

San José State University
Department of Environmental Studies
ENVS 250, Environmental Thought and Philosophy, Fall '24

Course and Contact Information

Instructor:	Dr. Will Russell
Office Location:	WSQ 115E
Email:	will.russell@sjsu.edu
Office Hours:	Tues 10:30-11:30 (by appointment)
Classroom	WSQ 111
Class Days/Time:	Tuesday, 12:00 – 2:45



Course Description

An intensive, critical analysis of current and historic works of significance in the field of environmental studies, with emphasis on their contributions toward the evolution of conservation and environmental thought. Topics covered include preservation versus conservation, biocentrism, environmental justice, eco-feminism, deep ecology, and environmental activism. Individual student research is presented with oral and written reports.

Course Overview

This seminar is designed to provide students with an opportunity to investigate the historic and cultural context of current environmental issues and philosophies. The evolution of our society has direct and profound influence on our attitudes toward nature. These attitudes are reflected in science, literature, government, art, and our management of natural resources. It will be the responsibility of each student to define the historic context of their own field of interest, present their findings to the class, and lead class discussions. As a graduate seminar, the goals of the course are to perfect communication skills as well as add to students' general understanding of environmental issues.

Learning Outcomes

Student Learning Objectives (SLO)

SLO - Knowledge of Environmental Thought: Students will demonstrate thorough knowledge of the history of environmental thought and specific topics including

preservation versus conservation, biocentrism, environmental justice, eco-feminism, deep ecology, and environmental activism.

>>>A Note About Electronic Devices<<<

All electronic devices will be stowed away and silenced throughout the class meetings, unless the instructor gives express permission.

Required Texts/Readings

Textbooks

Most of the course materials are linked in Canvas as pdf or urls, with the exception of the following two books. Both of these books are relatively inexpensive and can be purchased online, and it is **recommended that you purchase them**. They are also both available as e-books however, through the SJSU MLK library, so you may choose to go that route instead.

LaDuke, W. (2017). *All our Relations: Native Struggles for Land and Life*. Haymarket Books. This book is also available as an e-book through the MLK library. You will need to sign into the library to access the book: (<https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.libaccess.sjlibrary.org/lib/sjsu/detail.action?docID=4548443>).

Quinn, D. (1995). *Ishmael*. Bantam. This book is also available as an e-book through the MLK library. You will need to sign into the library to access the book. <https://csu-sjsu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/fulldisplay?docid=alma991013829517302919&context=L&vid=01CAL5 SJO:01CAL5 SJO&lang=en&search scope=MyInst and CI&adaptor=Local%20Search%20Engine&tab=everything&query=any,contains,Ishmael&offset=0>.

Worster, D. (1994). *Nature's economy: a history of ecological ideas*. Cambridge University Press. Readings from this book are also available as a (poor quality) PDF on Canvas.

McKibben, B. (Ed). (2008) *American Earth: Environmental Writing Since Thoreau*. Library of America. Readings from this book are also available as a (poor quality) PDF on Canvas.

Shiva, V. (2016). *Staying alive: Women, ecology, and development*. North Atlantic Books. Readings from this book are also available as a (poor quality) PDF on Canvas.

Bari, J. (1990). *Timber wars*. *Earth Island Journal*. Readings from this book are also available as a (poor quality) PDF on Canvas.

Additional readings will be available on Canvas.

Course Requirements and Assignments

SJSU classes are designed such that in order to be successful, it is expected that students will spend a minimum of forty-five hours for each unit of credit (normally three hours per unit per week), including preparing for class, participating in course activities, completing assignments, and so on. More details about student workload can be found in [University Policy S12-3](https://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf) at [sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf](https://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf).

NOTE that [University policy F69-24](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F69-24.pdf) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F69-24.pdf> states that “Students should attend all meetings of their classes, not only because they are responsible for material discussed therein, but because active participation is frequently essential to insure maximum benefit for all members of the class. Attendance per se shall not be used as a criterion for grading.”

Please read the following assignment descriptions carefully. Failing to comply with the specific directions given below will result in a loss of credit points for each assignment.

Discussion Posts

Post a 500-600 word Reaction to the day’s readings to the ‘Discussions’ section in Canvas. The Reaction should address the discussion question posted by the instructor for that day, and include at least one quote from the readings for each question. Cite each quote in the text with author’s name and page number ... i.e. (*Chavez, pg. 112*). In addition, post at least two ‘responses’ to other students’ posted reactions. For full credit, responses will encourage dialog by challenging assumptions and asking questions.

Topic Presentation

Each student will develop a short in-class presentation/discussion based on topic related to the themes discussed in the course. The presentation will be based on material researched by the student presenter. Each presenter will provide one additional reading no more than 10 pages in length that will be made available electronically one week in advance of the class meeting. The presentation will be 10-15 minutes in length, and will be followed up with discussion. The presentation may include activities, creative expression, and audio visual aids. Power-point is not encouraged for this assignment.

Research Paper Outline

As a prerequisite to writing the research paper, you will construct an outline of your research paper in bullet point format

Research Paper

Each student will write a 3000-4000 word research paper on a topic of their choosing that relates to the theme of the course (it is recommended that students explore their thesis topics with this paper). The paper will include the philosophical and theoretical foundation for the student’s proposed Masters thesis topic (or other instructor approved topic). The paper will be presented in the standard collegiate essay form (introduction, body, conclusions, etc.). A minimum of 10-15 primary references will accompany the paper and will be cited in the text. The paper will be

presented in APA format single spaced throughout with 12-point type. The essay will be submitted electronically through Canvas.

Research Paper Presentation

Each student will present their Environmental theory paper in class (**15 minutes**). The presentation should be professional in quality and creative in nature. Students are free to use PowerPoint or other audio visual aids, but are also welcome to include creative, participatory, and performance, aspects as well.

Grading Policy

Class Participation

1. Attendance – You are required to attend every class meeting unless you are ill or have an emergency. If you need to miss class for either of these reasons e-mail me as promptly as possible especially if you are expected to present that week.
2. Participation in discussions – Participation does not mean being verbose. In many cases allowing or encouraging others to speak is more valuable to the group dynamic. Providing the group your insights in an engaging and respectful manner. Statements are always more interesting if they are backed up by logic and evidence.
3. Presentations – As a presenter it is your job to make your subject informative and entertaining. Please be professional and creative!
4. **Respect and decorum – All class participants will behave in a manner that provides a positive and comfortable learning environment for everybody.**

Grading

Your grade in this course will be calculated as follows.

Assignment	Point Value
Discussion Posts	20
Topic Presentation	20
Research Paper	20
Research Paper Presentation	20
Participation	20
<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>100</i>

Penalty for Late Work

All assignments will be turned in during class time by the due. Assignments turned in after the due date will be dropped a full letter grade for each class meeting that they are late.

Classroom Protocol

All class participants will behave in a manner that provides a positive and comfortable learning environment for everybody. Use of cell phones during class time is discouraged. Computers may be used during class time at the instructor's discretion exclusively for tasks directly related to class activities. Students should be in class prepared to work at the

beginning of each class session. Disruption of the class by students arriving late will not be tolerated. Failure to meet the expectations of classroom protocol will result in a loss of participation points.

University Policies

Academic Integrity

Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at San José State University, and the University's Academic Integrity Policy requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the Office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The policy on academic integrity can be found at http://sa.sjsu.edu/student_conduct.

Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with DRC to establish a record of their disability.

Student Technology Resources

Computer labs for student use are available in the Academic Success Center located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall and on the 2nd floor of the Student Union. Additional computer labs may be available in your department/college. Computers are also available in the Martin Luther King Library.

ENVS 250, Seminar: Environmental Thought and Philosophy, Fall 2024

Course Schedule - subject to change.

Date	Topics	Readings	Assignments Due
8/27	Course introduction		
9/3	Traditional Practices and Indigenous Knowledge	1. LaDuke, Intro: 1-6 - textbook . 2. Maly, K. (2001). Mālama pono i ka ‘āina: an overview of the Hawaiian cultural landscape. <i>Kumu Pono Associates LLC, Lana ‘i City, HI.</i> - link on Canvas 3. Tunuri and the Blue Deer: Children’s book video - link on Canvas	Discussion Post Article Discussion
9/10	Biocentrism	1. Quinn “Ishmael” - textbook .	Discussion Post Article Discussion
9/17	The Neolithic Revolution	1. Shard, D. (1974). The Neolithic revolution: an analogical overview. <i>Journal of Social History</i> , 7(2), 165-170.- link on Canvas 2. Douclef, M. (2017). Are Hunter-Gatherers the Happiest Humans To Inhabit Earth? NPR, 10/1 - link on Canvas .	Discussion Post Article Discussion
9/24	Impacts of Colonialism	1. Whyte, K. (2018). Settler Colonialism, Ecology, and Environmental Injustice. <i>Environment and Society</i> , 9(1), 125–144. - link on Canvas	Discussion Post Article Discussion
10/1	Arcadia and the Age of Reason	Nature’s Economy, Donald Worster. Part 1:Two Roads Diverged: Ecology in the Eighteenth Century (Ch 1 - Science in Arcadia; Ch 2 - The Empire of Reason) - textbook	Discussion Post Article Discussion
10/8	The Romantic Era	1. Marsh, Man and Nature (McKibben) - textbook Canvas . 2. Thoreau, Huckleberries (McKibben) - textbook Canvas 3. Thoreau, Civil Disobedience (McKibben) - textbook	Discussion Post Article Discussion
10/15	The Progressive Era and the Great Debate	1. Muir, Hetch Hetchy Valley (McKibben) - textbook 2. Pinchot, Prosperity (McKibben) - textbook	Discussion Post Article Discussion Research Paper Outline
10/22	Environmental Justice	1. Kantor, I. (2007). Ethnic cleansing and America's creation of national parks. <i>Pub. Land & Resources L. Rev.</i> , 28, 41. - pdf on Canvas 2. Chavez (McKibben) - textbook 3. Mustafa Ali - linked video on Canvas 4. Dolores Huerta - linked video on Canvas	Discussion Post Article Discussion
10/29	Ecofeminism	1. Shiva (Chapt 3 Women and Nature) - textbook 2. Bari (The Feminization of Earth First!) - textbook 3. Judi Bari (linked video on Canvas)	Discussion Post Article Discussion
11/5	A New Hope	1. Haaland, Native American leaders press for Indigenous land protections - link on Canvas 2. A Letter from President Evo Morales about Climate Change and the International Crisis - link on Canvas 3. Greta Thunberg - linked video on Canvas 4. Green New Deal - linked video on Canvas	Discussion Post Article Discussion

Date	Topics	Readings	Assignments Due
11/12	Research Paper Presentations		
11/19	Research Paper Presentations		
11/26	No Class		
12/3	Research Paper Presentations		Research Paper Due