Shaw High School

Earth Systems Science

Class Syllabus

**Teacher:** Tiffany Nicholas

**Email:** **nicholas.tiffany.n@muscogee.k12.ga.us**

**Availability:**

* After School: Monday-Thursday 3:30 to 4:00

***Important Note****: Parents/students should always contact the teacher and confirm availability in advance to ensure that the teacher does not have a conflicting after-school meeting or appointment.*

**Introduction and Purpose**

Earth Systems Science (ESS) is an interdisciplinary study that explores different sciences, such as geology, oceanography, meteorology, and biology. The learning objective for this class is to understand the relationships of various interdependent Earth systems, how each interact with one another, and how both, naturally occurring events such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and man-made phenomena like global warming affect the entire planet and every living organism. Because many of our most pressing and complicated environmental problems are caused by multiple and interacting human activities in combination with naturally occurring changes within our planet, I believe that the information, concepts, and issues discussed in this class will be useful to you now and throughout your life. In fact, I believe that this Earth Systems Science class may be one of the most interesting classes that you will take in high school. What could be more important than learning about our home – Earth?

**Textbook**

*Earth Science* by Prentice Hall

**Textbook Issuance Policy**

Students will be issued an individual textbook and will be required to bring it to class every day.

**Required Materials**

* Divider for Earth Systems
* Loose Leaf Paper for 3-Ring Binder
* #2 Pencils
* Black or Blue Ink Pen
* Highlighter Pen(s)
* 3x5 Cards
* USB Flash Drive (optional but not recommended)
* Electronic Tablet or Smartphone (optional but recommended)

**Learning Objectives**

Student learning objectives will be covered in detail at the beginning of every unit and lesson. In addition to developing science related critical/analytical thinking skills and situational awareness of real-world phenomena, the course work in this class will…

* facilitate literacy development to promote and support higher order thinking skills
* strengthen reading comprehension and reading processes
* improve mathematical skills
* help students realize the importance of collaboration and sociocultural learning

**Student Requirements**

Students must…

* Complete assigned reading assignments before class. There is an expectation that every student will arrive on time and stay for the entire class period, and participate in class discussions.
* Complete homework/assignments by their due date. Failure to do so will result in a grade deduction.
* Complete all written assignments using MLA style and format, and upon completion, submit it to the teacher through the Canvas Assignments section in the Canvas portal for that particular assignment. Any work with 25% or greater similarity rating will not be accepted.

**Grading Policy**

In general, a student’s grade in this class is an indication of how well he/she demonstrates successful critical & analytical thinking and problem-solving skills. As such, grades will be awarded to an individual student based on the teacher’s judgment of the student’s scholastic achievements and mastery of standards. Additionally, there may instances where a teacher will grade using a “bell curve” method. This type of grading is typically used to boost a student’s grade (the entire class as a whole) when a teacher determines that the assessment was too difficult or the testing conditions not ideal.

**Grade Weight**

Assignments and assessments are categorized as either formative or summative.

* **Formative assessments** are assessments for learning that measure student learning and comprehension in the moment, and are primary used by the teacher to check a student’s understanding of the material and to modify pending instruction.
* **Summative assessments** on the other hand, are assessments of learning that determine a student’s comprehension of an entire module or unit of instruction.

Examples:

* **Formative Assessments** – Homework, Classwork, Quiz, Bell Work, Exit Slip, and In-Class Participation
* **Summative Assessments** – Test, Exam, Project, Lab, and the Georgia Department of Education Student Learning Objectives (SLO) Quarterly Assessment

In an effort to ensure that all students graduate prepared for the 21st century workplace, the State of Georgia and the Shaw High School Administration has placed considerable emphasis on measuring student-learning outcomes, wherein students are expected to demonstrate mastery of standards for each content area (i.e., science, math, history, etc.). As such, summative assessments will account for 50% of the student’s overall grade and formative assessments will make up the remaining 50%.

**Grade Distribution**

90-100 A

80-89 B

70-79 C

69-60 F (The range for an “F” in this class)

0 F (An exception to the above is when students are involved in acts of “Academic Integrity,” such as those listed below)

**Academic Integrity**

As per the *Shaw High School Guide for Parents/Students*, the following circumstances are considered scholastic dishonesty and shall be strongly disciplined:

* Taking of information in any form into a test situation for the purpose of responding to test items or assisting others
* Plagiarism
* Taking of test questions or materials to provide assistance in later test situations
* Copying or allowing the copying of work when the copied material is to be counted as part of the student’s work or standardized testing
* Using a cell phone or texting during a test

Additionally, the first (1st) offense will result in the student receiving a zero (0) on the assignment, parent notification, and three days of after-school detention. Any offense thereafter will result in parent notification and the student receiving an “F” for the 9-week term.

**Honor Roll/Principal’s List**

Students that earn an “A” in all classes during any nine-week term will be placed on the Principal’s List. Students with an 80 or higher average in all classes will be on the Honor Roll.

**Learning Environment**

In addition to participating during in-class related activities and completing assignments on time, students will be expected to share their thoughts and opinions with fellow classmates during class time and via social learning platforms (i.e. Canvas Portal). This sociocultural approach to learning is the formula for a productive learning environment, and ultimately, academic success for every student. By way of “active” participation, every student will have opportunities to peer teach and learn from one another, which I believe will undoubtedly enhance the learning outcomes for all students. In other words, talking at the appropriate time is not only encouraged but also expected.

**Missed Assignments/Assessments**

While every effort will be made to accommodate a student that has missed class time, ultimately it will be the responsibility of the absentee to acquire any missed notes, handouts, or worksheets. Here are the guidelines for missed or late class work:

* Students are expected to make-up all missed assignments/assessments regardless of whether or not their absence is excused or unexcused; failure to do so may result in after school detention that will remain in effect until the work as been successfully completed and turned in.
* A missed test/quiz must be made-up after school on the day of the student’s return unless it conflicts with the teacher’s schedule. In such instances, the teacher and student will determine an appropriate time for the student to make up the missed assessment at no penalty to the student.
* Missed in-class work will be completed as homework and turned in on the following day of the students return to school; failure to comply may result in after-school detention that will remain in effect until the work has been successfully completed and turned in.
* Late assignments/projects will be docked 10% of the total value per day that it is late unless the student receives advance permission by the teacher.

**Grade Improvement Program**

Every student has the opportunity to re-do an assignment or retake a test for the chance to improve their score to an 80 if he/she scores less than an 80 on the first try. A student can only re-do/retake an assignment/assessment administered during the current 9-weeks. Each student may re-do/retake the assignment/assessment only once.

**Credit Recovery**

Because of the ongoing grade improvement program mentioned above, credit recovery is typically reserved for individual students that have missed large blocks of instruction for reasons deemed “excusable” by the school. In such cases, assignments/assessments will be assigned on a case-by-case basis.

**Infinite Campus & Canvas**

Parents/Students in the Muscogee County School District will have ongoing access to the student’s grades and assignments throughout the entire school year by way of *Infinite Campus* and the *Canvas*. In addition to viewing grades and assessment status via *Canvas* provides a place for the teacher to share new information with students outside of class time. This online learning platform will be used as a collaboration tool. Students will have frequent opportunities to engage in online discussions with their teacher and fellow classmates or simply ask questions any time via their Canvas Portal. In short, Canvas will be the primary mode of communication for out-of-class discourse.

* Infinite Campus Portal: [https://campus.muscogee.k12.ga.us/campus/portal/muscogee.jsp](https://campus.muscogee.k12.ga.us/campus/portal/muscogee.jsp%20)
* Canvas Portal: <https://mcsd.instructure.com/>

**Standards of Appropriate Behavior (Infinite Campus, Canvas, & Social Media Platforms)**

The behavior protocols defined by the *MCSD Parent-Student Code of Conduct/Behavior Handbook* also apply to the Canvas Portal, as well as other similar social media platforms. Students are not allowed to use offensive language/online flaming, post inappropriate material, or SPAM to the class. For more information regarding appropriate behavior, please visit: <http://shaw.muscogee.k12.ga.us/school_info/admin/forms/MCSD%20Codebook%20FY15-16.pdf>

**Class Syllabus Statement of Understanding**

**Student:**

I hereby attest that I have read and understand the class syllabus. I also understand that the class syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the teacher based on the needs of the class, and that the most current version of the class syllabus can be found under the “Syllabus” tab in Canvas.

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Student Name (Please Print) Date

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Student Signature

**To the Parent/Guardian:**

The policies and expectations introduced in the class syllabus have already been discussed with your son/daughter in detail, but nonetheless, I encourage you to review/discuss this syllabus with your child as well. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me via my school email listed at the top of the first page.

I acknowledge that I have been given an opportunity to read/review my child’s class syllabus.

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Parent/Guardian Name (Please Print) Date

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Parent/Guardian Signature

**Science Lab Safety Contract**

To ensure a safe science classroom, a list of rules has been developed and provided to you in this student safety contract.  These rules set forth in this contract must be followed at all times.

**The student and a parent/guardian** **must sign and return a copy to the teacher**. **Please read the entire contract before you sign.** Students will not be allowed in the laboratory until all their contracts are signed and returned to the teacher.  All rules and guidelines have/will be discussed in class with further elaboration.

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| General Guidelines | 1. Conduct yourself in a responsible manner at all times. All horseplay, practical jokes and pranks are dangerous and not permitted.
2. Follow all written and verbal instructions carefully. If you do not understand a direction or part of the procedure, ask your teacher before proceeding.
3. Never work alone in the laboratory. The teacher must always be present.
4. Do not touch materials in laboratory area until instructed to do so.
5. Perform only those experiments authorized by your teacher.
6. Do not eat food, drink, or chew gum in the laboratory.
7. Be prepared to work when you arrive at the laboratory. Familiarize yourself with the lab procedures before beginning the lab.
8. When working with chemicals, always work in well-ventilated area.
9. Practice good housekeeping techniques. Keep work areas clean and tidy at all times.
10. Be alert and proceed with caution at all times.
11. Dispose of chemical waste properly. Sinks are to be used only for water. If you are confused how to dispose of the waste, please check with your teacher.
12. Keep hands away from face, eyes, mouth and body when working in lab. Wash your hands with soap and water after conducting all experiments.
13. Do not leave your experiments unattended. Do not wander around the room, distract students or interfere with experiments of others.
14. Know locations and operating procedures of all safety equipment including fire aid kit(s), eyewash station, safety shower, fire extinguisher and fire blanket. Know where the fire alarm and exits are located.
15. Know what to do if there is a fire drill during a laboratory period. Containers must be closed and electrical equipment turned off.
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| Clothing | 1. Students must wear safety goggles any time chemicals, heat, or glassware is used - no exceptions.
2. Dress properly during a laboratory activity. Long hair must be properly secured, shoes must completely cover the foot (no open backs), and dangling jewelry/baggy clothing must be secured.
3. Contact lenses should not be worn in laboratory unless you have permission from the teacher.
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| Accidents and Injuries | 1. Report any accident (spill, breakage, etc.) or injury (cut, burn, etc.) to the teacher immediately, no matter how minor it may be. Equally important, do not panic.
2. If you or your lab partner is hurt, immediately (and loudly) yell out the teacher’s name to get the teacher’s attention – again, try not to panic.
3. If a chemical should splash in your eye(s) or on your skin, immediately notify the teacher begin flushing with running water for at least 20 minutes.
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| Handling Chemicals and Live Specimens | 1. All chemicals in the laboratory are to be considered dangerous. Do not touch, taste, or smell any chemicals unless instructed to do so.
2. Check the label on all chemical bottles twice before removing any contents. Only take as much as you need.
3. Never return unused chemicals to their original container or taint with contaminated instruments.
4. Never remove chemicals or other material from laboratory.
5. Handle all living organisms used in a laboratory activity in a humane manner.
6. Preserved biological organism and materials are to be handled in a serious manner and disposed of properly.
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| Handling Glassware and Equipment | 1. Never handle broken glass with your bare hands. Use a brush and dustpan for cleanup. Place broken glass in the designated glass disposal container.
2. Examine glassware before each use. Never use chipped, cracked or dirty glassware.
3. If you do not understand how to use a piece of equipment, ask the teacher for help.
4. Do not immerse hot glassware in cold water - the glassware may shatter.
5. When removing electrical plugs from a socket, grasp the plug, not the electrical cord. Hands must be completely dry before touching anything electrical.
6. Always carry a microscope with both hands.
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| Heating Substances | 1. When using a hot plate, make sure that hair, clothing and hands are a safe distance away at all time.
2. Heated glassware remains very hot for a long time. Glassware should be set aside in a designated place to cool, and picked up with caution. Use tongs or heat protective gloves if necessary.
3. Never look into a container that is being heated.
4. Do not place a hot apparatus directly on the lab desk. Always use an insulated pad. Allow plenty of time for hot apparatus’ to cool before touching it.
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**Science Safety Contract**

This course offers a variety of laboratory activities on current concepts in science. Safety instruction will be given and safe practices will be stressed in all laboratory work.

***Note: This contract must be signed and returned prior to your child entering the laboratory***

**Student**

I, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, have thoroughly read the *Science Safety Contract* and do hereby agree to follow all safety rules and procedures listed herein. I will conduct myself in a safe and conscientious manner in the laboratory and during all experiments. I will not perform any unauthorized lab procedure. I understand that misbehavior in the lab or failure to follow safe lab procedures can cause a serious accident. I further understand that a violation of these rules might result in me not being allowed to participate in future lab exercises, which could possibly result in academic failure.

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian**

I have read and understood the *Science Safety Contract* and discussed the importance of following these safety rules and teacher’s instructions with my child. Additionally, I understand that laboratory activities provide my child with the opportunity to explore science and solve problems in a hands-on, minds-on kind of way and I give my permission for my child to participate in these types of activities.

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_