Introduction to Environmental Studies

Instructors: Dr. Monalisa Chatterjee  
Email: monalisc@usc.edu  
Office hours: TTH 11 – 12 noon, CAS 110

Sections: 33000 (TTH 9:30-10:50AM)  
Units: 4.0  
Room: WPH 207  
Prerequisites: none


Supplemental reading: assigned periodically throughout semester, available on Blackboard

Course description:
This course will give you an overview of how the natural world works, the ways in which humans are perturbing the natural world, and the ways in which governments and society are (or are not) addressing environmental degradation

Course Goals:
- Gain knowledge of the physical, chemical, biological aspects of the environment  
- Understand issues facing the environment from a scientific and social perspective  
- Explore how environmental issues affect humans, from multiple perspectives  
- Discuss solutions to environmental degradation through law, policy, and human behavior

Broader Learning objectives:
- Understanding an interdisciplinary approach to complex environmental problems using basic tools of natural and social sciences;  
- The ability to work effectively as a member of an interdisciplinary team on complex problems involving multiple competing stakeholders and agendas;  
- The ability to critically evaluate the economic and policy ramifications of diverse energy portfolios on air and water quality, climate, weapons proliferation and societal stability;  
- An experience-based understanding of economic policies in California including water and energy needs, air quality, marine and coastal issues;  
- The ability to write effectively about complex environmental problems and do so for both specialist and general audiences with equal facility;
And the ability to apply quantitative reasoning skills to environmental problems including basic calculations related to sustainability issues and the use of quantitative methods in data analysis and argumentation.

Please refer to https://dornsife.usc.edu/environmental-studies/learning-objectives/ for more information.

Course requirements and expectations:
- Come to class prepared and engage in discussions and group work
- Be respectful of me and other students in class
- Please leave cell phones outside the classroom or turned off
- If you have to miss class make sure you arrange to get notes and announcements.

Other course information:
This course will use Blackboard for communication, information and turning in assignments. I will make lecture slides available after the lecture is given, as well as post and accept assignments there. Some additional readings will be assigned periodically throughout the semester, and these will be announced in class, posted on Blackboard. You are expected to check blackboard often for any updates/announcements.

Grading:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midterm 1</td>
<td>75 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm 2</td>
<td>75 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pop quizzes</td>
<td>25 pts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>75 pts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brochure assignment</td>
<td>60 pts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Letter to congress</td>
<td>40 pts</td>
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<tr>
<td>In class debate</td>
<td>50 pts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class assignments</td>
<td>50 pts</td>
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</tbody>
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Grading scale:
- A = 89.5-100%
- B = 79.5-89.4%
- C = 69.5-79.4%
- D = 59.5-69.4%
- F = <59.5%

Both midterm exams will cover material immediately after the preceding exam (or beginning of class for midterm 1) up to the exam. The final exam will be a midterm. Exams will focus on lecture and reading material. During exams, students will NOT be allowed to have notes, books, cell phones, etc. Only pens/pencils and a calculator are required. Failure to comply with exam policies will automatically result in a grade of “0” for that particular exam.

Late/make-up policy:
If there is a conflict with an exam, you must email the instructor 2 weeks in advance to see if arrangements can be made (under reasonable circumstances). Otherwise, make-up exams will not be given except in extreme emergencies. Make-up exams will also be more difficult, so it is in your best interest to take the exam on the day it is scheduled. If you have an emergency on exam day, you must get in touch with us before the exam if possible. Assignments will not be accepted late but under unusual circumstances you can check with the instructor to submit with a late grade.
Academic Conduct:

**Plagiarism** – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Section 11, *Behavior Violating University Standards* [https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions](https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions). Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, [http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct](http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct).

**Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university.** You are encouraged to report any incidents to the *Office of Equity and Diversity* [http://equity.usc.edu](http://equity.usc.edu) or to the *Department of Public Safety* [http://adminopsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety](http://adminopsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety). This is important for the safety of the whole USC community. Another member of the university community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. *The Center for Women and Men* [http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/](http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/) provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage [http://sarc.usc.edu](http://sarc.usc.edu) describes reporting options and other resources.

**Support Systems:**
A number of USC’s schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the *American Language Institute* [http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali](http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali), which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students. *The Office of Disability Services and Programs* [http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html](http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html) provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, *USC Emergency Information* [http://emergency.usc.edu](http://emergency.usc.edu) will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.

**Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in a Crisis**
In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies.

**Lecture Schedule (may be modified)**

| Week 1 (Jan 9) | Introduction  
|               | Chapter 1: Studying the state of our earth; what is science? |
| Week 2 (Jan 16) | Chapter 2: Matter, energy and change  
|                | Chapter 3: Ecosystem ecology |
| Week 3 (Jan 23) | Chapter 4: Global climates and biomes |
Chapter 5: Evolution and biodiversity  
Week 4 (Jan 30)  Chapter 6: Population and community ecology  
Documentary screening & Review  
Week 5 (Feb 6)  **Midterm 1: Tuesday, February 7th 2017**  
Chapter 7: Population growth  
Week 6 (Feb 13)  Chapter 8: Natural resources  
Chapter 9: Water resources  
**Endangered species brochure due: Thursday, February 15th 2017**  
Week 7 (Feb 20)  Chapter 10: Land use  
Chapter 11: Food and Agriculture  
Week 8 (Feb 27)  Chapter 11: Food and Agriculture  
Chapter 12: Energy  
Week 9 (Mar 6)  Chapter 13: Renewable energy, biofuels  
Review  
Week 10 (Mar 20)  **Midterm 2: Tuesday, March 21st 2017**  
Chapter 14: Water pollution  
Week 11 (Mar 27)  Chapter 15: Air pollution  
Documentary Screening: Trashed  
Week 12 (Apr 3)  Chapter 16: Waste  
Chapter 20: Sustainability  
**Letter to congress due: Thursday, April 6th 2017**  
Week 13 (Apr 10)  Chapter 18: Biodiversity and conservation biology  
Conservation: Protecting Environment (additional reading)  
Week 14 (Apr 17)  Chapter 19: Science of climate change  
Chapter 19: Social science of climate change  
Week 15 (Apr 24)  Catch up class  
**Debates**  
May 9 2016  **FINAL EXAM** (8-10 am)