

Ocean 210 Oceanography Online Version Welcome Letter

PLEASE PRINT THIS PAGE FOR FUTURE REFERENCE

Dear Student,

Welcome to distance education at Cuesta College and the online version of Ocean 210! This letter is to inform you of some important details prior to the beginning of this online class. Please read this letter carefully!!

31986 - Spring 2012

This class DOES NOT begin until January 17, 2012

This is an introductory course that emphasizes the geology, physics, and chemistry of the ocean. You will learn why the ocean is salty and why some spots always have good surf.

The course has one *mandatory* orientation meeting on Wednesday Jan 18 from 5:30 to 6:30pm in room 2108 on the San Luis Obispo campus. Please let me know right away if you have a conflict with this meeting. There will be three **proctored** exams that you will need to take in person either at Cuesta or at *some other campus where you can arrange the test*. The only prerequisite for this course is Math 125, however, there are also some things you should consider to determine if you are a good candidate for online learning. If after reading this letter you are unsure, take this quiz:

<http://library.cuesta.edu/distance/survey.htm>

Important Note:

I will send an e-mail to your myCuesta e-mail account with the class web site address, username, and password a few days prior to the beginning of class. This course will be taught using **Blackboard CE-8**. This is a Web-based tool used to facilitate teaching an online class. This platform provides the framework for the Ocean 210 class including PowerPoint presentations, student data files, the tools to receive and send course materials, and a grade book. Using the communication tools, you can communicate using e-mail, and you can share materials and ideas with other course participants via the discussion board or in chat rooms. At the orientation meeting we will propose some times that we can share ideas in the chat rooms as well as ask me questions.

Note: All students receive a myCuesta e-mail that can be accessed through the myCuesta Portal (my.cuesta.edu). If you do not want to use this e-mail you can login into myCuesta and set this e-mail to be forwarded to any e-mail of your choice. Once we start the course we will primarily be using the Blackboard mail tool for class communication.

As soon as you log into the course be sure and read the class syllabus. Print it out and refer to it often during the semester. This is a statement of my expectations and agreements to support you in this course.

CLASS REQUIREMENTS

The textbook we will be using for Ocean 210 Online class is: Ocean Studies, Introduction to Oceanography published by the American Meteorological Society (AMS) and edited by Joseph Moran (2nd Edition). You will also be doing activities in the AMS Ocean Studies Investigation Manual. The two books and a globe come as a package that can be purchased from the Cuesta Bookstore. Be sure the package or manual says Academic Year 2011-2012 and Summer 2012 on it. The textbook provides access to a website where you will use real-time satellite data to understand how physical processes operate in the ocean. The activities undertaken in the DE version of this course will provide a more applied understanding of the major concepts of oceanography. You will be interpreting plots, graphs and satellite data that reflect oceanographic processes. The DE course covers the same material as the traditional classroom course, but is highly self-directed with 1-2 investigative activities for each chapter of the textbook. You will be guided to learn both the process and content of this science. **NOTE: this course uses a different textbook than the traditional classroom section of Oceanography. This curriculum has homework that will comprise 25% of your final grade, but the instructor is always available to assist you.**

COMPUTER REQUIREMENTS

- 1) Current Web Browser: Safari, Firefox, or Internet Explorer (Mac or Windows).
- 2) Computer Specs: Power Macintosh or Windows (Pentium) computer with at least a 200 Mhz processor speed and a minimum of 64 MB of system RAM (memory).
- 3) Adobe Acrobat Reader plugin. This is a free plugin that enables you to read the course readings. If you do not already have this plugin, you can download it at:
<http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>.
- 4) Basic computer experience.

If this is the first online course that you have taken, and you feel that you may not have the necessary computer skills to succeed, you might consider taking DIST 101. DIST 101 is a half unit, 3-week course that will introduce you to some of the basic technologies that are used in online courses.

If you have any further questions prior to the first day of class, please feel free to e-mail Debra Stakes (dstakes@cuesta.edu).

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