Gifted LearningLinks Program
Course Syllabus

Instructor name: Francesca Gray
E-mail address: xxx@xxx.xxx

The Sky Is Falling Grades 3-5 – Fall 2011

Course Description:
Explore the environmental phenomena that rock our world. Earthquakes, typhoons, droughts and tsunamis are among the natural disasters explored in this class. Discover the scientific reasons for these physical phenomena and how humans monitor and track their occurrences. Future meteorologists and geologists are invited to come and learn about these awesome natural events.

Outcomes: Upon successful completion of this course:

Students will know:
- Some natural hazards associated with severe weather
- Which weather conditions can lead to these natural disasters
- Some ways to prepare citizens for the imminent danger severe weather brings

Students will understand:
- The processes acting on the Earth and their interaction with the earth systems

Students will be able to:
- Define a natural disaster
- Identify the earth events that cause changes in atmospheric conditions
- Analyze factors that affect climate, such as ocean currents, elevation, and location
- Analyze the impact of large-scale weather systems on the local weather
- Conduct research on specific severe weather patterns
- Describe the conditions that cause severe weather
- Describe the damage resulting from, and the social impact of severe weather

Resources and Materials:

a. **Websites**
   - http://www.pbs.org/wnet/savageearth/
   - http://www.theweatherchannelkids.com/
   - http://www.noaa.gov/
   - Other specific websites will be found on course site

b. **Materials**
   - Paper, pencils, drawing paper, crayons, markers, or colored pencils
   - Digital camera would be useful for uploading pictures of your projects
   - 12”-Ruler with millimeters and inches

- Other materials for lab exercises (listed on course site)

Gifted LearningLinks Course Requirement

- All Gifted LearningLinks (GLL) courses require a properly-maintained computer with broadband Internet access, a recent-version of the Mozilla Firefox web browser, and a stable email account (once a student is registered for a course, he/she should not change his/her email address unnecessarily, as difficulties in communication will greatly affect his/her success in the course).
- All GLL courses use the Blackboard Course Management System. Web browsers must be Java- and cookie-enabled.
- Most courses use Acrobat Connect for video conferencing. A headset with a microphone and a webcam are highly recommended.
- Students are expected to be familiar with standard computer operations (e.g., login, cut & paste, email attachments) and to acquaint themselves with the Blackboard Course Management System and Acrobat Connect software prior to the start of class. A sample Blackboard classroom, as well as tutorials featuring Blackboard and Acrobat Connect are available on our website (http://www.ctd.northwestern.edu/learning/tutorials/index.html).
- In order to be successful in an online course, the following skills are also needed: self-direction, independent time management, and the ability to meet deadlines.

CTD Statement on Third-Party Web Sites

Instructors are required to thoroughly review any third-party web sites they intend to use in their courses for inappropriate content. However, because web content continuously changes, CTD disclaims any responsibility for any of the content contained on third-party web sites used in course materials. If you become aware of anything that may be inappropriate, please notify CTD staff immediately.

Schedule: The Sky Is Falling

	Topic/Focus	Activities & Reading Assignments	What do I need to post to the Discussion Board?	What do I need to turn in?
Week 1	**Orientation to Online Learning** **Introduction to the Forces of Nature: What are they?**	• Complete introductions • Answer pre-activity question • Play "Identify the Natural Disasters" • Final Project Ideas	Introduce yourself on the Discussion Board Welcome Forum Post answers to pre-activity question	Results of "Identify the Natural Disasters"

	Topic/Focus	Activities & Reading Assignments	What do I need to post to the Discussion Board?	What do I need to turn in?
Week 2	**Weather & Geology Causes & Effects**	• Answer pre-activity question • Read Background Information & Vocabulary • View video & read about weather patterns & storm systems (website on course) • Complete activities specified on course site	Post answers to pre-activity questions.	Reflections on Activity. Course site activities. Ideas for final project.
Week 3	**Earthquakes Part 1**	• Answer pre-activity question • Read Background Information and vocabulary • View videos/website on earthquakes (follow instructions on course site). • Complete activities specified on course site	Post answers to pre-activity question. Questions or comments about video/activities.	Answer critical thinking question in your own words. Ideas for final project.
Week 4	**Earthquakes Part 2**	• Answer pre-activity question • Read background information/vocabulary • View videos/website • Complete earthquake lab activities specified on course site	Post answers to pre-activity question. Questions or comments about video/activities.	Earthquake activity sheet. Ideas for final project
Week 5	**Tsunamis/ Floods/ Landslides Part 1**	• Answer pre-activity questions • Read background information/vocabulary • View videos/website • Complete activities specified on course site • Begin working on final projects	Post answers to pre-activity questions. Questions or comments about video/activities.	Answer critical thinking question in your own words. Completed activity worksheet.

	Topic/Focus	Activities & Reading Assignments	What do I need to post to the Discussion Board?	What do I need to turn in?
Week 6	**Tsunamis/ Floods/ Landslides Part 2**	• Answer pre-activity questions • Read background information/vocabulary • View video/website • Follow directions on course site to complete activities • Continue working on final projects	Post answers to pre-activity questions. Questions or comments about website.	Answer critical thinking question in your own words. Completed activity worksheet.
Week 7	**Hurricanes, Cyclones, Typhoons Part 1**	• Answer pre-activity questions • Read background information/vocabulary • View the videos & websites • Complete activities specified on course site • Continue working on final projects	Post answers to pre-activity questions. Questions or comments about video/activities.	Answer critical thinking question in your own words. Completed activity worksheet.
Week 8	**Hurricanes, Cyclones, Typhoons Part 2**	• Answer pre-activity questions • Read background information/vocabulary • View the videos & websites • Complete activities specified on course site • Continue working on final projects	Post answers to pre-activity questions. Questions or comments about video/activities.	Answer critical thinking question in your own words. Completed activity worksheet.
Week 9	**Drought**	• Answer pre-activity questions • Read background information/vocabulary • View the videos & websites • Complete activities specified on course site	Post answers to pre-activity questions. Questions or comments on final projects.	Completed final projects

Final Project Ideas:

- Severe Weather Action Plan
- Research a severe weather pattern of interest

- Wild Weather Adventure
- Feel free to suggest an idea on a specific course topic of interest

More details on final project ideas will be on the course site.

Student Evaluation and Grading Policies for Enrichment Courses:
Since this is an enrichment class, a narrative evaluation will be written at the conclusion of the course. Students will be evaluated on the quality of their work, participation in activities and discussions, and performance on labs and projects.
Students will also be evaluated on timely submission of assignments and ability to work and learn with some independence.

Instructor Biography:
Mrs. Gray loves science and the process of inquiry. Her goal is to reach the "scientist" inside every child by inspiring the excitement of discovery. She taught five years in the Bellwood School District; spending four years teaching the district's Academy Class (gifted/talented). Previously, she taught ten years at James Memorial Christian Academy—a private school in Maywood, Illinois. Mrs. Gray began working for Northwestern's Center for Talent Development Saturday Enrichment Program in the spring of 2010 as a teacher for the course, *The Wow of Chemistry*. She has been teaching for Gifted LearningLinks since the fall of 2010. Mrs. Gray holds a BA in Communications (Graphic Design) from Simmons College in Boston, Massachusetts and a MAT in Elementary Education from Chicago State University.

Contact Information:
My email address: xxx@xxx.xxx