

**Math 5421**  
**An Introduction to**  
**Mathematical Climate Models**

Spring 2025  
 1:25 – 3:20 Tuesdays and Thursdays  
 Blegen Hall 155

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course website  
<https://www-users.cse.umn.edu/~mcgehee/Course/Math5421/>


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**Math 5421**  
**Energy Balance**

**Budyko's Equation**

M. I. Budyko, "The effect of solar radiation variations on the climate of the Earth," *Tellus XXI*, 611-619, 1969.



$$R \frac{\partial T}{\partial t} = Qs(y)(1-\alpha) - (A+BT) + C(\bar{T} - T)$$

surface temperature  
↑  
R

sin(latitude)  
↑  
Qs(y)

↑  
1-α

↑  
A+BT

↑  
C

↑  
T̄ - T

$\bar{T} = \int_0^1 T(y) dy$

heat capacity      insolation      albedo      OLR      heat transport

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**Energy Balance**

**Budyko's Equation**

$$R \frac{\partial T}{\partial t}(y,t) = Qs(y)(1-\alpha) - (A+BT(y,t)) + C(\bar{T}(t) - T(y,t))$$

Equilibrium solution: temperature is a function of latitude.  
 $T = T^*(y)$

$$Qs(y)(1-\alpha) - (A+BT^*(y)) + C(\bar{T}^* - T^*(y)) = 0,$$

**Equilibrium solution**

$$T^*(y) = \frac{Qs(y)(1-\alpha) - A + C\bar{T}^*}{B+C}, \text{ where } \bar{T}^* = \frac{Q(1-\alpha) - A}{B}$$

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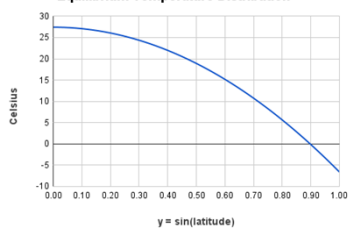
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**Energy Balance**

**Budyko's Equilibrium**

$$T^*(y) = \frac{Qs(y)(1-\alpha) - A + C\bar{T}^*}{B+C}, \text{ where } \bar{T}^* = \frac{Q(1-\alpha) - A}{B}$$

**Equilibrium Temperature Distribution**

$Q = 342$   
 $A = 202$   
 $B = 1.9$   
 $C = 3.04$   
 $\alpha = 0.32$



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**Budyko's Equation**

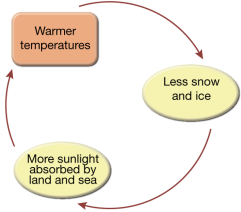
$$R \frac{\partial T}{\partial t} = Qs(y)(1-\alpha) - (A+BT) + C(\bar{T} - T)$$

There is still something missing.  
 What role is played by the ice?

**Ice-albedo Feedback**

temperature warms  
 ice melts  
 albedo decreases  
 more sunlight absorbed  
 temperature warms  
 REPEAT

**Why would it stop?**



<http://www.i-fink.com/melting-polar-ice/>

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**Budyko's Equation**


$$R \frac{\partial T}{\partial t} = Qs(y)(1-\alpha) - (A+BT) + C(\bar{T} - T)$$

There is still something missing.  
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**Ice-albedo Feedback**

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 ice melts  
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 more sunlight absorbed  
 temperature warms  
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**Why would it stop?**



M. I. Budyko, "The effect of solar radiation variations on the climate of the Earth," *Tellus XXI*, 611-619, 1969.

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**Energy Balance**

**Budyko's Equation**

$$R \frac{\partial T}{\partial t} = Qs(y)(1-\alpha) - (A+BT) + C(\bar{T} - T)$$

There is still something missing. Where is the ice?

**Ice-albedo Feedback**

albedo of ice: 0.62  
albedo of land and water: 0.32

If the boundary between ice and no ice is at  $y = \eta$ , then

$$\alpha = \alpha(y, \eta) = \begin{cases} \alpha_1 = 0.32, & y < \eta \\ \alpha_2 = 0.62, & y > \eta \end{cases}$$

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**Budyko's Equation**

$$R \frac{\partial T}{\partial t} = Qs(y)(1-\alpha) - (A+BT) + C(\bar{T} - T)$$

There is still something missing. Where is the ice?

**Ice-albedo Feedback**

albedo of ice: 0.62  
albedo of land and water: 0.32

**Assumption:** there is a single boundary between ice and no ice occurring at  $y = \eta$ .

$$\alpha = \alpha(y, \eta) = \begin{cases} \alpha_1 = 0.32, & y < \eta \\ \alpha_2 = 0.62, & y > \eta \end{cases}$$

$$R \frac{\partial T}{\partial t} = Qs(y)(1-\alpha(y, \eta)) - (A+BT) + C(\bar{T} - T)$$

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**Energy Balance**

**Budyko's Equation**

$$R \frac{\partial T}{\partial t}(y, t) = Qs(y)(1-\alpha(y, \eta)) - (A+BT(y, t)) + C(\bar{T}(t) - T(y, t))$$

**Equilibrium:**

$$Qs(y)(1-\alpha(y, \eta)) - (A+BT^*(y)) + C(\bar{T}^* - T^*(y)) = 0$$

*This looks worse than before!*

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**Energy Balance**

**Budyko's Equation**

$$R \frac{\partial T}{\partial t}(y, t) = Qs(y)(1-\alpha(y, \eta)) - (A+BT(y, t)) + C(\bar{T}(t) - T(y, t))$$

**Equilibrium:**

$$Qs(y)(1-\alpha(y, \eta)) - (A+BT^*(y)) + C(\bar{T}^* - T^*(y)) = 0$$

*This looks worse than before!*

Fortunately, the same technique works:  
**Assume we know the global mean temperature.**

$$Qs(y)(1-\alpha(y, \eta)) - A + C\bar{T}^* - (BT^*(y)) + C(-T^*(y)) = 0,$$

$$(B+C)T^*(y) = Qs(y)(1-\alpha(y, \eta)) - A + C\bar{T}^*$$

Solve for  $T^*(y)$ ,  
treating  $\bar{T}^*$  as constant.

$$T^*(y) = \frac{Qs(y)(1-\alpha(y, \eta)) - A + C\bar{T}^*}{B+C}$$

*Now we can compute the global mean temperature!*

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**Energy Balance**

**Budyko's Equilibrium**

$$T^*(y) = \frac{Qs(y)(1-\alpha(y, \eta)) - A + C\bar{T}^*}{B+C}$$

$$(B+C)T^*(y) = Qs(y)(1-\alpha(y, \eta)) - A + C\bar{T}^*$$

**Integrate:**

$$\int_0^1 (B+C)T^*(y) dy = \int_0^1 (Qs(y)(1-\alpha(y, \eta)) - A + C\bar{T}^*) dy$$

$$(B+C) \int_0^1 T^*(y) dy = Q \left( \int_0^1 s(y) dy - \int_0^1 \alpha(y, \eta) s(y) dy \right) - A \int_0^1 dy + C\bar{T}^* \int_0^1 dy$$

$$(B+C)\bar{T}^* = Q(1-\bar{\alpha}(\eta)) - A + C\bar{T}^*$$

$$\bar{T}^* = \frac{Q(1-\bar{\alpha}(\eta)) - A}{B}$$

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**Energy Balance**

**Budyko's Equilibrium**

$$T^*(y) = \frac{Qs(y)(1-\alpha(y, \eta)) - A + C\bar{T}^*}{B+C}$$

$$(B+C)T^*(y) = Qs(y)(1-\alpha(y, \eta)) - A + C\bar{T}^*$$

**Integrate:**

$$\int_0^1 (B+C)T^*(y) dy = \int_0^1 (Qs(y)(1-\alpha(y, \eta)) - A + C\bar{T}^*) dy$$

$$(B+C) \int_0^1 T^*(y) dy = Q \left( \int_0^1 s(y) dy - \int_0^1 \alpha(y, \eta) s(y) dy \right) - A \int_0^1 dy + C\bar{T}^* \int_0^1 dy$$

$$(B+C)\bar{T}^* = Q(1-\bar{\alpha}(\eta)) - A + C\bar{T}^*$$

*We computed the constant!*  $\bar{T}^* = \frac{Q(1-\bar{\alpha}(\eta)) - A}{B}$  *Note the dependence on the ice line  $\eta$ .*

$$T^*(y, \eta) = \frac{Qs(y)(1-\alpha(y, \eta)) - A + C\bar{T}^*}{B+C}, \text{ where } \bar{T}^*(\eta) = \frac{Q(1-\bar{\alpha}(\eta)) - A}{B}$$

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**Energy Balance**

**Budyko's Equilibrium**

$$T^*(y, \eta) = \frac{Qs(y)(1 - \bar{\alpha}(\eta)) - A + C\bar{T}^*}{B + C}, \text{ where } \bar{T}^*(\eta) = \frac{Q(1 - \bar{\alpha}(\eta)) - A}{B}$$

Can we compute the global albedo?

recall:  $\alpha(y, \eta) = \begin{cases} \alpha_1 = 0.32, & y < \eta \\ \alpha_2 = 0.62, & y > \eta \end{cases}$

global albedo  $\bar{\alpha}(\eta) = \int_0^1 \alpha(y, \eta) s(y) dy = \int_0^\eta \alpha_1 s(y) dy + \int_\eta^1 \alpha_2 s(y) dy$   
 $= \alpha_1 S(\eta) + \alpha_2 (1 - S(\eta))$

where  $S(\eta) = \int_0^\eta s(y) dy = \int_0^\eta (1 - 0.241(3y^2 - 1)) dy = \eta - 0.241(\eta^3 - \eta)$   
 Chylek & Coakley

**Time to summarize.**

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**Budyko's Equation**

$$R \frac{\partial T}{\partial t}(y, t) = Qs(y)(1 - \alpha(y, \eta)) - (A + BT(y, t)) + C(\bar{T}(t) - T(y, t))$$

**Equilibrium temperature distribution:**

$$T^*(y, \eta) = \frac{Qs(y)(1 - \alpha(y, \eta)) - A + C\bar{T}^*(\eta)}{B + C}$$

$$\bar{T}^*(\eta) = \frac{Q(1 - \bar{\alpha}(\eta)) - A}{B}$$

$$\bar{\alpha}(\eta) = \alpha_1 S(\eta) + \alpha_2 (1 - S(\eta))$$

$$s(y) = 1 - 0.241(3y^2 - 1)$$

$$S(\eta) = \eta - 0.241(\eta^3 - \eta)$$

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**Budyko's Equilibrium**

For each fixed  $\eta$ , there is an equilibrium solution for Budyko's equation.

$$T_\eta^*(y) = \frac{1}{B + C} (Qs(y)(1 - \alpha(y, \eta)) - A + C\bar{T}_\eta^*)$$

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**Equilibria**

$$T_\eta^*(y) = \frac{1}{B + C} (Qs(y)(1 - \alpha(y, \eta)) - A + C\bar{T}_\eta^*)$$

For each fixed  $\eta$ , there is an equilibrium solution for Budyko's equation.

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**Stability of Equilibria**

$$R \frac{\partial T}{\partial t} = Qs(y)(1 - \alpha(y)) - (A + BT) + C(\bar{T} - T)$$

Let  $X$  be the space of functions where  $T$  lives. (e.g.  $L^1([0,1])$ )  
 Let  
 $L: X \rightarrow X: LT = C\bar{T} - (B + C)T,$   
 $f(y) = Qs(y)(1 - \alpha(y)) - A$

Budyko's equation can be written as a linear vector field on  $X$ .

$$R \frac{dT}{dt} = f + LT$$

The operator  $L$  has only point spectrum, with all eigenvalues negative.  
 Therefore, **all solutions are stable.**  
 True for any albedo function.

**experts only**

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**Stability**

$$R \frac{\partial T}{\partial t}(y, t) = Qs(y)(1 - \alpha(y, \eta)) - (A + BT(y, t)) + C(\bar{T}(t) - T(y, t))$$

For each fixed  $\eta$ , there is a **globally stable** equilibrium solution for Budyko's equation.

**How to pick one?**

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**Energy Balance**


**Ice Albedo Feedback**

**Summary**

If we artificially hold the ice line at a fixed latitude, then the surface temperature will come to an equilibrium.

However, if the temperature is high, we would expect ice to melt and the ice line to retreat to higher latitudes. If the temperature is low, we would expect ice to form and the ice line to advance to lower latitudes.

*How to model this expectation?*



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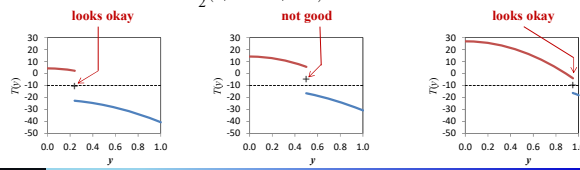

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**Ice Albedo Feedback**

For each fixed  $\eta$ , there is a stable equilibrium solution for Budyko's equation.

**Standard assumption:** Permanent ice forms if the annual average temperature is below  $T_c = -10^\circ\text{C}$  and melts if the annual average temperature is above  $T_c$ .

**Additional condition:** The average temperature across the ice boundary must be the critical temperature  $T_c$ .

$$\frac{1}{2}(T_\eta^*(\eta+) + T_\eta^*(\eta-)) = T_c = -10$$



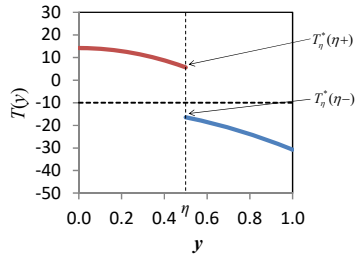

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**Ice Albedo Feedback**

ice line condition:  $\frac{1}{2}(T_\eta^*(\eta+) + T_\eta^*(\eta-)) = T_c = -10$

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**Energy Balance**

**Ice Albedo Feedback**

$$R \frac{\partial T}{\partial t} = Qs(y)(1 - \alpha(y, \eta)) - (A + BT) + C(\bar{T} - T)$$

Equilibrium:  $T_\eta^*(y) = \frac{1}{B+C}(Qs(y)(1 - \alpha(y, \eta)) - A + C\bar{T}_\eta^*)$


Ice line condition:  $\frac{1}{2}(T_\eta^*(\eta+) + T_\eta^*(\eta-)) = T_c = -10$

Albedo:  $\alpha(y, \eta) = \begin{cases} \alpha_1 = 0.32, & y < \eta \\ \alpha_2 = 0.62, & y > \eta \end{cases} \quad \alpha(\eta-, \eta) = \alpha_1, \quad \alpha(\eta+, \eta) = \alpha_2$

$$T_\eta^*(\eta+) = \frac{1}{B+C}(Qs(\eta)(1 - \alpha_2) - A + C\bar{T}_\eta^*) \quad T_\eta^*(\eta-) = \frac{1}{B+C}(Qs(\eta)(1 - \alpha_1) - A + C\bar{T}_\eta^*)$$

Ice line condition:  $\frac{1}{2}(T_\eta^*(\eta+) + T_\eta^*(\eta-)) = \frac{1}{B+C}(Qs(\eta)(1 - \alpha_0) - A + C\bar{T}_\eta^*) = T_c = -10$

where:  $\alpha_0 = \frac{\alpha_1 + \alpha_2}{2} = 0.47$



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**Energy Balance**

**Ice Albedo Feedback**

$$R \frac{\partial T}{\partial t} = Qs(y)(1 - \alpha(y, \eta)) - (A + BT) + C(\bar{T} - T)$$


Ice line condition:  $\frac{1}{B+C}(Qs(\eta)(1 - \alpha_0) - A + C\bar{T}_\eta^*) = T_c = -10$

Rewrite:  $h(\eta) = \frac{1}{B+C}(Qs(\eta)(1 - \alpha_0) - A + C\bar{T}_\eta^*) - T_c = 0$

Recall equilibrium GMT:  $\bar{T}_\eta^* = \frac{1}{B}(Q(1 - \bar{\alpha}(\eta)) - A)$

Recall average albedo:  $\bar{\alpha}(\eta) = \int_0^\eta \alpha(y, \eta) s(y) dy = \alpha_2 - (\alpha_2 - \alpha_1)S(\eta) = 0.62 - 0.3S(\eta)$

where:  $S(\eta) = \int_0^\eta s(y) dy = \eta - 0.241(\eta^3 - \eta)$

$$h(\eta) = \frac{Q}{B+C} \left( s(\eta)(1 - \alpha_0) + \frac{C}{B}(1 - \alpha_2 + (\alpha_2 - \alpha_1)S(\eta)) \right) - \frac{A}{B} - T_c = 0$$


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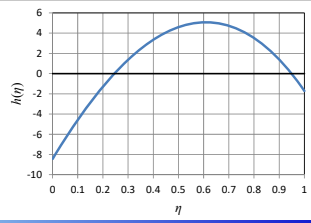
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**Energy Balance**

**Ice Albedo Feedback**


$$R \frac{\partial T}{\partial t} = Qs(y)(1 - \alpha(y, \eta)) - (A + BT) + C(\bar{T} - T)$$

The additional condition:  $\frac{1}{2}(T_\eta^*(\eta+) + T_\eta^*(\eta-)) = T_c = -10$

can be written:  $h(\eta) = \frac{Q}{B+C} \left( s(\eta)(1 - \alpha_0) + \frac{C}{B}(1 - \alpha_2 + (\alpha_2 - \alpha_1)S(\eta)) \right) - \frac{A}{B} - T_c = 0$



Two equilibria (zeros of  $h$ ) satisfy the additional condition.



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**Math 5421 Energy Balance**

**Ice Albedo Feedback**

Equilibrium temperature profiles  $T_e^*(y) = \frac{1}{B+C} (Qs(y)(1-\alpha(y,\eta)) - A + C\bar{T}_e)$

Interesting Solutions:

- small cap
- large cap
- ice free
- snowball

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**Math 5421 Energy Balance**

**Dynamics of the Ice Line**

$$R \frac{\partial T}{\partial t} = Qs(y)(1-\alpha(y,\eta)) - (A+BT) + C(\bar{T}-T)$$

Idea:

If the average temperature across the ice line is above the critical temperature, some ice will melt, moving the ice line toward the pole. If it is below the critical temperature, the ice will advance toward the equator.

Widiasih's equation:  $\frac{d\eta}{dt} = \varepsilon(T(\eta) - T_c)$

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**Math 5421 Energy Balance**

**Dynamics of the Ice Line**

$$\frac{d\eta}{dt} = \varepsilon(T(\eta) - T_c)$$

$$R \frac{\partial T}{\partial t} = Qs(y)(1-\alpha(y,\eta)) - (A+BT) + C(\bar{T}-T)$$

Widiasih's Theorem. For sufficiently small  $\varepsilon$ , the system has an attracting invariant curve given by the graph of a function  $\Phi_\varepsilon : [0,1] \rightarrow X$ . On this curve, the dynamics are approximated by the equation

$$\frac{d\eta}{dt} = \varepsilon h(\eta)$$

experts only

Esther R. Widiasih, Dynamics of the Budyko Energy Balance Model, *SIAM J. Appl. Dyn. Syst.*, 12(4), 2068–2092.

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**Math 5421 Energy Balance**

**Budyko-Widiasih Model**

Temperature profiles

Esther Widiasih

$$\frac{d\eta}{dt} = \varepsilon h(\eta)$$

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**Budyko-Widiasih Model**

Esther → Dick

Oahu, February 2020

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**Summary**

surface temperature  $R \frac{\partial T}{\partial t} = Qs(y)(1-\alpha(y)) - (A+BT) + C(\bar{T}-T)$

heat capacity  $R$ , insolation  $Qs(y)$ , albedo  $\alpha(y)$ , OLR  $A+BT$ , heat transport  $C(\bar{T}-T)$

sin(latitude)  $\bar{T} = \int_0^1 T(y) dy$

reduces to

$$\frac{d\eta}{dt} = \varepsilon h(\eta)$$

$$\frac{d\eta}{dt} = \varepsilon h(\eta) = \varepsilon \left( \frac{Q}{B+C} (s(\eta)(1-\alpha_0) + \frac{C}{B}(1-\alpha_2 + (\alpha_2 - \alpha_1)S(\eta))) - \frac{A}{B} - T_c \right)$$

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**Energy Balance**

**Budyko-Widiasih Model**

$$R \frac{\partial T}{\partial t} = Qs(y)(1 - \alpha(y)) - (A + BT) + C(\bar{T} - T)$$

Labels for the equation:  $R$  (heat capacity),  $\frac{\partial T}{\partial t}$  (surface temperature),  $Qs(y)$  (insolation),  $1 - \alpha(y)$  (albedo),  $(A + BT)$  (OLR),  $C(\bar{T} - T)$  (heat transport).  $\bar{T} = \int_0^1 T(y) dy$  (sin(latitude)).

**What about the greenhouse effect?**

$A + BT$  is the outgoing long wave radiation. This term decreases if the greenhouse gases increase.  
We view  $A$  as a parameter.

$$\frac{d\eta}{dt} = \epsilon h(\eta, A)$$

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**Earth's Carbon Cycle**

**Long-Term Carbon Cycle**

[http://www.carleton.edu/departments/geol/DaveSTELLA/Carbon/long\\_term\\_carbon.htm](http://www.carleton.edu/departments/geol/DaveSTELLA/Carbon/long_term_carbon.htm)

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**Earth's Carbon Cycle**

**Long-Term Carbon Cycle**

Volcanos emit CO<sub>2</sub>.

Silicate weathering carries carbon to the ocean.

Carbon sinks to the bottom of the ocean by the "biological pump" and by the precipitation of calcium carbonate.

The carbon is captured in the sediment.

The sediment is subducted beneath the continental crust by plate tectonics.

Volcanic activity released carbon from the carbonate rocks in the form of CO<sub>2</sub>.

**Repeat.**

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**Earth's Carbon Cycle**

**Long-Term Carbon Cycle**

[http://www.carleton.edu/departments/geol/DaveSTELLA/Carbon/long\\_term\\_carbon.htm](http://www.carleton.edu/departments/geol/DaveSTELLA/Carbon/long_term_carbon.htm)

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**Earth's Carbon Cycle**

**Silicate Weathering**

Rainwater containing dissolved CO<sub>2</sub> falling on silicate rocks replaces a silicon atom with a carbon atom, ultimately producing calcium carbonate (limestone) and silicon dioxide (quartz). For example, calcium silicate (Wollastonite):

$$CaSiO_3 + CO_2 \rightarrow CaCO_3 + SiO_2$$

Under volcanic conditions, the carbon atom is replaced by a silicon atom, completing the long term carbon cycle.

$$CaCO_3 + SiO_2 \rightarrow CaSiO_3 + CO_2$$

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**Budyko-Widiasih Model**

$$\frac{d\eta}{dt} = \epsilon h(\eta, A)$$

isocline  $h(\eta, A) = 0$

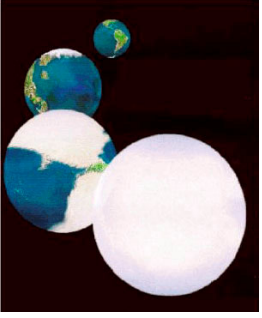
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**Snowball Earth**

Is it possible for Earth to become completely covered in ice?  
(Snowball Earth)

*Did it ever happen?*

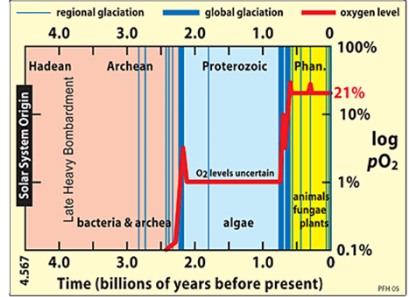


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**Snowball Earth**

There is evidence that Snowball Earth has occurred, the last time about 600 million years ago.




<http://www.snowballearth.org/when.html>

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**Snowball Earth**




The continents were clustered near the equator.

Hoffman & Schrag, *Snowball Earth*, SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN, January 2000, 68-75

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**Snowball Earth**



"Ice-rafted debris" occurred in ocean sediments near the equator, indicating large equatorial glaciers calving icebergs.


Hoffman & Schrag, *Snowball Earth*, SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN, January 2000, 68-75

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**Snowball Earth**

Large limestone deposits "cap carbonates" are found immediately above the glacial debris, indicating a rapid warming period following the snowball.



Hoffman & Schrag, *Snowball Earth*, SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN, January 2000, 68-75

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**Math 5421**  
**Snowball Earth**

**Idea:**

When the Earth is mostly ice-covered, silicate weathering slows down, but volcanic activity stays the same, allowing for a build-up of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere.

When the Earth is mostly ice-free, silicate weathering speeds up, drawing down the CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere.

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**Math 5421**  
**Energy Balance**

**Budyko-Widiasih Model**

$$\frac{d\eta}{dt} = \varepsilon h(\eta, A)$$


What if  $A$  is a dynamical variable?

**Simple equation:**

$$\frac{dA}{dt} = \tilde{\varepsilon}(\eta - \eta_c) \leftarrow \text{(silicate weathering)}$$

$$0 < \tilde{\varepsilon} \ll \varepsilon \ll 1$$

**New system:**

$$\begin{cases} \frac{dA}{dt} = \tilde{\varepsilon}(\eta - \eta_c) \\ \frac{d\eta}{dt} = \varepsilon h(\eta, A) \end{cases}$$


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Postdoc 2012-14

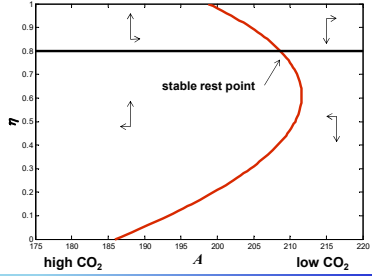
Anna M. Barry, Esther Widiasih, & Richard McGehee, *Discrete & Continuous Dynamical Systems Series B* 22 (2017), 2447-2463.

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**Math 5421**  
**Energy Balance**

**Budyko-Widiasih-Barry Model**

$$\frac{d\eta}{dt} = \varepsilon h(\eta, A), \quad \frac{dA}{dt} = \tilde{\varepsilon}(\eta - \eta_c)$$


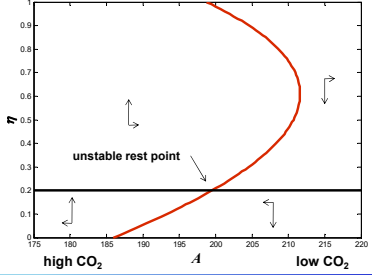
What if  $\eta_c$  were here?

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**Math 5421**  
**Energy Balance**

**Budyko-Widiasih-Barry Model**

$$\frac{d\eta}{dt} = \varepsilon h(\eta, A), \quad \frac{dA}{dt} = \tilde{\varepsilon}(\eta - \eta_c)$$


What if  $\eta_c$  were here?

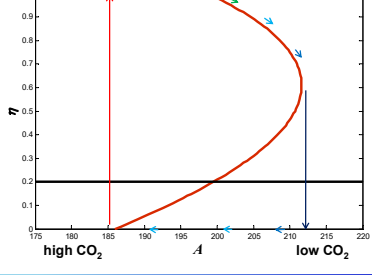
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**Math 5421**  
**Energy Balance**

**Budyko-Widiasih-Barry Model**

**Snowball – Hothouse Oscillations**




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**Math 5421**  
**Energy Balance**

**Banded Iron Formations**

Banded iron deposits form when the ocean oscillates between oxygen-rich and oxygen-poor. The formation on the right is from northern Minnesota.



<https://www.usgs.gov/media/images/minnesota-banded-iron>

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