Environmental Law

PLG-203-1210

Syllabus and Course Guide

The NPC Environmental Law course meets 15 times over the course of the 8-week term in the NPC interactive classroom. Each session consists of about 60 minutes of online lecture by the course instructor. After the lecture, students may ask questions and make comments on the material being studied. This class meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays and the first class is on Tuesday, October 2, 2011. Unless otherwise noted, all lectures begin at 9:00 P.M. Eastern Time.

All class sessions are recorded and may be viewed by students at any time.

To successfully complete the course, each student must satisfactorily complete:
- 5 written assignments
- 3 examinations

All assignments and exams must be submitted on or before the course deadline, referenced later in this syllabus.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course introduces the student to the study of environmental law, with emphasis on the role of the paralegal in this field. It surveys major environmental acts in the United States, such as the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, and other legislation. The course also presents an overview of the treatment of issues concerning the environment from a legal perspective.

INSTRUCTORS AND CONTACT INFO:

Instructor: Eric Martinez (emmnpc@yahoo.com)

Grader: Shannon Southard (sunshan1@aol.com)
COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Upon successful completion of this course, the student should be able to:

- Identify sources of environmental law and the legal foundations of environmental law
- Explain the litigation process, including the concept of standing
- Describe the history of the development of environmental law and the concept of environmental justice
- Apply management principles to environmental law
- Define the relationship of Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) to environmental law
- Explain the differences between the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other environmental laws
- Identify the nature of waters covered by the Clean Water Act (CWA)
- Define “pollutant” from a legal standpoint
- Explain the procedures for the CWA permit system
- Describe the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES)
- Define technology-based standards applicable under federal environmental law
- Describe and research the major provisions of the Oil Pollution Act (OPA) and the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA)
- Describe and research the technology standards applicable to the Clean Air Act (CAA)
- Describe the Prevention of Significant Deterioration (PSD) Permit Program and an Operating Permit Program
- Define, from a legal standpoint, terms such as solid waste, hazardous waste, and cradle-to-grave
- Describe the four characteristics of hazardous waste
- Define generators, transporters, and Treatment, Storage, and Disposal (TSD) facilities and explain the requirements imposed on them
- Describe important environmental law terms such as Superfund, hazardous substances, pollutants, and contaminants, release and remediation
- Describe of the National Contingency Plan (NCP)
- Describe the key elements of the Toxic Substances and Control Act (TSCA) inventory and chemical identity
- Explain the difference between new chemicals and existing chemicals and the importance of that distinction
- Define significant new uses
- Describe the history of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) and how it differs from other federal environmental acts
- List and Describe the substances covered by FIFRA
- Explain how the focus of the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA) differs from that of other environmental acts
- Describe the importance of the emergency planning component of EPCRA
- Explain what an Emergency Response Plan (ERP) is
- Describe the composition of SEPC and LEPC committees
- Define and Explain the Toxic Chemical Release Inventory Reporting requirements
• Describe the types of laws that are considered natural resources laws

TEXTBOOK AND READING ASSIGNMENTS:

The textbook for this course is:

Environmental Law
Authors: Kathryn L. Schroeder
Publisher: Delmar Publishers/ Cengage Learning
ISBN number 1401857140

It is expected that each student will obtain a copy of the textbook prior to the beginning of the course. The book may be obtained in any manner the student chooses to do so, including:

Direct from the Publisher:

Amazon.com:

Barnes and Noble:
http://search.barnesandnoble.com/Environmental-Law/Kathryn-L-Schroeder/e/9781401857141

Kindle Edition (can be used electronically on Kindles, Macs or PCs and many smart phones):
http://www.amazon.com/Environmental-West-Legal-Studies-ebook/dp/B005H6NX0Q/

Unless otherwise noted, all reading assignments refer to the above referenced textbook. Any additional materials assigned in this syllabus will be posted on the NPC site for reading or download. All statutes and regulations referenced in the text can be downloaded or viewed through Lexis. Directions on how to do this will be discussed in class and posted to the course message board.

All reading assignments should be completed prior to the corresponding lecture. Lecture slides and additional documents can be found on the “Documents and Slides” page on the NPC student website.
WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS:

At the outset of the course, five assignments will be posted “assignments and exams” page. The 5 assignments will cumulatively count for 40% of the student’s grade for the course. Information will be posted to the message board that indicates when the material for each assignment is discussed in class.

Assignments are to be submitted via the section of the student menu entitled “assignments and exams.”

It is highly recommended that assignment answers be composed in a word processing program and then passed into the NPC system rather than composing it in the assignment answer window. This is important because an inadvertent page refresh or login timeout could cause you to lose all unsaved work typed into the NPC assignment window.

Pdf documents and images may also be submitted as part of your assignment. For a short tutorial on creating and submitting pdf documents, please see:

http://tinyurl.com/assignmentpdf

(You may have to log into Google to view this document.)

Each submitted assignment will be graded on the following scale:
4 - Excellent
3 - Good
2 – Satisfactory
1 – Poor
0 – Not acceptable (must resubmit)
(Half-points may also be awarded in assignment grading.)

Please see the “Assignment Grading Rubric” (the next page of this syllabus) for more detailed information as to how assignments are graded and the key elements of assignments that instructors look for when grading assignments.

In addition to a grade, students will receive written feedback from the instructor on their assignments, where appropriate.

To the extent that such is possible, it is recommend that students complete the assignments as the course proceeds rather that waiting until after the course ends.
# Assignment Grading Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>4 (Excellent)</th>
<th>3 (Good)</th>
<th>2 (Satisfactory)</th>
<th>1 (Poor)</th>
<th>0 (no credit)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thoroughness</td>
<td>Answered all questions in the exercise completely and in the appropriate order.</td>
<td>Answered all questions in the exercise but not completely and/or not in the appropriate order.</td>
<td>Answered most of the questions in the exercise but not completely and/or not in the appropriate order.</td>
<td>Did not answer many of the questions in the exercise but did make some reasonable effort to do so.</td>
<td>Made little or no reasonable effort to answer the questions posed in the assignment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrated Understanding Of the Assignment and has come to an appropriate conclusion</td>
<td>Response demonstrates a thorough understanding of the exercise and the student has justified and enunciated an appropriate conclusion.</td>
<td>Response demonstrates an understanding of the exercise and comes to a conclusion.</td>
<td>Response demonstrates some understanding of the exercise. The conclusion that the student’s comes to may not be appropriately justified by the rest of the essay.</td>
<td>Response demonstrates some understanding of the exercise but shows a high level of confusion on the part of the student. The student’s conclusion, if any, is not supported by the rest of the essay.</td>
<td>Response demonstrates a very poor understanding of the subject matter presented by the assignment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documentation/ Legal research (note: For assignments, sources should be those obtained through legal research; for exam essays, legal principles learned in class or the courseware is sufficient.)</td>
<td>Student has cited at least two excellent sources and has applied them appropriately. Appropriate sources are documented and well cited and well integrated.</td>
<td>Student has cited one excellent source or two or more good sources but has missed at least one excellent source. Sources are integrated well in the assignment.</td>
<td>Student has cited appropriate sources but has missed the best available OR student has cited good sources but has done a poor job of integrating them.</td>
<td>Student has cited poor or inappropriate authorities or has failed to establish the relevance of the sources that he or she has cited.</td>
<td>Student has not cited any legal authorities or has cited authorities that are irrelevant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Essay is organized very well; the reader can clearly understand where the essay is going at all point and a cohesive easy-to-follow argument is made in the essay. Separate paragraphs are used for separate ideas.</td>
<td>Essay is well organized. The essay is coherent, though may not flow freely. Different components of the essay are broken up appropriately.</td>
<td>Essay shows some level of organization, but is difficult to follow. The essay is not as focused as it should be. Essay may go back and forth between points without using new paragraphs.</td>
<td>Essay is poorly organized and is very difficult to follow. The student did not appropriately separate thoughts and did not properly organize the essay.</td>
<td>Student’s essay is in chaos. There is no reasonable attempt to organize the essay coherently.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking and Analysis</td>
<td>Shows excellent critical thinking and analysis. The student was able to apply the cited law to the facts of the given case in a clear and convincing manner.</td>
<td>Shows good critical thinking and analysis. The student’s points are well argued and well supported.</td>
<td>Shows adequate critical thinking and analysis. The student’s points are supported by logic, but are not exceptionally convincing.</td>
<td>Shows minimal critical thinking or analysis. The student’s arguments are weak and unconvincing.</td>
<td>Shows no effort critical thinking or analysis. The student’s points make no sense.</td>
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EXAMINATIONS:

Examinations will be posted on the NPC website when indicated on the syllabus of the course. The examinations consist entirely of “short essay” questions. The 3 examinations will cumulatively count for 60% of the student’s course grade.

Examinations are non-cumulative; they cover only the material that has been covered since the previous examination. The instructor will provide specific information regarding the content of each examination as the examination time approaches.

All examinations are timed. A student may begin the examination any time after it is posted to the NPC website. Once begun, the examination must be completed within 4 hours.

Examinations will be graded on a conventional 0-100 scale. The number of points each question is worth is equal to 100 divided by the number of questions on the examination.

For each examination question, full credit will be awarded if the student:

1) Correctly identifies the legal issue(s) presented by the question
2) Applies the correct law to the legal issue(s) presented (note: full credit may also be awarded if the student’s answer comes to an “incorrect” conclusion if the student bases his or her analysis on correct law and supports his or her position in a convincing manner)
3) Presents his or her answer in a clear and understandable manner

The amount of partial credit to be awarded, if any, for an answer that is not complete and correct is at the discretion of the instructor. Instructors are instructed to award partial credit that is proportional to the level of knowledge and legal skill displayed by the student in answering the question.

The following factors are generally NOT taken into account in grading examinations:

Legal research: Although research is a key component of assignments, examinations are graded on the student’s knowledge of the legal concepts taught and do not require independent research.

Grammar and spelling (unless they impact the ability of the graded to understand the student’s answer); Although these are essential skills for a paralegal, examinations test legal knowledge and ability to apply the skills learned, not necessarily the ability to write professional legal memoranda (assignments test this skill). In addition, because exams are taken under time constraints, we would rather see the students spend their time spotting legal issues and applying applicable law than on proofreading answers for typos and grammar mistakes.

For more information on assignments and examinations, please see the NPC Student Handbook.
To the extent that such is possible, it is recommend that students complete the exams as the course proceeds rather that waiting until after the course ends.

WEEKLY INTERACTION REQUIREMENT

To ensure that all students are involved and participating in the course as the course moves forward, each student enrolled in this course must, at least once during each week, either:

1) Attend a live lecture
   OR
2) Submit at least one assignment
   OR
3) Take at least one examination
   OR
4) Answer a weekly “interaction” question or questions that will be posted on the “Assignments and Exams” page.

The weekly “interaction” question(s) will be simple and straightforward and will cover material covered in class that week. Answers to these questions should be short (typically 1-3 sentences) and to the point.

This student response (which is necessary only if the student does not attend a live class or take an exam or submit an assignment in the given week) will be graded on a pass/fail basis. The interaction questions will be posted no later than Monday of each week and must be answered on or before the following Monday.

The weekly interaction questions will be posted alongside the assignments. Students who do not attend a live class or take an exam or submit an assignment in the given week will be required to answer the questions presented. Students who did attend a live class or take an exam or submit an assignment in the given week may ignore the question.

Any student who does not fulfill this requirement during a given week will receive a reduction in his or her over-all grade of 2 percentage points from his or her over-all average. Conversely, any student who demonstrates excellent participation either through message board participation or through relevant in class discussion may receive an increase in his or her over-all grade, in the discretion of the instructor.

Moreover, due to federal regulations, students who are receiving federal financial aid will have their financial aid eligibility jeopardized if they do not complete a weekly interaction for fourteen (14) consecutive days.
COURSE GRADES

The following formula will be used to calculate final grades

Cumulative exam scores + (assignment points x 10) = raw score

Because exams are worth up to 100 points and exams up to 4 points each, the maximum raw score is 500. 10 raw points (2% of the raw point total) are deducted for each missed weekly interaction. Extra credit may be available for certain in class activities as may be announced by the instructor.

The following conversion chart is then applied based on the total raw points you have earned:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&gt;474</td>
<td>A+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>445-474</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>420-444</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>395-419</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>365-394</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>340-364</td>
<td>B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>315-339</td>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>285-314</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>260-284</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>230-259</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;230</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All examinations and assignments are due no later than December 23, 2012 at 11:59 PM EASTERN TIME; That’s EASTERN time. That means 8:59 PM Pacific time, 9:59 PM Mountain time, 10:59 PM Central time, etc.

PLEASE SEE THE END OF THIS SYLLABUS FOR A NOTE ON NPC DEADLINE EXTENSION POLICY.
Lecture and Reading Assignments Schedule

CLASS ONE
Tuesday, October 2, 2011   9:00 PM-Eastern Time

This class will provide an introduction to the most important concepts that will be discussed throughout the course. We will describe the sources of environmental law and explain the legal foundations of environmental law, including constitutional law, civil law (including common law), administrative law, tort law, and criminal law. We will also describe the litigation process, including the concept of standing.

Assigned Reading:

Chapter 1: Legal Foundations of Environmental Law

Pages 1-20

CLASS TWO
Thursday, October 4, 2011   9:00 PM-Eastern Time

This class will focus on several topics fundamental to an understanding of environmental law. We will outline the history of environmental law. We will explain how the important concept of “standing” is applied in environmental, as well as how and why local governments make environmental laws. We will then describe what environmental justice means and how risk management concepts apply to environmental law. Finally, we will describe the provisions of the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSH Act) and the Occupational & Safety Health Administration (OSHA).

Assigned Reading:

Chapter 2: History, Standing, Local Government Regulation, Risk Management, and Workplace Safety

Pages 21-55
CLASS THREE  
Tuesday, October 9, 2011  
9:00 PM-Eastern Time  

In this class we will turn our attention to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and its effect on environmental law and policy in the United States. We will describe the differences between NEPA and other environmental laws and explain NEPA’s nature as a procedural, rather than substantive, law. We will discuss the elements of NEPA, including the role of the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), and the applicability of NEPA to only certain types of federal actions (minor federal actions being excluded). We will then explain the definitions and functions of an environmental assessment (EA) and an environmental impact statement (EIS). Finally, we will describe what the “hard look” doctrine is and how it applies to environmental activities.

Assigned Reading:

Chapter 3: National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)  

Pages 57-79

CLASS FOUR  
Thursday, October 11, 2011  
9:00 PM-Eastern Time  

In this class we begin looking at the Clean Water Act (CWA). In addition to discussing the general goals of the CWA, we will describe which waters are covered by the Act and we will define pollutant. We will then explain the CWA permit system and describe what the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) requires. We will also explain technology-based standards and water quality standards.

Assigned Reading:

Chapter 4: Clean Water Act (CWA)  

Pages 81-100
In this class we will continue studying the CWA and the CWA permit system. We will explain toxicity testing and other types of discharges, such as storm water discharges, sea and ocean discharges, and nonpoint source discharges. We will describe the CWA requirements regarding preventing, reporting, and responding to spills. We will also describe CWA enforcement options. Finally, we will describe the major provisions of the Oil Pollution Act (OPA) and the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA).

Assigned Reading:

Chapter 4: Clean Water Act (CWA) (cont.)

Pages 100-115

Examination # 1 will be administered at this point.

CLASS SIX
Thursday, October 18, 2011 9:00 PM-Eastern Time

This class may have to be pre-recorded. Stay tuned to the course message board for more information as the date approaches.

Tonight we will begin looking at the Clean Air Act (CAA). We will examine the goals of the CAA, including protecting human health and the quality of the environment by requiring that the air meet specific standards concerning identified pollutants. Next, we will describe the technology standards and emission standards applicable to the CAA. We will also explain National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) and State Implementation Plans (SIPs). Finally, we will describe attainment and nonattainment areas.

Assigned Reading:

Chapter 5: Clean Air Act (CAA)

Pages 117-129
CLASS SEVEN  
Tuesday, October 23, 2011  
9:00 PM-Eastern Time  

In this class we will continue studying the CAA. First, we will define a new source. Then, we will explain new source performance standards (NSPS). We will describe preconstruction permitting and various permit programs, including a PSD permit program, a nonattainment area permit program, and an operating permit program. We will also describe the permit process, including permit issuance and changes to a permit. In addition, we will look at emissions trading, accidental releases, acid rain, allowances, and visibility standards. Finally, we will conclude our discussion of the CAA by exploring its various enforcement mechanisms.

Assigned Reading:

Chapter 5: Clean Air Act (CAA) (cont.)

Pages 129-151

CLASS EIGHT  
Thursday, October 25, 2011  
9:00 PM-Eastern Time  

Next we will turn our attention to the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA). We will describe the meaning of cradle-to-grave, and define the terms solid waste and hazardous waste. We will then look at the EPA lists used to characterize hazardous waste and we will describe the four characteristics of hazardous waste. We will also describe the toxicity characteristic leaching (TCL) procedure, the mixture rule, the derived-from rule, and the contained-in rule. We will explain the RCRA provisions that regulate certain recycling and reclamation activities.

Assigned Reading:

Chapter 6: Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA)

Pages 153-160
CLASS NINE  
Tuesday, October 30, 2011  
9:00 PM-Eastern Time

In this class we will continue our focus on the RCRA. We will describe waste management activities and the requirements that the RCRA imposes on generators of hazardous waste and transporters of hazardous waste. We will also describe Treatment, Storage, and Disposal (TSD) facility standards. Then, we will explain RCRA operating permits. Finally, we will look at state-regulated hazardous waste programs and the enforcement mechanisms available to the EPA under the RCRA.

Assigned Reading:

Chapter 6: Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) (cont.)

Pages 160-182

CLASS TEN  
Thursday, November 1, 2011  
9:00 PM-Eastern Time

In this class we will discuss the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA). We will describe the Superfund and define hazardous substances, pollutants, and contaminants. We will also describe a release and explain remediation. Then, we will describe the National Contingency Plan (NCP) and we will define the acronyms RI/RA, ARARs, and ROD. We will explain what Potentially Responsible Parties (PRPs) are and how they are identified. To conclude, we will explain how cost recovery actions are handled.

Assigned Reading:

Chapter 7: Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA)

Pages 183-196

Examination # 2 will be administered at this point.
CLASS ELEVEN  
Tuesday, November 6, 2011  
9:00 PM-Eastern Time

In this class we will continue our focus on CERCLA. We will discuss who is liable under CERCLA and we will explain the mechanisms used by the EPA to identify and assess liability related to sites subject to CERCLA actions. We will describe the various enforcement actions available to the EPA and we will describe the penalties for failure to comply with EPA enforcement orders. Then, we will look at the statute of limitations for various CERCLA proceedings and the division of responsibility between defendants for costs or damages. Finally, we will describe citizen suits and CERCLA’s applicability to federal facilities.

Assigned Reading:

Chapter 7: Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) (cont.)

Pages 196-227

CLASS TWELVE  
Thursday, November 8, 2011  
9:00 PM-Eastern Time

In this class, we will examine the provisions of the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA). We will begin by describing a premanufacture notice (PMN). We will describe PCBs and explain why they are dangerous. Then we will describe the TSCA Inventory and explain chemical identity. Next, we will explain the difference between new chemicals and existing chemicals, and the importance of that distinction. We will define the term significant new uses, and describe how the EPA orders testing requirements under the TSCA. We will conclude with a discussion of the Bhopal Disaster.

Assigned Reading:

Chapter 8: Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA)

Pages 229-259
Tonight we will discuss the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA). We will begin by relating the history of FIFRA and explaining how it differs from other federal environmental acts. We will then describe the substances covered by FIFRA. We will also describe the registration process, including (1) the four criteria assessed as part of the registration process, (2) unreasonable risk, (3) labeling, (4) cancellation, and (5) suspension. We will explain the purpose and effective reach of the FIFRA labeling requirement, and we will conclude our discussion by describing the mechanisms used to enforce FIFRA.

Assigned Reading:

Chapter 9: Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA)

Pages 261-282

In this class will look at The Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA). We will begin by explaining how the focus of EPCRA differs from that of other environmental acts. We will describe the importance of the emergency planning component of EPCRA and explain an Emergency Response Plan. We will also describe the composition of the State Emergency Response Commission (SERC) and the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC). We will then describe the release notification requirements and explain how to satisfy the “community-right-to-know” requirements of EPCRA. Next, we will describe MSDS and Form R forms, as well as Tier One and Tier Two reporting requirements. We will define the Toxic Chemical Release Inventory Reporting requirements, and to conclude, we will explain what the Pollution Prevention Act (PPA) covers.

Assigned Reading:

Chapter 10: Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA)

Pages 283-305
CLASS FIFTEEN  
Tuesday, November 20, 2011  
9:00 PM-Eastern Time

In our final class we will discuss hot topics in natural resources law. We will describe the types of laws that are considered natural resources law. We will then describe the Wilderness Act of 1964 and the Endangered Species Act. Next, the basic principles of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) and the acts created by its amendments will be explained. We will list the basic energy sources considered to be environmentally appropriate. We will conclude with a discussion on global warming, describing what it is and what is believed to cause the phenomenon.

Assignment Reading:

Chapter 11: Natural Resources Law: Hot Topics

Pages 307-333

Examination # 3 will be administered at this point.

All examinations and assignments are due no later than December 23, 2012 at 11:59 PM EASTERN TIME; That’s EASTERN time. That means 8:59 PM Pacific time, 9:59 PM Mountain time, 10:59 PM Central time, etc.

Please see the NPC EXTENSIONS POLICY below for details on extensions to complete your work.
NPC EXTENSIONS POLICY

1) Extensions that conform to the rules below may be requested from the “assignments and exams” page on the NPC student website.

2) No extensions are possible unless the student has first submitted at least one assignment or examination.

3) No extensions of more than thirty (30) days beyond the deadline are possible for any reason at all.

4) Requested extensions are granted automatically. It is not necessary to give any reason for the request. However, for each day of extension you request, you will be penalized 4 raw points (of 500 that determine your final grade - see page 8 of this syllabus). This accounts for 0.8% of your course grade, per day of extension. This is necessary to compensate for the advantage that students who take more time to do their work enjoy over those who complete their work on time. This also means that a short extension (e.g., a day or two) is unlikely to affect your grade, but a long extension (e.g., two weeks) is guaranteed to affect your grade.

5) The penalty referenced in Paragraph 4 may be waived by an instructor in extreme cases only. Extreme cases include circumstances beyond the control of the student that caused the student to be unable to complete work for a significant period of time. Foreseeable life circumstances such as being busy at work or at home, vacations, family occasions or power or internet outages lasting a few days, are foreseeable life circumstances. Extensions may be taken for these reasons (or, for that matter, for any reason at all), but the grade penalty will not be waived for anything short of a true, unforeseeable emergency.