

ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES 001: INTRODUCTION TO ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

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Office Hours: M, W 11:00-12:00 and F by appt

COURSE OBJECTIVE

Welcome to an introductory course about environmental issues. This course is designed to offer students the opportunity to gain an understanding of the causes and cures for many of our environmental problems. Our world and its living populations are compromised by an expanding human population, poverty, increasing disparity between the well fed and the starving, between the rich and poor, conversion of non-renewable resources into municipal solid waste and pollution, political manipulation of the public for corporate benefit, the abuse of public and natural resources, and the dangers of toxic emissions imposed onto the environment and into ourselves. *Dealing effectively with these issues requires an understanding of interactions between the human systems and the natural world, social mechanisms, and applying critical thinking skills with, interdisciplinary scientific analysis if we are to have long-term and sustainable solutions for the benefit of current and future generations.*

The course is designed to fulfill GE learning objectives and to provide information to: 1) gain and improve knowledge of environmental issues; 2) learn the interrelationships of resource use, economics, politics and those impacts on the environment; 3) increase understanding of human behavior and social interaction in the context of value systems and to 3) identify social, political, technological and personal mechanisms which can influence technology and institutions and ultimately lead to more sustainable and peaceful world. Finally, the course will assist students to clarify the basic questions raised by technology and politics regarding environmental quality and their life.

Here are some other General Education learning objectives we'll include in the course:

- Identifying and analyzing the social dimensions of society as a context for human life, the processes of social change and continuity, the role of human agency in those social processes, and the forces that engender social cohesion and fragmentation.
- Placing contemporary developments in cultural, historical, environmental, and special contexts;
- Identifying and understanding the dynamics of different populations and sub-populations (e.g. according to ethnicities, cultures, gender, age, or economic class).
- Evaluating social science information, drawing on multiple perspectives, and formulating applications appropriate to contemporary issues;
- Recognizing the interaction of social institutions, culture, and environment with the behavior of individuals; and,
- Applying multi-disciplinary material to a topic relevant to social action at the local, national, or international level.

REQUIRED BOOKS

Living in the Environment, G. Tyler Miller Jr., Wadsworth Publishing Company, Belmont, California, 15th Edition. 2007. *Earlier editions not recommended.*

A Miniature Guide for Students on How to Study and Learn. Order this pamphlet on www.criticalthinking.org. It's about \$6 and could be the best \$6 you spent in college!

Recommended Book: **A Manual for Writers**, Tarabian. (or your department stylebook)

CLASS FORMAT

Students are welcome and expected to participate in daily discussions so we may all benefit from the group's interaction. We'll begin most days with a review of environmental issues in the news (you'll be asked to bring in and discuss news articles) followed by a scheduled lecture and occasionally a video.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Class members that are engaged with the material and keep up with the course work make for a good learning experience. So, ***please be a responsible class member by being prepared. Complete the assigned readings before each class. Attend each class, be prepared to discuss the reading, actively participate and let's have some fun too. Take good notes, as they'll be needed for exams and papers. Take the time to write quality assignments and to turn them in on time. Pick up class handouts and your returned papers IN CLASS. See the professor when you want advice or have an issue to discuss.***

DISABILITIES: The services of the DRC are available for those who need them. If you think you need them, just check with the DRC, the catalog (on-line), or see me during office hours or after class.

All assignments are due in class, within 10 minutes of the beginning of class. Late papers will be assessed a 10% penalty if they are received late. The penalty applies for each day, including weekends and not for each class period. This is to treat everyone equally in the course. Exceptions will be considered for proven extreme hardship cases only.

Academic Integrity Policy Plagiarism is the use of someone else's language, images, data, or ideas without proper attribution. It is a very serious offense in both academic and professional environments. In essence, plagiarism is both theft and lying: you have stolen someone else's ideas and then lied by implying that they are your own. Plagiarism will lead to grade penalties and may also result in failing the course and/or having the incident permanently noted in your SJSU student records. If you are unsure what constitutes plagiarism, it is your responsibility to educate yourself, or to ask for clarification, before handing in written work.

Please see the SJSU website Academic Integrity Policy to familiarize themselves with SJSU policy:
<http://info.sjsu.edu/web-dbggen/narr/soc-fall/rec-369.html>

OFFICE VISITS

If you would like to discuss a personal issue, the course, a class, an assignment, careers, or majoring or minoring in Environmental Studies see me or schedule an office visit using the clipboard posted next to my office. Please do not wait for an insurmountable problem before considering an office visit.

READING ASSIGNMENTS/COURSE SCHEDULE

Classroom discussions, exams, and reading assignments and due dates are listed on an accompanying *Environmental Studies 001 Schedule*. **Specific course handouts describe each assignment below.**

EXAMS, ASSIGNMENTS, EXTRA CREDIT, AND COURSE SCHEDULE

The assignments provide a mechanism to learn a variety of material and skills and to express that knowledge in a variety of ways; writing, research, and standard examinations (do you know the basic information?).

Three Midterms (total of 70 points): Midterms are a mix of multiple-choice and short answer questions. Exam 1 is about 15 points, Exam 2 is 25 pts, and the third midterm is 30 points and includes a comprehensive exam of materials from exam 1 and 2.

News/Journal Analysis Project, 2: (5 points each): Students will find and analyze a recent printed newspaper, newsmagazine (Time, US. News and World Report, Newsweek, etc.) or a library journal article about an environmental issue and respond to it with a reasoned opinion in a letter to the editor or to an elected official. There are three due dates but only two assignments are required to be submitted.

Take Home Essay 2, (10 points each): The objective of this writing assignment (about 3-4 pages) is to illustrate critical thinking skills by linking some of the topics in the course into a comprehensive whole. Specific instructions will be handed out for each assignment.

Extra Credit: (5 points max) Students are encouraged to seek and process information outside of the classroom. *Papers may be submitted with exam 1 or 2. Papers submitted for extra credit must be labeled "Extra credit"* and may include one of the following:

- An extra Topical Summary or, a "Letter to the Editor" from the News Analysis assignment. A copy of an article and a copy of your letter to the editor or "official. *It must be an environmental issue.*
- Attending a Bruce-Approved Alternative: Write a brief 1-page summary about the experience.
- BONUS POINTS: Letters to the editor are often published. If yours is, you'll be awarded 2 bonus points. Letters that are responded to will receive bonus points. Be sure to turn it in for credit!

GRADING

Fair and impartial is the goal. Points are not added or deducted because of "personality traits." I may, move a grade up by one degree (from a B+ to a A-) if a student has turned in all assignments, showed improvement throughout the course, and attended regularly. If you are unclear about grading or performance, please ask.

Ten-point assignments are equivalent to the following: 10-9=A, 8.9-8=B, 7.9-7=C, 6.9-5=D, 4.9-0=F

Accumulated points that fall within the grade scale below determine your semester grade.

97 - 100	A+	84 - 87	B	70 - 72	C-
93 - 96	A	80 - 83	B-	64 - 69	D+
90 - 92	A-	78 - 79	C +	56 - 63	D
88 - 89	B+	74 - 77	C	50 - 55	D-