

## ES1086B Course Outline

### 1. Course Information

#### **EARTHSCI 1086B 650 LEC FW25 – Origin and Geology of the Solar System**

**Academic Term:** Winter 2026 (2026W)

**Delivery Mode:** Fully asynchronous via OWL–Brightspace

<https://westernu.brightspace.com/d2l/home/157473>

**List of Prerequisites:** None

**List of Antirequisites:** Earth Sciences 2232F/G, Astronomy 2201A, Astronomy 2232F/G

Unless you have either the prerequisites for this course or written special permission from the Department of Earth Sciences to enroll in it, you may be removed and withdrawn from this course in accordance with university policy. This may be done after the add/drop deadline of the academic term, and the course will be marked as withdrawn (WDN) on your academic record. This decision may not be appealed.

### 2. Instructor Information

#### **Instructor:**

Dr. Debora Rios, Department of Earth Sciences

#### **Instructor Communication and Support:**

I encourage you to post questions related to course content in the online discussion forums, as this allows everyone in the class to benefit from the questions and answers. If you need to contact me about a personal or confidential matter, please email me at **drios2@uwo.ca**.

When emailing, you **must use your Western (@uwo.ca)** email address and **include the course code ES1086B in the subject line**.

Before posting or emailing a question, please be sure to read the syllabus carefully, as many common questions are already addressed there.

#### **Office Hours:**

There are no regularly scheduled office hours for this course. Your first point of contact will be your Teaching Assistant (TA), who will be available as needed. If you need to speak with me directly, please send me an email and I will be happy to arrange a Zoom meeting.

Your first point of contact is your assigned TA. **TA assignments are final.** Please update your Brightspace profile with a short introduction and optionally a photo to help your TA and classmates connect with you. **Find Your TA!**

**Last Name A to G:** TA – Deep Patel [dpate696@uwo.ca].

**Last Name H to P:** TA – Navid Sirous [nsirous@uwo.ca].

**Last Name Q to Z:** TA – Qi Zhao [qzhao336@uwo.ca].

### 3. Course Syllabus, Schedule, Delivery Mode

**Key Sessional Dates are listed below** (all dates and deadlines are Eastern Standard Time):

<b>Classes begin</b>	<b>Monday, January 5<sup>th</sup>/2026</b>
Academic Integrity Quiz (MANDATORY)	<b>January 16<sup>th</sup> / 2026, at 5:00 pm EST</b>
ProctorTrack Onboarding (MANDATORY)	<b>February 4<sup>th</sup> / 2026, at 5:00 pm EST</b>
Deadline for Quizzes 1, 2, 3a, 3b submissions	<b>February 6<sup>th</sup> / 2026, at 5:00 pm EST</b>
<b>MIDTERM test</b> (Official time will be communicated through Announcement on the OWL/Brightspace site)	<b>February 10<sup>th</sup> / 2026, at 9:am EST</b> Date and time pending approval from Exam Central.
Deadline for FORUMS participation:	<b>April 1<sup>st</sup> / 2026, at 5:00 pm EST</b>
Deadline for QUIZZES 4, 5, 6, 7 submissions	<b>April 1<sup>st</sup> / 2026, at 5:00 pm EST</b>
Deadline for participating in the Brightspace POLLS:	<b>April 1<sup>st</sup> / 2026, at 5:00 pm EST</b>
Midterm Makeup (with approved accommodations)	<b>Thursday, April 9<sup>th</sup> , 3:00 pm EST</b> Date and time pending approval from Exam Central.
Classes end	<b>Thursday, April 9<sup>th</sup> / 2026</b>
<b>FINAL EXAM</b> Set by the Registrar's Office (to be announced) Final Exam Period	<b>TBD</b> <b>April 12-30, 2026</b>

#### Course Description

This half-course explores our current understanding of the origin and evolution of the Solar System, including some observations about our Universe and the Milky Way Galaxy. We will examine the hypothesis and theories that attempt to explain the formation and geological evolution of the Sun, planets, moons, asteroids, comets, and meteorites. Particular attention is given to why and how Earth evolved along a path that is fundamentally different from the other planets.

Throughout the course, students will be introduced to the scientific reasoning behind planetary science: how ideas develop over time, how hypotheses are tested, and how new data refine or reshape existing theories. By applying geological principles learned on Earth to other planetary bodies, students will gain insight into comparative planetology and the broader context of Earth within the Solar System. The course concludes with a discussion of the potential for life beyond Earth.

As technology improves and as more and more space vehicles probe beyond Earth, knowledge expands dramatically. This course emphasizes qualitative understanding and scientific reasoning and is designed to be accessible to students from all academic backgrounds.

**Course Objectives** – The objectives of this course are to:

- Introduce students to our current understanding of the Solar System and how this knowledge has been developed.
- Provide an overview of the formation and evolution of stars and planetary systems.
- Highlight the diversity of planetary bodies and recognize that Earth's geological history is not universally applicable.
- Familiarize students with the logical structure of scientific investigation, from observation and data collection to hypothesis development and theory refinement.
- Build foundational skills in scientific communication through structured written assignments.

## Course-Level Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Describe the origin and structure and major components of the Solar System.
- Explain the geological processes that shape planets, moons, asteroids, and comets.
- Apply fundamental geological concepts from Earth sciences to the study of other planetary bodies.
- Evaluate scientific hypotheses using observational and experimental evidence.
- Communicate scientific ideas clearly and effectively in written scientific format.

## Delivery Mode:

This course content is delivered fully online and is primarily asynchronous through OWL–Brightspace.

Asynchronous delivery means you can engage with lectures, readings, labs, and tutorials according to your own schedule, within the established deadlines.

A suggested reading schedule is provided below. Quizzes are asynchronous online asynchronous activities (not timed). Exams will be synchronous, online, timed, and proctored. This means you need to write the exam online at the scheduled time. All deadlines, assessments, and required activities are clearly listed on OWL–Brightspace and must be followed carefully.

## 4. Course Materials

- All course materials will be posted to OWL–Brightspace: <https://westernu.brightspace.com/>
- There is **no additional textbook** for this course.
- Students should check OWL-Brightspace regularly for news, updates, and announcements, as this is the primary method of communication, by which information will be disseminated to all students in the class. Students are responsible for checking OWL-Brightspace on a regular basis!
- If you need assistance, you can seek support on the [OWL Brightspace Help](#) page. Alternatively, you can contact the Western Technology Services Helpdesk at 519-661-3800 (ext. 83800).

## Technical Requirements

- Students are responsible for maintaining reliable internet access for the duration of the course.
- To complete exams, a stable internet connection and a computer with a working webcam and microphone are required. Tablets and iPads are not supported. It is the student's responsibility to ensure they can access and complete all online exams successfully.

## Course Outline and Schedule

The course is organized into **seven units**. Each unit includes:

- an Introduction outlining key concepts and learning goals,
- a Self-Test to help you check your understanding, and
- a Graded Quiz that contributes to your final mark.

The Learning Goals presented in each Unit Introduction are intended as a starting point for your studies. More detailed guidance on what to focus on is provided in the **Study Guides**, which can be found under “Reading and Studying the Material” in the Course Notes section on OWL–Brightspace.

## Unit Structure & Content: **Suggested Weekly Schedule**

This is a suggested schedule to help you pace your work throughout the term. Because the course is asynchronous, you are responsible for planning your own study time based on your reading speed and other commitments. The final week is intentionally left without assigned readings to allow time for work and test preparation.

Plan ahead, read regularly, and aim to keep up with the chapters each week. **DEADLINES ARE NOT OPTIONAL!**

UNIT	DESCRIPTION OF CONTENTS	CHECKLIST	DETAILS AND DEADLINES
<b>Unit 1</b>	<b>Basic Concepts</b>	<b>Week 1</b>	<b>Starts January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2026 (36 pages)</b>
Read the Syllabus, introductory materials and familiarize yourself with course site on OWL-Brightspace			
			<b>Unit 1 Introduction</b>
	Chapter 1: Scientific Theory and the Big Bang		Complete Chapter 1
	Chapter 2: Time and Space		Complete Chapter 2
	Chapter 3: Matter and the Nebular Hypothesis		Complete Chapter 3
<b>Unit 2</b>	<b>The Solar System</b>	<b>Week 2</b>	<b>Starts January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2026 (33 pages)</b>
			<b>Unit 2 Introduction</b>
	Chapter 4 – A Star Called the Sun		Complete Chapter 4
	Chapter 5 – Geometry of the Solar System		Complete Chapter 5
			<b>Quiz 1</b>
<b>Deadline for Academic Integrity Quiz</b>		<b>MANDATORY</b>	<b>Friday, January 16<sup>th</sup>, 5:00pm EST</b>
<b>Unit 3</b>	<b>The Terrestrial Planets</b>	<b>Week 3</b>	<b>Starts January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2026 (47 pages)</b>
			<b>Unit 3 Introduction</b>
	Chapter 6 – When Two Planets Collide		Complete Chapter 6
	Chapter 7 – Earth		Complete Chapter 7
	Chapter 8 – The Moon		Complete Chapter 8
			<b>Quiz 2</b>
<b>Unit 3</b>	<b>The Terrestrial Planets</b>	<b>Week 4</b>	<b>Starts January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2026 (27 pages)</b>
			<b>Unit 3 Introduction</b>
	Chapter 9 – Mercury		Complete Chapter 9
	Chapter 10 – Venus		Complete Chapter 10
			<b>Quiz 3a</b>
<b>Unit 3</b>	<b>The Terrestrial Planets</b>	<b>Week 5</b>	<b>Starts February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2026 (29 pages)</b>
			<b>Unit 3 Introduction</b>
	Chapter 11 – Mars		Complete Chapter 11
	Independent reading and study time		<b>Quiz 3b</b>

**Deadline for ProctorTrack Onboarding: MANDATORY – Wednesday, February 4<sup>th</sup> at 5:00pm EST**

**Deadline for Quizzes 1, 2, 3a, and 3b: Friday, February 6<sup>th</sup> at 5:00pm EST**

**This is the end of the material that will be on the MIDTERM**

<b>Units 1–3</b>	<b>Revision for Midterm</b>	<b>Week 6</b>	<b>Starts February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2026 (152 pages in total)</b>
Review previous material in preparation for the Midterm Exam will be on-line, proctored, and synchronous			<b>Midterm Test</b>
			(Tentative) Tuesday,
			<b>February 10<sup>th</sup>/2026, at 9:00 am EST</b>

**The mid-term exam covers material from Unit 1 through the end of Chapter 11.**

<b>READING WEEK – February 16<sup>th</sup> to February 22<sup>nd</sup> / 2026 (no assigned readings)</b>			
<b>Unit 4</b>	<b>From Asteroids to Meteorites</b>	<b>Week 7</b>	<b>Starts February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2026 (33 pages)</b>
Chapter 12 – Asteroids Chapter 13 – Meteorites			<b>Unit 4 Introduction</b>
			Complete Chapter 12
			Complete Chapter 13
			<b>Quiz 4</b>
<b>Unit 5</b>	<b>The Gas Giant Planets</b>	<b>Week 8</b>	<b>Starts March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 20 (29 pages)</b>
Chapter 14 – Jupiter and Its Moons			<b>Unit 5 Introduction</b>
			Complete Chapter 14
<b>Unit 5</b>	<b>The Gas Giant Planets</b>	<b>Week 9</b>	<b>Starts March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2026 (38 pages)</b>
Chapter 15 – Saturn and Its Moons Chapter 16 – Uranus and Neptune			Complete Chapter 15
			Complete Chapter 16
			<b>Quiz 5</b>
<b>Unit 6</b>	<b>Plutoids, TNOs &amp; Comets</b>	<b>Week 10</b>	<b>Starts March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2026 (33 pages)</b>
Chapter 17 – Plutoids and Trans-Neptunian Objects (TNOs) Chapter 18 – Comets			<b>Unit 6 Introduction</b>
			Complete Chapter 17
			Complete Chapter 18
			<b>Quiz 6</b>
<b>Unit 7</b>	<b>Extraterrestrial Life</b>	<b>Week 11</b>	<b>Starts March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2026 (22 pages)</b>
Chapter 19 – Life in the Universe			<b>Unit 7 Introduction</b>
			Complete Chapter 19
			<b>Quiz 7</b>
<b>Units 4–7</b>	<b>Revision for the Final Exam</b>	<b>Week 12</b>	<b>Starts March 30<sup>th</sup> (NO READINGS)</b>
Have you completed the course and instructor evaluation survey?			
<b>Deadline for FORUMS participation:</b>			<b>Wednesday, April 1<sup>st</sup> / 2026, at 5:00 pm EST</b>
<b>Deadline for QUIZZES 4, 5, 6, 7 submissions:</b>			<b>Wednesday, April 1<sup>st</sup> / 2026, at 5:00 pm EST</b>
<b>Deadline for participating in the Brightspace POLLS:</b>			<b>Wednesday, April 1<sup>st</sup> / 2026, at 5:00 pm EST</b>
<b>FINAL EXAM – TBD: * The Final Exam is not cumulative and covers material from the Unit 4 Introduction through Chapter 19 (Unit 7). (155 pages in total)</b>			

## 5. Methods of Evaluation

The overall course grade will be calculated as listed below:

**Grading Scheme and Assessment Dates:** (All dates and deadlines are Eastern Standard Time (EST))

Description / Marking Scheme	Worths	Availability Starts	Due Deadline
<b>Midterm</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exam will be on-line, proctored, and synchronous (timed).</li> <li>This covers Units 1, 2 and 3 inclusive (to the end of Chapter 11)</li> </ul>	30%	Tuesday, February 10 <sup>th</sup> at 9:00 am EST (Tentative = To be announced on Brightspace)  <b>MAKE-UP:</b> Thursday, April 9 <sup>th</sup> , 3:00 pm EST (Tentative)	Tuesday, February 10 <sup>th</sup> at 11:00 am EST (Tentative) <b>MAKE-UP:</b> Thursday, April 9 <sup>th</sup> , 5:00 pm EST (Tentative)
<b>Final Exam</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exam will be on-line, proctored and synchronous (timed).</li> <li>This covers Units 4, 5, 6 and 7 (Chapters 12 to 19). The final exam is not cumulative.</li> </ul>	30%	(Date and time to be determined by the Registrar's office)	
<b>Graded Quizzes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are 8 graded quizzes (numbered 1, 2, 3a, 3b, 4, 5, 6, 7).</li> <li>There are also 8 self-tests available as practice. These are not graded.</li> <li>Spelling and grammar count on the quizzes! Misspelled words will not be recognized.</li> <li>The quizzes are automatically administered through the OWL system.</li> </ul>	24%	You should try to complete the quizzes each week as you read the related chapters. <b>Don't wait to submit your quizzes until the last minute!</b> Last minute computer problems will not be accepted as grounds for accommodation.	<b>Quizzes 1 to 3b:</b> Friday, February 6 <sup>th</sup> at 5:00 pm (EST)  <b>Quizzes 4 to 7:</b> Wednesday, April 1 <sup>st</sup> at 5:00 pm (EST)
<b>Participation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participation in online forums and online polls throughout the OWL-Brightspace Lessons pages is required.</li> <li>You will also be required to post ONE photo that YOU took during the semester that relates to the course's theme.</li> <li>Please see <b>"The Exceptional Contributor"</b> below.</li> <li>Academic Integrity Quiz (<b>MANDATORY</b>)</li> </ul>	16%	The photo could be: The Moon, a meteor, a comet, the Northern Lights... Star tracks DO NOT count as those stars are beyond our Solar System. Tips on Night Sky Photography will be posted in the Announcements.	Wednesday, April 1 <sup>st</sup> at 5:00 pm (EST)
<b>Academic Integrity Quiz</b>	<b>MANDATORY</b>	Monday, January 5 <sup>th</sup> , at 9:00 am (EST)	Friday, January 16 <sup>th</sup> , at 5:00 pm (EST)
<b>ProctorTrack Onboarding Quiz</b>	<b>MANDATORY</b>	Monday, January 5 <sup>th</sup> , at 9:00 am (EST)	Wednesday, February 4 <sup>th</sup> , at 5:00 pm (EST)

## **Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)**

I acknowledge that some students may be interested in exploring the use of Generative AI as a learning tool. I have chosen not to ban its use in this course. Instead, I require that all assignments **MUST** contain one of the two following statements at the end:

- 1) I did not use artificial intelligence in creating this paper; or
- 2) I did use artificial intelligence in creating this paper. I affirm I did not generate text with artificial intelligence and directly copy it into my paper.

You may use Generative AI (e.g., ChatGPT, etc.) to get you started and/or help you when you are stuck. If you choose to do this, you must include a brief description of the following:

- Software and version used.
- A complete list of prompts.
- How the generative AI was used (e.g., brainstorming, preparing an outline, discovering facts about the topic, locating background information, improving grammar/spelling/punctuation/structure, etc.).

## **Why can't we directly copy words from an AI engine into my assignments?**

There are multiple reasons:

- 1 This is considered plagiarism (which means presenting others' words as if they were our own).
- 2 We have already created several essays using various Generative AI models so Turnitin is already good at detection, and you will likely get a very high similarity index.
- 3 AI engines are notoriously unreliable on facts.
- 4 AI engines reproduce biases and prejudices from their source material; and
- 5 Using AI to generate text robs you of the chance to develop your own critical thinking on the subject. The point of assignments is to help you develop your ability to think critically. Writing is a mechanism to convey your critical thinking. The act of writing helps you cultivate your own intelligence. Not artificial intelligence.

## **Step-by-Step Checklist for Students**

Use the checklist below to guide your work and ensure you meet all course requirements:

- 1 Carefully read the assignment instructions and rubric on OWL/Brightspace.
- 2 Take notes in your own words; do not copy text into your draft.
- 3 Properly cite all sources according to the required citation style.
- 4 Review your work for clarity, structure, and scientific accuracy.
- 5 Submit Assignments through OWL-Brightspace before the deadline.
- 6 Carefully read the feedback provided by your TA.
- 7 Revise your assignment meaningfully.
- 8 Keep all submission confirmation emails for your records.

## The Exceptional Contributor

“The Class Was Better Because You Were Here”

OWL–Brightspace includes discussion forums where you can engage with your classmates on topics related to the course material. These forums are an important part of the learning experience and a space to ask questions, share ideas, clarify concepts, and learn from one another.

All students are expected to read and contribute regularly to the forums. You are encouraged to help each other by answering questions and offering thoughtful comments. If you have a personal or confidential question, you are welcome to email the instructor directly. However, before sending an email, please consider posting your question in the forum first- this often leads to quicker responses and allows the entire class to benefit from the discussion. Be sure to check the forums regularly for new posts.

### Participation Expectations

Active online participation is an essential component of this course. **Beginning January 15**, you are expected to:

- Post one original contribution to the forums each week, and
- Respond to at least two posts made by your classmates each week.

Your contributions should be engaging, relevant, and thoughtful. Aim to write posts that go beyond simple answers by encouraging discussion, raising questions, or offering clear explanations that help others better understand the material. Throughout the course, you will also find short polls embedded in the course notes - please complete these and take time to review how your classmates responded.

Remember: Participation accounts for **5% of your final course grade**.

### What Does an Exceptional Contributor Look Like?

An exceptional contributor is someone who helps create a positive, inclusive, and intellectually engaging learning environment. This includes students who:

- Make original, insightful, and informative posts
- Provide attentive and constructive responses to others
- Ask thought-provoking questions or help clarify complex ideas
- Contribute strategically, allowing space for others to participate
- Encourage classmates to share their perspectives
- Use respectful, engaging language that shows interest in others' ideas
- Submit assignments on time
- Interact constructively with the TAs and instructor
- Demonstrate awareness of their responsibilities as outlined in this syllabus

In short, an exceptional contributor is someone who makes the class stronger - **because you were here**.



## Accommodated Evaluations

### Midterm Examination

Students with an approved academic accommodation (granted by an Academic Counselor) for an excused absence will be eligible for the following arrangements:

- A make-up midterm will be offered on **Thursday, April 9<sup>th</sup> / 2026 at 3:00 pm EST** (tentative).
- If you have a legitimate, documented reason for missing both the scheduled midterm and the make-up midterm, you will **receive an Incomplete (INC)** for the course and will be required to write the midterm the next time the course is offered.

### Final Exam

- The final exam is not cumulative and will not be re-weighted under any circumstances. No exceptions.

### Quizzes

- Quizzes are administered and **automatically graded** through the OWL Brightspace system.
- **No academic accommodations** are available for quizzes.
- Students are strongly advised to complete quizzes **well in advance of the deadline**.
- Technical issues occurring at the last minute **will not** be accepted as grounds for accommodation.

## Course-Specific Requirements to Pass

In accordance with Western University regulations, students must meet all of the following requirements to successfully pass the course:

- Achieve a **minimum** overall course grade **of 50%**.

## Academic Integrity and Use of Sources (Western University Policy)

This course follows Western University's Academic Integrity and Scholastic Discipline policies. Students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic honesty.

### Academic Integrity and Use of Sources

Academic integrity is taken very seriously in this course.

- You are not allowed to copy and paste any text (even partial sentences) from any source, including:
  - websites,
  - books or journal articles,
  - other students' work,
  - generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT or similar).
  - You may not generate text using artificial intelligence and include it directly in your paper.
  - Replacing a few words in copied text or rearranging sentences still counts as **plagiarism**.
  - All sources must be properly cited according to the guidelines provided on OWL.

Failure to follow these rules may result in academic penalties in accordance with university policy.

All essays are submitted through Turnitin to support originality checking. Suspected breaches of academic integrity will be addressed in accordance with Western University policy, which may include penalties ranging from a grade reduction to more serious academic sanctions.

If you are unsure about proper citation, paraphrasing, or acceptable use of sources, please ask your TA or instructor before submitting your work.

### Use of Generative AI Tools

Generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Copilot, Gemini) are **permitted with limitations**. Students may use the tool for brainstorming but not for final writing.

Generative AI uses sophisticated models that can generate responses to "prompts" from existing examples and patterns. Generative AI models use natural language processing (NLP), neural networks, and deep learning AI algorithms to extract patterns in data. However, you should be aware that all Generative AI platforms (like ChatGPT) still tend to make up facts and fake citations. You are responsible for any inaccurate, biased, offensive, or otherwise unethical content you submit regardless of whether it comes from you or a Generative AI platform.

### General information about missed coursework

Students must familiarize themselves with the *University Policy on Academic Consideration – Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs*, posted on the Academic Calendar:

[https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/academic\\_consideration\\_Sep24.pdf](https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf),

This policy does not apply to requests for Academic Consideration submitted for **attempted or completed work**, whether online or in person.

The policy also does not apply to students experiencing longer-term impacts on their academic responsibilities. These students should consult [Accessible Education](#).

For procedures on **how to submit Academic Consideration** requests, please see the information posted on the Office of the Registrar's webpage:

[https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/academic\\_considerations/](https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/academic_considerations/)

All requests for Academic Consideration must be made within 48 hours after the assessment date or submission deadline.

All Academic Consideration requests must include supporting documentation; however, recognizing that formal documentation may not be available in some extenuating circumstances, the policy allows students to make one Academic Consideration request **without supporting documentation** in this course. However, the following assessments are excluded from this and, therefore, always require formal supporting documentation:

- Final Examinations scheduled during official examination periods (Defined by policy)
- Midterm (Designated by the instructor as the one assessment that always requires documentation when requesting Academic Consideration)

When a student *mistakenly* submits their one allowed Academic Consideration request **without supporting documentation** for the assessments listed above or those in the **Coursework with Assessment Flexibility** section below, the request cannot be recalled and reapplied. This privilege is forfeited.

### **Evaluation Scheme for Missed Assessments**

Missed assessment will be handled with an extension or reweighting.

**[Important]** For any assessment for which extensions are allowed, **April 9<sup>th</sup>/2026** is the last date when submissions will no longer be accepted, even with Academic Consideration granted. This is the date when the work is marked as a peer-reviewed exercise. This submission cut-off date is ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT for assessment where Academic Consideration can be granted without documentation (thus no end date).

When a student misses the Final Exam and their Academic Consideration has been granted, they will be allowed to write the Special Examination (the name given by the University to a makeup Final Exam). See the Academic Calendar for details (under [Special Examinations](#)), especially for those who miss multiple final exams within one examination period.

### **Essential Learning Requirements**

Even when Academic Considerations are granted for missed coursework, the following are deemed essential to earn a passing grade.

Any course-specific conditions related to essential learning objectives that are required to pass the course are outlined in this syllabus.

In such cases, the consequences of not meeting the requirement (e.g., a grade of 50%) are specified. Note that students should not be penalized for failing to meet a requirement where Academic Considerations are granted. For example, a student who misses too many activities due to illness to receive course credit should be given an opportunity to complete those activities after they recover. However, for logistical reasons, that opportunity will be with the next offering of the course, in which case the student will receive a grade of Incomplete (INC) and their maximum course load may be reduced during the term in which they complete their course requirements.

## 6. Additional Statements

### Religious Accommodation

When a recognized religious holiday or observance conflicts with an examination, test, or other scheduled academic obligation, students must request accommodation via the University's Student Absence Portal (SAP). This request should identify the conflict and specify which course component(s) (e.g. test, midterm, exam) are affected.

Students are encouraged to submit the SAP request as early as possible, but **no later than two weeks BEFORE any examination**, or one week before any mid-term test or quiz, to allow sufficient time for adjustment.

The SAP request serves as official notification to both the course instructor and the Academic Advising Office, in accordance with University policy:

[https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/accommodation\\_religious.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_religious.pdf)

**Note that in the Faculty of Science, religious holidays and university-sanctioned varsity events (e.g., intercollegiate competitions) are treated as scheduling conflicts. In such cases students are offered an early sitting or a make-up opportunity.**

For more information on recognized religious holidays, please visit the Diversity Calendar posted on the Equity, Diversity & Inclusion website - <https://www.edi.uwo.ca>

## 7. Academic Accommodation Policies

Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact Accessible Education, which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The policy on Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities can be found at:

[https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/Academic\\_Accommodation\\_disabilities.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic_Accommodation_disabilities.pdf).

Students should note that individual instructors are not permitted to receive documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for consideration on medical grounds, or for other reasons. All documentation required for absences must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's Home Faculty.

### General Academic Policies

The website for Registrar Services is <https://www.registrar.uwo.ca/>.

**Use of @uwo.ca email:** In accordance with policy, [https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/policies\\_procedures/section1/mapp113.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/policies_procedures/section1/mapp113.pdf), the centrally administered e-mail account provided to students will be considered the individual's official university email address. It is the responsibility of the account holder to ensure that emails received from the University at their official university address are attended to in a timely manner.

**Requests for Relief** (formally known as "appeals")

Policy on Request for Relief from Academic Decision:

[https://uwo.ca/univsec//pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/requests\\_for\\_relief\\_from\\_academic\\_decisions.pdf](https://uwo.ca/univsec//pdf/academic_policies/appeals/requests_for_relief_from_academic_decisions.pdf)

Procedures on Request for Relief from Academic Decision (Undergraduate):

[https://uwo.ca/univsec//pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/undergrad\\_requests\\_for\\_relief\\_procedure.pdf](https://uwo.ca/univsec//pdf/academic_policies/appeals/undergrad_requests_for_relief_procedure.pdf)

Procedures on Request for Relief from Academic Decision (Graduate):

[https://uwo.ca/univsec//pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/graduate\\_requests\\_for\\_relief\\_procedure.pdf](https://uwo.ca/univsec//pdf/academic_policies/appeals/graduate_requests_for_relief_procedure.pdf)

### **Scholastic Offences**

Policy on Scholastic Offences:

[https://uwo.ca/univsec//pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_offences.pdf](https://uwo.ca/univsec//pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_offences.pdf)

Procedures on Scholastic Offences (Undergraduate):

[https://uwo.ca/univsec//pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/undergrad\\_scholastic\\_offence\\_procedure.pdf](https://uwo.ca/univsec//pdf/academic_policies/appeals/undergrad_scholastic_offence_procedure.pdf)

Procedures on Scholastic Offences (Graduate):

[https://uwo.ca/univsec//pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/graduate\\_scholastic\\_offence\\_procedure.pdf](https://uwo.ca/univsec//pdf/academic_policies/appeals/graduate_scholastic_offence_procedure.pdf)

### **Use of Electronic Devices During Assessments**

In courses offered by the Faculty of Science, the possession of unauthorized electronic devices during any in-person assessment (such as tests, midterms, and final examinations) **is strictly prohibited**. This includes, but is not limited to mobile phones, smart watches, smart glasses, and wireless earbuds or headphones.

Unless explicitly stated otherwise in advance by the instructor, the presence of any such device at your desk, on your person, or within reach during an assessment **will be treated as a *scholastic offence***, even if the device is not in use.

Only devices expressly permitted by the instructor (e.g., non-programmable calculators) may be brought into the assessment room. It is your responsibility to review and comply with these expectations.

### **Use of Generative AI Tools**

Unless otherwise stated, the use of generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Microsoft Copilot, Google Gemini, or similar platforms) is **not permitted** in the completion of any course assessments, including but not limited to: assignments, lab reports, presentations, tests, and final examinations.

Using such tools for content generation, code writing, problem solving, translation, or summarization—when not explicitly allowed—will be treated as a **scholastic offence**.

If the use of generative AI is permitted for a particular assessment, the conditions of use will be specified by the instructor in advance. If no such permission is granted, students must assume that use is prohibited. It is your responsibility to seek clarification before using any AI tools in academic work.

### **TURNITIN:**

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the

service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

### SCANEX:

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

**Remote Proctoring Software WILL be used in this course, including in the event of a health lockdown!**

Tests and examinations in this course will be conducted using a remote proctoring service. By taking this course, you are consenting to the use of this software and acknowledge that you will be required to provide **personal information** (including some biometric data) and the session will be **recorded**. Completion of this course will require you to have a reliable internet connection and a device that meets the technical requirements for this service. More information about this remote proctoring service, including technical requirements, is available on Western's Remote Proctoring website at:

<https://remoteproctoring.uwo.ca>.

## 8. Support Services

Please visit the Science & Basic Medical Sciences Academic Advising webpage for information on adding/dropping courses, academic considerations for absences, requests for relief, exam conflicts, and many other academic-related matters: <https://www.uwo.ca/sci/counselling/>.

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western (<https://uwo.ca/health/>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts, at:

[https://www.uwo.ca/health/student\\_support/survivor\\_support/get-help.html](https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html).

To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact [support@uwo.ca](mailto:support@uwo.ca).

Please contact the course instructor if you require lecture or printed material in an **alternate format** or if any other arrangements can make this course more accessible to you. If you have any questions regarding accommodations, you may also wish to contact Accessible Education at

[http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible\\_education/index.html](http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/index.html)

Learning-skills counsellors at **Learning Development and Success** (<https://learning.uwo.ca>) are ready to help you improve your learning skills. They offer presentations on strategies for improving time management, multiple-choice exam preparation/writing, textbook reading, and more. Individual support is offered throughout the Fall/Winter terms in the drop-in Learning Help Centre, and year-round through individual counselling.

Additional student-run support services are offered by the USC, <https://westernusc.ca/services/>.