1. Mid-term course evaluation. Please Comment on the following.

(a) Assignments: difficulty, appropriateness, whether or not they are clearly defined.
(b) Lectures: pace, content, presentation (is writing legible, etc.).
(c) Mid-term exam: difficulty, length, appropriateness of topics.
(d) Professor: availability, is he approachable, authoritative on subject material.
(e) Webpage: organization, information, functionality of links.
(f) MATLAB: introduction, usefulness, support from instructor.
(g) What does the professor do particularly well?
(h) In what area or areas does the professor need to improve?

If there is anything else you would like to comment on, please do. I will use this information to improve the second half of the course. Please send this information in an email (either in the body of the email, or as a .txt, .rtf, or .doc attachment) to Melissa Stolt, mstolt@iastate.edu. She will note your submission and compile all the responses in one document. I will only see the final compilation, so that your answers will be anonymous. Full credit given as long as each question is answered.

2. Read “NOAA Budget Would Boost Satellite Funding but Cut Some Key Areas” from the March 6, 2012, issue of the American Geophysical Union’s Eos, available on the course website. The main theme of the article may best be summarized by the following quote from NOAA director Jane Lubchenco.

“The challenge for NOAA this year was simply that in light of the expense of the satellite programs and the cap that we had to live within, we couldn’t afford to do many, many important things...”
(a) Do you agree that satellite observations are more important than the other NOAA services that are described in the article? Note the cuts to the National Weather Service (as mentioned by Rachel and Tim in class) and to education. Why or why not?

(b) Although I don’t know specifically what NOAA’s Climate Database Modernization Program is about, it sounds like an effort to put our best knowledge of climate into one single place that can be easily accessed. Perhaps an Iowa Environmental Mesonet for the entire country (or perhaps world). Do you think this is an important task? Why or why not?

(c) Both NOAA and NASA are involved with Earth remote sensing satellites. It is hard for me at least to explain how the responsibilities are divided, other than to say NOAA works with “operational” satellites (well-understood and validated observations) and NASA develops new remote sensing capabilities. Should the government instead have a single agency devoted to satellite observations? Why or why not?

Please submit this electronically via email to me (bkh@iastate.edu) either in the body of the email or as a .txt, .rtf, or .doc attachment.