

[GGS 656/EVPP 652 - The Hydrosphere](#); Credits: 3  
4:30 pm - 7:10 pm Tuesday Art and Design Building 2026  
Jan 22, 2012 - May 14, 2012

## Syllabus

**Overview:** Components and transfer processes within the hydrosphere, which consists of aqueous envelope of Earth, including oceans, lakes, rivers, snow, ice, glaciers, soil moisture, groundwater, and atmospheric water vapor. Offers understanding of various components of the hydrosphere, spatial and temporal distributions, physics of transfer processes for redistribution, and appreciation of water's role in sustaining life and influencing global and regional energy and mass balance.

**Prerequisites:** Two semesters of calculus, preferably partial differential equations; or permission of instructor.

**Instructors:** [Dr. Paul R. Houser](#) Telephone: 301-613-3782  
Office: Research 1–Room 240 E-mail: phouser at gmueu  
Office Hours: by appointment, or before/after class

**Website:** <http://mason.gmu.edu/~phouser/hydrosphere>

**Required text:** Dingman, S. L., [Physical Hydrology](#), 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Waveland Press, Inc..

**Procedure:** Material will be covered by lectures, not necessarily restricted to the text/supplemental and handouts. Students are expected to read the text and other assignments thoroughly prior to the lecture.

**Performance:** Material covered on the final exam will include handouts, lecture notes and outside readings.

**Evaluation:** All work must be your own. A grade of "0" will be assigned for any work which is clearly not your own or cheating of any type.

Homework	20 %
Paper Presentation	10%
Final Exam	40%
Term Paper	30%

**Homework assignments:** All assignments should be done neatly and professionally. Pages must be numbered and stapled. The problem should be defined, diagrammed (if appropriate), and the solution should be developed in a step-by-step procedure. Spreadsheet answers can be printed out and annotated. The final solution should be reported to the appropriate significant figures and underlined. You are encouraged to work together in study groups; however, identical (copied) homework will be awarded a grade of zero (0). Incorrect homework may be neatly reworked on a separate sheet of paper and resubmitted for re-evaluation and partial credit.

**Team Project:** The project will consist of a modeling or data analysis exercise to investigate a well-posed hydrological question. Models may be written by the 2-student team, or an existing model may be selected for the investigation. Project deliverables will consist of: 1. A brief project proposal; 2. A short (5-

10 pages) written report in standard scientific format; and 3. a 20-minute oral presentation. Here are a few ideas:

- The transmission of dam-induced stage changes in the Lower Colorado River: Data Interpretation: Stage data from different parts of LCR over tens to more than 100 km will be collected and analyzed to determine how a dam-induced flood travels through the LCR.
- The transmission of dam-induced stage changes in the Lower Colorado River: Modeling. Dam-induced stage variations will be modeled using kinematic wave or diffusive wave approximations. The model will be driven by upstream data.
- Measurement of discharge and stage changes in a local River. Students will deploy pressure transducers along different parts of the river to monitor dam-induced stage fluctuations.
- Measurement of moisture changes in the riparian zone of the Lower Colorado River due to dam-induced stage changes. This project will consist of a historical assessment of the LCR and how floods (natural and managed) have altered its course, if any.
- A 'backward' systems dynamics hydrologic model for a local creek/river.
- Discharge data from a local creek/river will be analyzed following Kirchner (Water Resources Research, 2009)
- A 'backward' systems dynamics hydrologic model for local springs/creek.
- Is Virginia getting warmer? Focus on extreme temperatures
- Students will collect ground and air temperature archives from weather stations across the state and delineate trends for number of days above 90 F or some other threshold, if any.
- Long-term (decadal) discharge variations in undammed Virginia rivers. Historical discharge data from undammed rivers or those little affected by dams will be analyzed.

**Other project ideas:**

<http://www.ce.utexas.edu/prof/maidment/gradhydro99/termproj.html>

<http://www.ce.utexas.edu/prof/maidment/giswr2010/docs/termpaperlibrary.htm>

**Paper Presentation:** Each student will be required to present a relevant research paper or topic at the start of one of the class sessions. The 15 minute presentation should be generally relevant (but not redundant) to the topic covered during that class session. Grading will be based on (1) relevancy and creativity of chosen paper/topic, (2) quality of presentation and visuals, (3) responses to questions and discussion. ***Any review materials should be sent out to the class by the Friday before the presentation. Please select a date for your paper presentation – preference will be given on a first come first served basis.***

**Late Work:** All work is expected to be completed on time.

**Disabilities:** Students with disabilities that require accommodation should contact the instructor so that the necessary arrangements can be made.

## Course Outline

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>
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- Jan 22                    [Introduction: Course Requirements, Basic Hydrologic Concepts \(Ch 1-2\)](#)  
                              Homework: ([Introduction to Hydrodesktop](#))  
                              [Water Cycle Movie](#)  
                              [Dingman Chapter 1-2](#)
- Jan 29                    [Climate, soils and vegetation \(Ch 3\)](#)  
                              15min Student Presentation:  
                              Homework: ([Climate/ENSO Analysis](#))  
                              [Dingman Chapter 3](#)
- Feb 5                     [Water in Soils \(Ch 6\)](#)  
                              15min Student Presentation:  
                              Homework: ([Radiation/Soil Moisture](#))
- Feb 12                   [Hydrometeorology](#)  
                              15min Student Presentation:  
                              Homework (None)
- Feb 19                   [Precipitation](#) (Ch 4)  
                              15min Student Presentation:  
                              Homework: ([Precipitation Data Analysis](#))
- Feb 26                   Team Project Proposal Presentations
- March 5                   [Snow and Snowmelt](#) (Ch 5) –  
                              15min Student Presentation  
                              Homework: [Hydrodesktop Snow](#)
- March 12**               **Spring Break (no class)**
- March 19                [Evapotranspiration](#) (Ch 7)  
                              15min Student Presentation:  
                              Homework: (Dingman, Q7-1,7-2,7-3)
- March 26                [Groundwater](#) (Ch 8)  
                              15min Student Presentation:  
                              Homework: (TBD)
- April 2                   [Streamflow](#) (Ch. 9)  
                              15min student Presentation:  
                              Homework: (TBD)
- April 9                   [Water in Oceans](#) – Guest Lecturer?, Dr. Barry Klinger, AOES  
                              15min Student Presentation:
- April 16                   [Water in Ice](#)

15min Student Presentation:

April 23                    [Water Resource Management](#) (Ch 10)  
15min Student Presentation:

April 30                    Team Project Presentations & Review for Final  
[Final Exam Guidance](#)

**May 14: 4:30-7:15pm Final Exam**

**NOTE:** This is a course outline and is subject to revision at the discretion of the instructor. You will be informed in class if changes are made.

### WEB RESOURCES:

On-Line Precipitation Data:

<http://www.eol.ucar.edu/projects/hydrometnet/virginia/>

<http://www.afws.net/search.htm>

<http://va.water.usgs.gov/>

[http://waterdata.usgs.gov/va/nwis/current/?type=precip&group\\_key=county\\_cd](http://waterdata.usgs.gov/va/nwis/current/?type=precip&group_key=county_cd)

<http://afws.erh.noaa.gov/afws/county.php?type=precip&state=51>

<http://www.erh.noaa.gov/marfc/Archive/Precip/>

<http://www.cocorahs.org/ViewData/>

[http://climate.geog.udel.edu/~climate/html\\_pages/download.html](http://climate.geog.udel.edu/~climate/html_pages/download.html)

<http://www.mlbs.virginia.edu/data.html>

Hydrologic tools and data:

<http://his.cuahsi.org/>

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** GMU is an Honor Code university; please see the University Catalog for a full description of the code and the honor committee process. The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously and violations are treated gravely. What does academic integrity mean in this course? Essentially this: when you are responsible for a task, you will perform that task. When you rely on someone else's work in an aspect of the performance of that task, you will give full credit in the proper, accepted form. Another aspect of academic integrity is the free play of ideas. Vigorous discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the firm expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions. When in doubt (of any kind) please ask for guidance and clarification.

**GMU EMAIL ACCOUNTS:** Students must activate their GMU email accounts to receive important University information, including messages related to this class.

**OFFICE OF DISABILITY SERVICES:** If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS. <http://ods.gmu.edu>

### OTHER USEFUL CAMPUS RESOURCES:

WRITING CENTER: A114 Robinson Hall; (703) 993-1200; <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>

UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES "Ask a Librarian" <http://library.gmu.edu/mudge/IM/IMRef.html>

COUNSELING AND PSYCH SERVICES (CAPS): (703) 993-2380; <http://caps.gmu.edu>

**UNIVERSITY POLICIES:** The University Catalog, <http://catalog.gmu.edu>, is the central resource for university policies affecting student, faculty, and staff conduct in university affairs.