

**ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES 001**  
**INTRODUCTION TO ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES**  
**Spring 2015, San Jose State University**

**Instructor:** Jessie E. Denver  
**Office Hours:** By appointment only  
**Phone:** email only  
**Class website:** Canvas

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**Office:** By appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES**

Understanding the drivers and impacts of emerging environmental problems at local, regional, and global scales requires an interdisciplinary synthesis of approaches and tools from a variety of fields. Dealing effectively with these challenges and creating lasting social and environmental change requires an understanding of how the human and natural world interact using critical thinking skills, and applying a long-term problem-solving approach. Using key ideas from both the natural and social sciences, you will develop your own set of analytical and decision making tools and apply them to a wide variety of environmental scenarios.

This course is designed to provide you with the information to: 1) gain and improve knowledge of key environmental issues; 2) learn about the interrelationships between resource use, economics, politics, social justice and environmental degradation; and 3) identify social, political, and technical solutions that will guide change towards more sustainable communities today, and in the years to come.

- Identify social-environmental issues and describe the challenges they pose for human societies.
- Understand various causes of social-environmental problems and appraise potential ways for addressing them
- Conduct basic research on social-environmental issues using social scientific perspectives
- Reflect on key concepts, engage in meaningful dialogue with peers, and articulate ideas using research, critical reasoning and personal investigation.
- Apply critical concepts in future courses, academic research, and practical situations such as internships, service-learning opportunities, activism and personal choices.

**REQUIRED COURSE MATERIAL**

Miller, G. *Living in the Environment: Principles, Connections, and Solutions*, 17<sup>th</sup> Edition. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company.

- Available at the Spartan Bookstore *and online via Amazon or an alternative.*
- Additional readings will be distributed via Canvas

**This course meets the requirements of GE Category D3. As such, this course will include material that addresses these D3 learning objectives:**

**Learning Objective 1.** Students shall be able to identify and analyze the social dimension of society as a context for human life, the processes of social change and social continuity, the role of human agency in those social processes, and the forces that engender social cohesion and fragmentation.

**Learning Objective 2.** Students will be able to place contemporary developments in cultural, historical, environmental, and spatial contexts.

**Learning Objective 3.** Students will be able to identify the dynamics of ethnic, cultural, gender/sexual, age-based, class, regional, national, transnational and global identities and the similarities, differences, linkages, and interactions between them.

**Learning Objective 4.** Students will be able to evaluate social science information, draw on different points of view, and formulate applications appropriate to contemporary social issues.

**Learning Objective 5.** Students will be able to apply multidisciplinary material to a topic relevant to policy and social action at the local, national, and/or international levels.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS:** Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of forty-five hours over the length of the course (normally 3 hours per unit per week with 1 of the hours used for lecture) for instruction or preparation/studying or other course related activities.

**Essay #1 (10 points):** 1,200-word assignment, you will answer several specific questions assigned by the professor based on information in the course and textbook. Mid-semester.

**Essay #2 (15 points):** 1,750 word assignment. End semester

**Reading Notes (20 points):** Due every Wednesday by 11:59 pm of each week (weeks 3 – 15) = each up to 1.5 points, 1 worth 2 points

**Chapter Quizzes (20 points):** Due every Friday by 11:59 pm of each week (weeks 3 – 15) = each up to 1.5 points, 1 worth 2 points

**Other Assignments (40 points):** At the prerogative of the professor, you will be given in-class writing / online assignments, group projects (1-2) and a community engagement activity.

### Two Exams

- Mid – term (10 points)
- Final (15 points)

Each exam will include the material covered since the previous exam.

**Total = 130 points**

**Extra Credit Opportunities (2 points per project/10 point maximum):** Extra credit opportunities will be announced.

### GRADING

128 - 130 A+	117 - 112 B	100 – 101 C-	89 or below F
122 - 127 A	110 - 111 B-	99 - 98 D+	
120 - 121 A-	108 - 109 C +	92 - 97 D	
118 - 119 B+	102 - 107 C	90 – 91 D-	

**Participation:** Attendance in class is required. This course is interactive and will include frequent opportunities for engagement. You are expected to attend class lectures, read/view all assigned material prior to class, complete assignments and contribute to discussions. Discussion is important to this class and I will do my best to make you feel comfortable contributing to our collective conversation. The best way to understand the course topics is to engage with each other, contribute questions, objections or other thoughts during class. Although no relevant remark is out of bounds, you are expected to treat all members of your cohort and guests with respect.

**Reading Notes:** You'll need to keep notes about the readings as a way to identify key points, note issues that you have questions about, and prepare for discussions in class, quizzes and the exams. Your notes will not be graded for content but will be checked. To receive credit for your notes, you must submit them to Canvas by 11:59 pm on Wednesday of each week. At a minimum, your notes should include 3 significant points you identify in the reading and 2 confusions or questions you have about the reading; you may include additional thoughts for your own reference. Incomplete notes will not receive credit. A PDF has been provided for you with more details on Canvas (Modules). You will be able to use your reading notes on quizzes and the final exam.

**Quizzes:** You will need to complete the quizzes throughout the semester. Quizzes will be available on Canvas at the end of weeks 3-15, and are due Fridays by 11:59 pm. Each quiz will be timed, and you will have only one opportunity to complete the quiz. You may use your class notes, reading notes and book to complete the quizzes. The purpose of the quizzes is to check your comprehension of key terms and concepts as we go, and to prepare you for the final exam.

## **COURSE POLICIES – Please read carefully!**

**Attendance:** Class attendance is required and expected. Please arrive to class on time. If there is a serious illness or family emergency that prevents you from attending class please contact me via email right away. If you need to miss class for an extracurricular obligation, do to illness or an emergency, you will need to present a doctor's note or other documentation.

**Completion of Assignments:** An assignment must be completed in order to receive credit for it, and you must complete the research papers and final exam to pass the course. Late assignments may be accepted up to 24 hours after being due but will be marked down; assignments submitted later than 24 hours after being due will not be accepted (the drop box will close and will not reopen). Incompletes or extensions will only be given in the event of documented emergencies and must be requested as soon as possible.

- Please do not email assignments, they must be submitted via Canvas in the correct area (i.e., Discussion, Assignments – File upload, etc.)

**Computers and other Electronic Devices:** Please respect our collective learning environment by turning off electronic devices during lecture class, including laptops, cell phones and iPads/tablets. If you wish to take notes on a laptop or tablet during lecture, please let me know and please sit in the front of the room. Use of laptops or tablets for note taking will be monitored, and you may be asked to leave if you're using your device for other, non – academic / non-class related purposes.

- The course will utilize the **CANVAS** e-campus service. The syllabus, course assignments, and class presentations can all be accessed via CANVAS.

### **Office Hours**

I encourage all students to feel free to reach out to talk about the course, related environmental studies courses / issues, career options / next steps, and any other topic related to the field. It is especially important that you communicate with me, preferably in person, if you are experiencing a problem that is preventing you from performing well in the course. My office hours are by appointment only.

## **UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY**

Every student who takes a class at SJSU, including this one, agrees to abide by the University's policies on plagiarism and academic dishonesty. Any student found to be in violation of these policies would receive zero credit for the exam or assignment in question. If you have questions about the official SJSU policy on plagiarism, please read the Academic Integrity Policy downloadable at [http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/download/judicial\\_affairs/Academic\\_Integrity\\_Policy\\_F06-1.pdf](http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/download/judicial_affairs/Academic_Integrity_Policy_F06-1.pdf).

### **DISABILITIES POLICY**

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. More information on registering disabilities with DRC is available at: [http://www.drc.sjsu.edu/student\\_services/document\\_disability.htm](http://www.drc.sjsu.edu/student_services/document_disability.htm).

### **CSU Executive Order 1083**

CSU EO 1083 requires that all CSU employees are mandated reporters for suspected child abuse or neglect. Reporters are REQUIRED to report any suspected child abuse or neglect that is relayed from students--whether such comments are submitted in a paper, verbally expressed to the reporter "in confidence", or made in an off-handed comment. Any information from students that meets CSU EO 1083 conditions of "abuse or neglect" will be reported to the Associate Vice President for Human Resources.

**ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES 001 – SYLLABUS**  
**Spring 2015 - Prof. Jessie Denver**

Note: This schedule will likely be modified. You are responsible for making sure you are informed of schedule revisions, which will be posted in the MODULES section of CANVAS. Attend class regularly for updates.

Class	Topic
Week One 1/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome / Intros</li> <li>• Overview: What is Environmental Studies?</li> <li>• Environmental Problems &amp; Solutions</li> </ul> <p>Refer to Modules on Canvas for assignments</p>
Week Two 2/2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principles of Sustainability</li> <li>• Ecosystems: What are they and how do they work?</li> <li>• Population and Footprint</li> </ul> <p>Refer to Modules on Canvas for assignments</p>
Week Three 2/9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affluence and Consumption</li> <li>• Environmental Worldviews</li> <li>• Poverty</li> </ul> <p>Refer to Modules on Canvas for assignments</p>
Week Four 2/16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental Law &amp; Policy</li> <li>• Scientific Integrity</li> </ul> <p>Refer to Modules on Canvas for assignments</p>
Week Five 2/23	<p>Energy Supply and Risk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sources of Energy - Nonrenewable Resources</li> <li>• Climate Change</li> <li>• Video: Years of Living Dangerously</li> <li>• <b>Group Presentations Assigned</b></li> </ul> <p>Refer to Modules on Canvas for assignments</p>
Week Six 3/2	<p>Energy Supply and Solutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Energy Efficiency &amp; Renewables</li> <li>• Alternative Fuels</li> <li>• Green Building</li> </ul> <p>Refer to Modules on Canvas for assignments</p>
Week Seven 3/9	<p><b>Group Presentations</b></p> <p>Refer to Modules on Canvas for assignments</p>
Week Eight 3/16	<p>Agrifood Systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food Resources / GMOs / Seafood</li> <li>• Pests / Sustainable Agriculture</li> </ul> <p>Refer to Modules on Canvas for assignments  <b>Note: Paper 1 Assigned</b></p>

Week Nine 3/23	<b>Spring Recess – Take home midterm</b>
Week Ten 3/30	Agrifood Systems (continued) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Food Movements</li> </ul> Refer to Modules on Canvas for assignments
Week Eleven 4/6	<b>Paper 1 Due</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water Resources</li> <li>• Water Quality</li> <li>• Human Rights</li> </ul> Refer to Modules on Canvas for assignments
Week Twelve 4/13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustaining Aquatic Biodiversity</li> <li>• Ocean Acidification</li> <li>• Emerging Contaminants</li> </ul> Refer to Modules on Canvas for assignments
Week Thirteen 4/20	Earth Day Week (4/22) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental Inequality / Justice</li> </ul> Refer to Modules on Canvas for assignments Note: <b>Paper 2 Assigned</b>
Week Fourteen 4/27	Solid Waste Pollution Prevention E-Waste  Refer to Modules on Canvas for assignments
Week Fifteen 5/4	Solid Waste Pollution Prevention E-Waste  Refer to Modules on Canvas for assignments
Week Sixteen 5/11	<b>TBD</b> <b>Last Day of Instruction (W - 5/13 for all classes at SJSU)</b>
Week of 5/15-5/21	<b>Final Exam</b>