

University of Colorado Denver
 Department of Civil Engineering and Construction
CVEN-5333 Surface Water Hydrology

Spring 2026

Class: Tuesday/Thursday 5:00-6:15 pm
 Location: North Classroom 1515
 Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday 3:30-4:45 pm,
and also by appointment

Instructor: David C. Mays, P.E., Ph.D.
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<http://engineering.ucdenver.edu/dmays/5333>

Catalog Description: Fundamentals of hydrology emphasizing surface water processes. Topics include the hydrologic cycle, frequency analysis, drought management, flood routing, rainfall-runoff relationships (rational method, unit hydrograph, and hydrologic software) and hydrologic design.
Prerequisites: Graduate standing in engineering or instructor consent. Course requires Microsoft Excel.

Course Objectives: At the end of the semester, you should be able to:

1. Explain the hydrologic cycle and state the equations used to describe each sub-process.
2. Predict flood magnitudes from data, probability distributions, and recurrence intervals.
3. Choose the best modeling approach: rational method, unit hydrograph, or hydrologic software.
4. State the basic concerns and major regulations related to water quality.
5. Use hydrologic principles to design drainage, detention, and retention systems.

Required Text: Bedient, P.B., Huber, W.C., and Vieux, B.E. (2019), *Hydrology and Floodplain Analysis*, 6th edition, ISBN 9780134751979. For the exams, you need a bound hard copy from the publisher.

Week	Dates	Topic	Reading Assignment*
1	1/20, 1/22	Hydrologic Cycle	1.1-1.2, 1.4, 2.1, 13.2, G-2009
2	1/27, 1/29	Precipitation and Infiltration	1.3, 2.6-2.7
3	2/3, 2/5	Groundwater and Streamflow	1.6, 1.8, 2.8, 8.1-8.3, 8.8
4	2/10, 2/12	Snow Hydrology	2.9, P-1989, D/P/B/B/U-2013
5	2/17, 2/19	Engineering Probability	3.1-3.7, C/M/M-1988a, DR-2011
6	2/24, 2/26	Drought Management (EXAM #1)	3.8, M-2005
7	3/3, 3/5	Reservoirs and Routing	4.1-4.3, 4.6 (266-273), 4.7 (278-280)
8	3/10, 3/12	Rational Method	1.5, 6.2 (352-355), 6.4 (365-373)
9	3/17, 3/19	Unit Hydrograph	1.7, 2.2, F-2002
10	3/31, 4/2	Synthetic Unit Hydrograph	2.3-2.5
11	4/7, 4/9	HEC-HMS (Hydrologic Software)	5.1-5.6
12	4/14, 4/16	Contaminant Hydrology (EXAM #2)	N/AC-2001
13	4/21, 4/23	Hydrologic Design	6.1, 6.3, 9.1-9.4, C/M/M-1988b
14	4/28, 4/30	CUHP (Hydrologic Software)	M-2024
15	5/5, 5/7	Floodplain Management	9.5, 12.1-12.6

* Readings C/M/M-1988, DR-2011, N/AC-2001, F-2002, M-2005, M-2024, P-1989, and G-2009 are on the course website.

Midterms: Tuesday 2/24/2026 (weeks 1-4), Tuesday 4/14/2026 (weeks 1-9).
Final Exam: To be scheduled during Exam Week (Monday 5/11/2026 to Friday 5/15/2026).
Grades: 10% homework, 20% 1st midterm, 30% 2nd midterm, 40% final exam.

Attendance

Education research has established a strong cause-and-effect relationship between attendance and learning. Accordingly, punctual attendance is required. While your letter grade is based entirely on your demonstrated ability, as stated above, students with more than five absences will receive a grade of incomplete (I) that may prevent registration for subsequent courses. *If you must miss a class, can you make it up?* Partially, as follows: (1) Borrow a classmate's notes. (2) Copy them by hand with your name in ink on each page. (3) Discuss the notes with your classmate, the teaching assistant (TA), or the instructor. (4) Arrange a meeting with the TA or the instructor, show your handwritten notes, and summarize your discussion for ½ attendance point. *If you are facing unusual circumstances, may you request special arrangements with the instructor?* Yes.

Homework

Homework will be assigned in class each Monday, or through Assignments and Answers on the course website, and will be due at the beginning of class on Wednesday of the following week. Engineering paper is encouraged. To clarify the presentation, accelerate the grading, and develop attention to detail, homework must comply with the following specifications:

1. Assignments must be submitted in hard copy, during class or office hours, professionally presented (no wrinkles or ragged edges), and stapled in the upper-left corner.
2. At the top of *each* page, print your name, class number, homework number, due date, and page of total (1 of 5, 2 of 5, etc.). If late, you must write the date submitted on the first page.
3. Draw a picture for *each* problem. Use a straight edge for straight lines.
4. Briefly restate *each* problem in your own words. Do not copy the problem statement verbatim.
5. State what you are going to calculate under the heading FIND.
6. State any relevant assumptions, including assumed precision of input numbers.
7. Write the units for all numbers, not just final results:
 - a. Use the same units (metric or US) as the problem.
 - b. Write 5 ft rather than 5' and 8 in rather than 8".
 - c. Units like psi are fine for results, but otherwise write lb/in² to show the units cancel.
8. Write each result, with the correct number of significant digits, on its own line.

Homework will be checked for compliance specifications 1-8. If more than one specification is overlooked, homework will be returned and considered missing until resubmitted. Homework grades are A (100), B (85), C (75), D (65), F (50), and missing (50). For example, the average of B = 85 and C = 75 is 80%, and the average of C = 75 and D = 65 is 70%. There is a five-point bonus for A homework and a five-point penalty for F or missing homework.

Grading

- Life happens, so late homework is accepted—no questions asked—with a penalty of one letter grade per class.
- No credit for missing assignments or late assignments after solutions have been posted, which usually happens on the Wednesday evening before the midterm exam or final exam.
- No credit for missed exams, except (a) when special arrangements have been made ahead of time, or (b) with documentation of an emergency.
- Unclaimed exams, assignments, and reports will be destroyed on or after 6/1/2026.

- Final grades, rounded to two decimal places, are $F < 60\%$, $60\% \leq D < 70\%$, $70\% \leq C < 80\%$, $80\% \leq B < 90\%$, and $A \geq 90\%$. Final grades will not include plus or minus designations.

Communication

The business of civil engineering happens by email, so I expect you to check your CU Denver email account each and every business day. Never hesitate to email me. It's easy! See the step-by-step guide below.¹

Academic Integrity

Studying with others is useful and encouraged, but you must perform and present your own work, so copied solutions—from artificial intelligence (such as ChatGPT), from an online resource, from a tutor, from other students, or from any other source—violate the expectation for academic integrity stated in the *2025-2026 Academic Catalog*² and our Student Honor Code, attached below. To avoid plagiarism, cite your sources using American Society of Civil Engineers format.³ Midterm and final exams will follow an Exam Policy to be distributed separately.

Mental Health

Is your mental health impacted by anxiety, depression, substance use, or loneliness? If so, you are not alone, and there is help available at CU Denver Medical and Mental Health Resources.⁴ You can visit their website below, email them at lynxwellness@ucdenver.edu, call them at 303-315-WELL (9355), or visit them in the Lola and Rob Salazar Student Wellness Center (1355 12th Street).

General

- We honor and acknowledge that we are in the traditional territories and ancestral homelands of the Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Ute nations.
- The University of Colorado Denver is committed to an educational environment that is inclusive and embodies the equality of opportunity. We are dedicated to the full participation of students with disabilities in the university environment. If you have a learning disability or need special accommodation, please register with Disability Resources and Services (DRS),⁵ who will evaluate your situation on a case-by-case basis. I will provide accommodation per your letter from DRS.
- Snow Closure Hotline 877-556-3637. Campus closed? Class on Zoom with video uploaded.
- Students are responsible for all material presented in class, readings, homework, and email.
- Syllabus subject to revision.

This semester's Academic Calendar and our Student Honor Code are attached below. If you have not done so already, please detach, sign, and return it to me.

Welcome to the class!

¹ <https://www.ucdenver.edu/student/stories/student-stories/how-to-write-an-email-to-a-professor>

² <http://catalog.ucdenver.edu/>

³ <https://doi.org/10.1061/9780784478998.ch17>

⁴ <https://www.ucdenver.edu/wellness/services/basic-needs/medical-and-mental-health-resources>

⁵ <https://www.ucdenver.edu/offices/disability-resources-and-services>

[UCD Access \(Student Portal\)](#)[Registrar Forms](#)[Registration Information](#)

All deadlines are 11:59 PM MT unless otherwise indicated.

Main Session	Date	Important Notes
First day to apply for Spring Graduation via UCDAccess.	November 3, 2025	
Priority Registration begins for Spring Semester via UCDAccess.	Nov. 3, 2025 - Nov. 18, 2025	Check UCDAccess for your specific registration date and time assignment. For best course selection, register as soon as possible after your registration time assignment.
Open enrollment begins.	November 19, 2025	
Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday	January 19, 2026	No classes. Campus closed.
First day of Spring semester classes.	January 20, 2026	
Last day to waitlist classes using UCDAccess.	January 25, 2026	
Last day to drop a class without a \$100 drop charge.	January 26, 2026	All waitlists will be eliminated today.
First day instructor approval may be required to add some classes.	January 26, 2026	If unable to enroll in UCDAccess because "Instructor Consent is Required", obtain instructor approval on a Schedule Adjustment Form.
Census Day	February 4, 2026	Deadline time is 5:00 PM MT.
Last Day to add classes in UCDAccess.	February 4, 2026	Deadline time is 5:00 PM MT.
Last day to add classes with instructor consent on the Schedule Adjustment form.	February 4, 2026	If unable to enroll in UCDAccess because "Instructor Consent is Required", obtain instructor approval on a Schedule Adjustment Form. Deadline time is 5:00 PM MT.
Last day to drop classes with a financial adjustment.	February 4, 2026	Deadline time is 5:00 PM MT.
Classes dropped after this date will appear on your transcript with a grade of "W".	February 4, 2026	Deadline time is 5:00 PM MT.
Full tuition will be charged for additional classes added after this date.	February 4, 2026	College Opportunity Fund hours will not be deducted from eligible student's lifetime hours. Deadline time is 5:00 PM MT.
Last day to apply for Spring graduation via UCDAccess.	February 4, 2026	Deadline time is 5:00 PM MT. After this date, contact your advisor.
Last day to request to Opt Out of Grade Forgiveness.	February 4, 2026	Refer to the Grade Forgiveness Opt Out form for restrictions. Deadline time is 5:00 PM MT.

Priority Registration begins for Summer Semester via UCDAccess.	March 2, 2026 - March 17, 2026	Check UCDAccess for your specific registration date and time assignment. For best course selection, register as soon as possible after your registration time assignment.
Open enrollment begins for Summer Semester.	March 18, 2026	
Spring Break	March 23, 2026 - March 29, 2026	No classes. Campus open.
Priority Registration begins for Fall Semester via UCDAccess.	April 1, 2026 - April 16, 2026	Check UCDAccess for your specific registration date and time assignment. For best course selection, register as soon as possible after your registration time assignment.
Last day to withdraw from a class via UCDAccess.	April 5, 2026	
Last day to request No Credit or Pass/Fail grade for a class.	April 5, 2026	Graduate degree students can exercise the P+/P/F option for undergraduate courses only. Graduate students should consult their school or college regarding the P+/P/F option. A grade of P+/P/S will not be acceptable for graduate credit to satisfy any graduate education requirement.
First day to withdraw from a class with a Late Withdrawal Petition form.	April 6, 2026	
Open enrollment begins for Fall Semester.	April 17, 2026	
Last day to withdraw from a class with a Late Withdrawal Petition form.	May 6, 2026	
Finals week.	May 11, 2026 - May 16, 2026	
End of semester - Commencement.	May 16, 2026	
Final grades available on UCDAccess and transcripts (tentative).	May 21, 2026	
Spring degrees posted on UCDAccess and transcripts (tentative).	June 16, 2026	This is the date your degree will be recorded on your transcript; diplomas begin mailing on July 5th.

Student Honor Code

(Revised 12/1/2022)

The Honor Code outlined below is the College of Engineering, Design and Computing statement on academic integrity. The Code articulates the College's expectations of its students and faculty in establishing and maintaining the highest standards in academic work.

Honor Code Text

The Honor Code of the College of Engineering, Design and Computing is a statement of its students, individually and collectively:

- Students will not give or receive aid during examinations.
- Students will not use any prohibited electronic devices during examinations.
- Students will not give or receive unpermitted aid in class work, in the preparation of reports, or in any other work that is to be used by the instructor as the basis of grading.
- Students will uphold the spirit and letter of the Honor Code and they will take an active role to ensure that others uphold the Honor Code and if they observe violations of the Honor Code they must report violations to their Department Chair.
- The Faculty of the College will do its part to ensure its confidence in the honor of its students. Faculty must ensure that precautions are in place to prevent the forms of dishonesty mentioned above. Faculty will also avoid, as far as practical, academic procedures that create temptations to violate the Honor Code. Faculty alone has the right and obligation to set academic requirements. However, the students and faculty will work together to establish optimal conditions for honorable academic work.

Violations of the Honor Code

Examples of conduct that will be regarded as being in violation of the Honor Code include:

- Copying from another's examination paper or allowing another to copy from one's own paper.
- Plagiarism in any shape or form. Plagiarism is defined as the use, without giving reasonable and appropriate credit to or acknowledging the author or source, of another person's original work, whether such work is made up of code, formulas, ideas, language, research, strategies, writing or other form(s).
- Giving or receiving unpermitted aid either in person or via electronic devices.
- Engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic assignments or examinations.
- Representing as one's own work the work of another.

Penalties for Violating the Honor Code

Most student disciplinary cases have involved Honor Code violations. Of these, most cases arise when a student submits another's work as his or her own, gives or receives unpermitted aid, or engages in unauthorized collaboration. If a violation occurs during a quiz or on a homework assignment, the student will receive a zero for that quiz or assignment. If a violation occurs on an examination or a final project that compromises at least 15% of the final grade, the student will receive a failing grade for the course. The standard penalty for a first offense may include suspension from the College of Engineering, Design and Computing for a severe infraction of the Honor Code. The penalty for a second violation will be expulsion from the College of Engineering, Design and Computing. An instructor who notices a violation should report it to the Department Chair. The Department Chair makes a confirming determination if a violation has occurred and writes a formal letter to the student describing the penalty that will be imposed.

It is the responsibility of the student to seek clarification from the instructor when in doubt about these guidelines.

By signing below, I affirm that I have read and understood the Student Honor code and will abide by its provisions.

Student Name (*printed*): _____

Student ID: _____

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____