

Climate Carbon and Soil (AESC30230) 2020–2021 Essay Assignment

For this Essay Assignment, **discuss and critique** the following statement:

Soil carbon sequestration is the solution to the global anthropogenic climate change crisis

In your essay, you may agree or disagree with this statement, or you may take a view in between these two positions.

The purpose of this assignment is for you to learn skills and capacities in *critical thinking* and *forming an informed opinion*, *searching the scientific literature* and *assimilating knowledge* and *scientific writing*, and a *deeper knowledge of this important topic*.

This assignment is worth **60%** of the final module grade.

This essay should be no more than 1,500 words long. Think carefully about the statement being discussed. Make use of the published scientific literature. Think critically about the evidence presented in the literature. In this light, two useful questions you might consider are;

1. Does the evidence presented in a paper support the conclusions reached?
Are there any weaknesses or gaps?
2. On the balance of the evidence that you have found in the literature, what is your opinion on the statement being discussed and why?

It is not intended that the essay should simply reflect what is presented in the lectures in this module. Rather, it is intended that you go beyond that material to gain a deeper understanding from the published scientific literature and form an opinion on the statement being discussed.

Please do read the Grading Rubric for this assignment carefully- it will be used to assess this assignment and should help you in preparing your submission by letting you know what the grader will be looking for and what is expected of you.

See the following link for a useful guide to good scientific writing:

<https://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/ld/all-resources/writing/writing-resources/science>

This essay should include **at least 5 references to peer-reviewed scientific journal articles**. See the requirements below. The reference formatting to be used is that of the American Psychological Association (APA); a common format for scientific publications. For more information see: <https://www.mendeley.com/guides/apa-citation-guide>

Submission

Submission will be online on Brightspace.

Submission Deadline: 17:00 Tuesday 16 March.

Assessment Breakdown

Knowledge and Understanding	40%
Critical Thinking	20%
Reading and Referencing	20%
Structure	10%
Use of Language	10%

Requirements

- 1) Word limit: excludes references and is absolute.
- 2) Structure: use themed paragraphs and sections with appropriate headings to provide a clear, logical structure to the essay.
- 3) Referencing: a bibliography/reference list must be included at the end of the document. Use the American Psychological Association (APA) format for referencing publications in-text and in the reference list. For more information see: <https://www.mendeley.com/guides/apa-citation-guide>
- 4) The assignment should be referenced with citations derived mainly from primary sources: peer-reviewed scientific journal articles, books, etc. References to Website pages, although useful, are ephemeral and potentially suspect, and should be validated wherever possible, and always cited with the date accessed.
- 5) **Please note:** your essay **must be written in your own words**. It is legitimate to include ideas, paraphrased statements or identifiable quotes from other sources as long as the original work is appropriately acknowledged and a reference provided. Having said that, full quotes should be used sparingly and reserved for passages of great import! It will be assumed that all other statements and analyses are your original work. **Do not cut and paste** text from any source. **This is a form of plagiarism**. Your essay will be automatically checked by the software Urkund to check for similarity to other essays submitted and to existing texts in published works. I would encourage you all to read the UCD Student Guide on plagiarism and always bear it in mind for all of you work:
https://www.ucd.ie/secca/t4media/plagiarism_studentguide.pdf
- 6) All work must carry a signed and dated disclaimer as to its originality, such as:
"I certify that this essay is entirely my own work and that all material derived from other sources is acknowledged as such with textual citations or presented in quotation marks."
- 7) The assignment should be submitted online on Brightspace.