
GC 170A1 FINAL EXAM STUDY GUIDE - Fall 2012

[Practice Test Questions for the final exam](#) [pdf]

11 pages when printed -- contains 50 questions to give you lots of practice!

[ANSWER KEY for Practice Test Questions](#) [pdf]

5 pages -- contains the answers for the Practice Questions along with hints on how to tackle the write-in questions

Try to do the Practice Questions FIRST before consulting this key!

Lec 1+2 Final Exam is **TUESDAY, December 11th** @ **1:00 – 3:00 pm** in our regular classroom, **McClelland Park 105**

Remember: this exam **STARTS at 1:00 pm**, NOT noon when our class usually starts!! The exam period is 2 hours

Lecture 3+4 Final Exam is **THURSDAY, December 13th** @ **1:00 - 3:00 pm** in our regular classroom, **BioWest 301**

This exam **STARTS at the same time** our class usually starts, but the exam period is 2 hours

Don't forget to bring a coin, etc. for scratching on the IF-AT form! We'll have paperclips if you prefer those.

FORMAT OF THE EXAM:

- The Final Exam will be worth **105 points**, with about **25 multiple choice questions** and the rest of the points in other question formats, including at least one essay question (i.e. a format similar to the Midterm Exam).
 - Like the MIDTERM, the exam will consist of questions in a variety of forms: **multiple choice, fill in the blank, figure interpretation, make-a-sketch, short answer / essay**. It will focus **PRIMARILY ON MATERIAL SINCE THE MIDTERM**, but several concepts from earlier in the course are still very important (see below for earlier concepts you should review).
 - For the multiple-choice part of the test you will answer on the **IF-AT FORM**, for the other questions you will sketch or write on the test itself. You will probably not need a calculator.
 - **"PRACTICE" ESSAY QUESTIONS** -- There will be one or more short answer / essay questions on the exam, examples are listed for you in the PRACTICE QUESTIONS -- you can "practice" these at home. One of the essays that might be on the exam is a question about the Greenhouse Effect (see **# 49 in the PRACTICE QUESTIONS**) -- Sample answers to this question from the are provided [HERE](#) to guide you in how to write a good essay question.
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GENERAL SUGGESTIONS:

The content and "**TOP TEN THINGS TO STUDY**" are a good summary of most of the key concepts from the course that you should know and understand. If you haven't done so already, print out the Top Tens (for Tests #3 and #4 especially) and go through each one to structure your studying.)

Do a quick review of all the **CLASS FOLLOW-UP PAGES since the Midterm** to be sure you haven't missed any key topics.

ST's & RQ's -- You should also review the content of **Self Tests & Readiness Quizzes Self Test/RQ-5, 6, 7, 8, and 9**.

HOW DO YOU REVIEW AN RQ THAT YOU'VE TAKEN? Click [HERE](#) to find out.

Review the basics of these physical science concepts to see how they tie into topics since the Midterm:

ELECTROMAGNETIC SPECTRUM & THE RADIATION LAWS -- These are essential to understanding the **energy balance** and nearly every other topic in the course -- review them, know the key wavelength ranges of UV, visible and IR radiation, understand and be able to apply absorption curves to global change issues such as global warming and ozone hole depletion, etc.)

ENERGY & THERMODYNAMICS (Review key items on heat transfer, **sensible heat (H)** and **latent energy (LE)** and be able to tie these into the topics of global warming, the effect of deforestation on climate, etc.)

The **MOST IMPORTANT CONCEPT** that ties together and synthesizes just about everything in this class: **THE ENERGY BALANCE!** (Review, study, and thoroughly understand Topic #10 (Global Energy Balance) and the class presentations on this topic and be ready to tie these concepts into each of the topics we've covered since the Midterm Exam. -- more specific details are given below)

As with the Midterm Exam, an important part of your studying should be to **TIE TOGETHER different topics** that we've covered and to **make connections between topics**. Several questions will be asked that require you to link up different parts of the course.

TOPICS & CONCEPTS YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR:

The FINAL EXAM will emphasize the topics in Class Notes, lecture presentations, & assigned reading material since the Midterm Exam, so, as noted above, the very **FIRST thing you should do to focus your studying is to refer to the "TOP TEN" for Tests #3 & #4 for details on each of the topics below**. (NOTE: The Top Ten's for Test #3 & #4 list several "specific hints" which are not going to be repeated here, so refer back to the Top Ten's for these.)

SOME BASICS TO REVIEW FROM THE FIRST HALF OF THE SEMESTER

Detailed specifics from these topics won't be asked, but you will need to know the basics of the items mentioned below under these topics in order to tie them in to the topics in the second half of the semester:

TOPIC # 5 Electromagnetic Spectrum (know these wavelength range cutoffs: **ultraviolet < 0.4, visible 0.4 - 0.7 , and infrared radiation > 0.7)**

TOPIC # 6 The Radiation Laws (be sure you understand Law 6: "Selective emission and absorption" and how to interpret an absorption curve; also be sure you fully understand the **"Class Concepts Self Test" on p 44 of Class Notes** – It's a good review of past material and would help you write an essay about the Greenhouse Effect.)

TOPIC # 7 Atmospheric Structure & Chemical Composition (review **p 38 in Class Notes** with respect to the **stratospheric ozone layer and its place in the structure of the atmosphere** review the **"Greenhouse Gas Overview" table (p 40)** and the top of **p 39 in Class Notes**, including the definition of *Radiative Forcing*; fully understand the **Summary of this topic on p 41** in Class Notes.)

Specific hint: Know what the "Greenhouse Signature" looks like with respect to Atmospheric Structure (p 39 in Class Notes) and how this is different from the "signature" after a climatically effective explosive volcanic eruption (which you learned in G-5 would lead to *cooling* in the troposphere and *warming* in the stratospheric -- just the opposite of the Greenhouse signature – see the box on p 72 in class notes) Be sure you know what causes the cooling and warming in different layers during each of these "signatures" and why it happens.

TOPICS SINCE THE MIDTERM EXAM Following are the main topics that will be covered on the Final Exam:

TOPIC # 10 The Global Energy Balance (This topic is the KEY to understanding nearly all of the other topics!) Know and understand the symbols of the Energy Balance Equation and the difference between what the left-hand and right-hand sides of the equation represent:

$$R_{NET} = \downarrow_{SW} + \downarrow_{SW} - \swarrow_{SW} - \updownarrow_{LW} + \downarrow_{LW} = H + LE + G$$

Know the different processes involved in the pathways of incoming and outgoing energy (NOTE: you don't need to memorize how many "units" are involved in each pathway, just get a good sense of the relative amounts: only about half is actually absorbed at the surface, about 30 % is reflected back out to space, LOTS of IR (LW) energy is radiated from the surface, absorbed by GH gases, and then re-radiated back to the surface, etc.). Know the link to everyday life of some of the energy balance terms (G-4 and p 55 in Class Notes) , fully understand what Fig 4-2 in SGC-E-Text represents and how it might change with adjustments in incoming solar energy and outgoing infrared energy, **SPECIFIC HINT: see the 4 graphs at the end of the TOP 10 for Test #4, and think about how different kinds of radiative forcing might affect curve A or B and change the graph.**

TOPIC # 11 Systems & Feedbacks -- Know the difference between a coupling and a loop; be able to recognize positive and negative couplings and loops; understand how all the loops on p 59 of Class Notes work; be able to do the Self Test on p 61 of Class Notes; know how feedback loops link to equilibrium states and what the difference between a perturbation and a forcing is.

TOPIC # 12 How the Climate Works-- Focus on pp 64-65 in Class Notes and the link to the surplus & deficits in the Energy Balance; review "Earth-Sun Relationships" (p 63 in Class Notes) and "Astronomical Forcing of Climate Change" (p 69)

TOPIC # 13 Natural Climatic Forcing -- Understand the different ways that these processes "force" climate change: astronomical forcing/Earth-Sun orbital relationships, solar variability, and ESPECIALLY **volcanism** since we had a group activity on it: **review the G-5 GROUP ACTIVITY on Volcanism & Climate (pp 74-75 in Class Notes) and know how to do it on your own.**

TOPIC # 14 Ozone Depletion in the Stratosphere -- The key things to know are stated for you on p 77-79 of Class Notes -- see especially "Ozone Depletion: What, Why & Where" on p 79 -- **if you can answer the following questions, you will have the beginnings of a good answer to a possible essay question on comparing and contrasting the ozone issue with the global warming issue!**

Ozone Questions to Ponder:

- *Do you understand the difference between stratospheric and tropospheric ozone concentrations and effects?*
- *Can you tie the ozone hole discussion to earlier material on the electromagnetic spectrum, atmospheric structure and composition, and the time-latitude curve of solar radiation to answer: Why is the loss of ozone a concern? and, What's so special about spring in the polar regions that influences the onset of the chemical reactions that destroy ozone?*
- *Think about the connections between the ozone hole problem and the greenhouse effect problem. Are they the same thing? Do they occur in the same part of the atmosphere? Do they involve radiation in the same part of the electromagnetic spectrum? Are they related to each other? Do media sources and the general public sometimes err in confusing the two? Are the "solutions" to both problems the same? Why are scientists currently concerned that global warming will SLOW the healing of the ozone layer?*

TOPIC # 15 Global Warming & Anthropogenic Forcing -- This topic was addressed in several parts:

Part A emphasized Carbon Reservoirs & Fluxes, especially the role of photosynthesis, respiration, and decomposition. Be sure you know how this links to the zig-zags on the Keeling Curve, and what it has to do with why DEFORESTATION is a major contributor to increasing CO₂ in the atmosphere (see also p 91-92 on deforestation). Be familiar with the relative contribution of land use change (mostly deforestation) and combustion of fossil fuels to CO₂ emissions (graph on top of p 82 in Class Notes). What parts of the world are currently contributing the most to forest carbon emissions? (graphs in middle of p 82 in Class Notes).

Part B emphasized the extremely important Radiative Forcing Diagram (p 83 in Class Notes). The exam will contain one or more questions based on this key figure, so be sure you understand it. See the slides and clicker questions in the presentation on **Topic #15 Global Warming & Anthropogenic Forcing** (Nov 16) to sharpen your understanding and give you an idea of what kinds of questions might be asked. (See also **Self Test 8** and **Self Test 9**, each has a question on some aspect of this graph.)

The "**Solar Dimming**" issue we learned about in the Global Dimming film relates directly to this Radiative Forcing diagram. Can you figure out which part?? (*HINT: look for the bar for **Total Aerosol – Direct Effect***). Does this bar on the diagram indicate cooling or warming? Can you explain why scientists are quite concerned that global warming could be even stronger than experienced to date now that the "masking" effect of aerosols is being reduced by cleaning up air pollution?

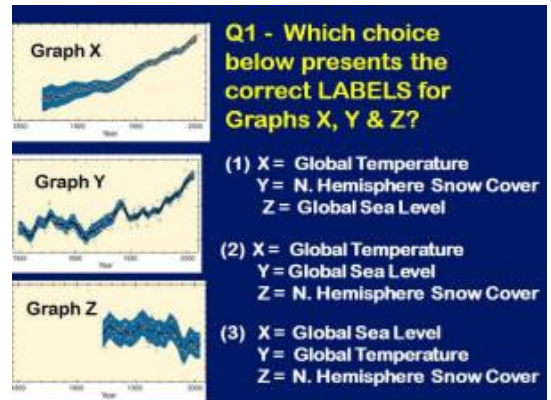
Part C emphasized Evidence from Natural Archives and brought tree rings back to our attention, along with other natural archives. This part was tied in with the "iconic" figure of the **Hockey Stick diagram**, along with the earlier "Noodle diagram" and the newer, updated version of the Hockey Stick graph from the 2007 IPCC - AR4 (the **Spaghetti Plate**) which depicts results from many different research groups, not just the Hockey Stick scientists -- both graphs are shown on p 84 in Class Notes -- See also p 47 in *Dire Predictions*). All 3 graphs are discussed in the Topic #15 –III presentation (see the slides for Nov 19th) Know why these graphs constitute an important line of evidence pointing to anthropogenic causes for the observed late 20th century / early 21st century global warming.

Part D emphasized Evidence from Natural vs. Anthropogenic Model Comparisons. Know how to interpret the graphs in Fig 15-5 on SGC p 302 and the similar graphs on pp 68-69 in *Dire Predictions*: (Do you understand how to read Graphs #1, #3 & #4 on DP pp 68-69?) Also understand how to read the Land vs Ocean and the Regional Continental Trends graphs on p 85 in Class Notes (similar graphs are on p 71 in *Dire Predictions*). Can you explain why ALL of these graphs which show different MODEL RUN results are compelling lines of evidence pointing to anthropogenic causes for the observed recent warming – but in a different way than in the Hockey Stick? (Review the Topic #15 presentation on Nov 19th)

Also review the **Indicators of a Warming World** diagram on p 86 in Class Notes. The “Too Hot Not to Handle” video addressed nearly all of the the indicators on it. Could you list and explain several of these indicators? We also briefly discussed the **10 Indicators of a Human Fingerprint on Climate Change** (p 87 in Class Notes). Don’t worry about having to explain them all – the three we’ve addressed the most this semester are: (a) cooling stratosphere, (b) less heat escaping to space and (c) all the CO₂ being emitted into the atmosphere each year – so be sure you can state these 3 as indicators pointing to a human fingerprint on climate change (rather than natural forcing mechanisms alone).

The Nov 26th lecture included this clicker question →:

Specific Hint: You may see similar questions on the Final Exam showing graphs without any titles. Could you reason out which graph is which . . . if a list of possible graph titles was given to you? This type of question tests your basic understanding of the observed trends, how familiar you are with the shapes of some of the key global change graphs, and how well you understand the nature of the processes that are changing (i.e. if temperatures warm up, snow cover would tend to decrease; sea level has been rising slowly and steadily, whereas temperature has more ups and downs because it is forced more readily by different mechanisms, etc).



TOPIC #16 Climate Change: Impacts & Issues With respect to specific **Impacts**, what do you need to know??-- Here are some guidelines. The graph on the top of p 90 in CLASS NOTES contains a succinct summary of what impacts we can expect under different amounts of warming (1° to 5 °C) with respect to: **Water, Ecosystems, Food, Coasts, and Health**. The bottom of p 90 lists other projected impacts that are *very likely* or *likely* to occur. Many of these things were effectively illustrated in the *Dire Predictions* text and in *Too Hot Not to Handle*.. Be generally familiar with the impacts named on p 90, but you do **NOT** need to memorize them or any others from the *Dire Predictions* text !! Just be able to give examples of 2-3 projected impacts if asked. You might also be given a list of a few impacts and asked to link them to some other aspect of the course already mentioned above in this study guide.

Biodiversity (pp 91-92 in Class Notes) -- We didn’t go over this in detail – **but be sure you read through it and understand the KEY CONCEPTS** – they echo items from **SGC Chapter 1 on Global Change**, the films we’ve watched, and other parts of the class when we discussed Deforestation. You **should be able to answer the questions on p 92** – which were addressed in earlier lectures linked to the Energy Balance.

TOPIC #17 Climate Change: Adaptations & Solutions: With respect to **ADAPTATION & MITIGATION** -- just be sure you know what the terms mean and be able to give (or recognize) an example of each. (see p 93 in Class Notes). The film on "*The Next Frontier: Engineering the Golden Age of Green*" provided a huge array of possible mitigation solutions. Could you name several and describe their pros and cons?

APPENDIX I -- Climate Literacy: The Essential Principles of Climate Sciences, (Class Notes p 97 -106) -- This is a broad-brush overview of many of our class topics that will help you see the "big picture" summarized as 7 key principles. Self Test and RQ-9 will steer you to the things you need to know from this final topic.

Lastly: You should also re-read or skim Chapter 1 in the SGC-E-Text on Global Change for a good overview of many of our key global change topics

A FINAL WORD: When I am assigning **the final letter grades** for the course and find that a student is right on the borderline between two grades, what I always do is **go to the student's Final Exam and review the write-in part and essay question answers**. It is here that I can get the best insight into whether or not the student REALLY understands the material or not. If a good understanding is demonstrated, this will help to kick the final grade up to the higher letter grade. So it is to your best advantage to do as well as you can on the write-in and essay parts of the test!

PRECEPTOR STUDY SESSIONS

PLEASE BRING A COPY OF THIS STUDY GUIDE & THE PRACTICE QUESTIONS WITH YOU!

Information of time and location for the Study Sessions with the preceptors will be posted in D2L