on your English!