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Office Hours: Tuesday 2-3:50 p.m.
(and by appointment)

Environmental Issues in Society (ENST 150)

Lecture: Mon, Wed 10:00-11:50 a.m.

Location: SGM 101

Fall 2014, 4 units

Section	Type	Time	Days	Location
33005R	Lecture	10:00-11:50am	Mon, Wed	SGM 101
33006R	Discussion	1:00-1:50pm	Monday	VKC 151
33007R	Discussion	4:00-4:50pm	Tuesday	VKC 157
33008R	Discussion	1:00-1:50pm	Wednesday	VKC 151
33010R	Discussion	1:00-1:50pm	Tuesday	WPH 207

Course overview: This course is an interdisciplinary study of environmental issues and challenges, examining their scientific, social, cultural, political, and ethical aspects. During the course, we will explore the environmental and social impacts of modern industries and lifestyle; the roles of different actors and institutions; environmental debates on such topics as fracking, nuclear energy, waste management, etc. We will also explore institutional and social barriers to environmental and social policies and will discuss strategies for environmental regulation in the global economy. Finally, we will talk about our personal responsibilities and roles in environmental and social problems.

Lectures: This course is built both on lectures and on student discussion and debate. Students are expected to study the required text assignment before lectures. Students will be also asked to prepare group presentations (15 minutes) on major issues discussed in the course.

Discussion Section Participation: Each student must attend one discussion section per week. In sections, students will talk in detail about the week's reading assignment. Discussions are highly interactive and include such activities as debates, group presentations, individual presentations, and small group activities.

Course policy: Attendance of lectures and discussion sections is required. Please be on time. Texting, surfing social media (Facebook, etc.), chatting are not allowed. Laptops/iPads may be used only for lecture notes and class-related activities. If you are absent in class for one of the reasons listed in the university policies (e.g., documented illness), please notify the instructor and provide the documentation about your absence.

Readings: Reading material for this class will be posted on the Blackboard in the folder "Readings." Students are expected to complete the assigned readings prior to each class. Per university policy, the reading material will range from 30 to 60 pages per class.

Blackboard and E-Mail: The Blackboard website is our main means of communication. The updated syllabus, readings, and assignments will be all posted there. The instructor will use your official USC email, so please make sure that you check it every day. Related current news articles will be posted in the “Readings” on some weeks. This syllabus may be updated during the semester, and the latest version will be posted on the Blackboard.

Writing Course: Some of you are registered in the Writing 140 course. Many of you are taking the writing course separately, or not at all, because you met the requirement as a transfer student. The Writing Center on campus is also a useful free resource for students who want to improve their writing skills.

Research paper: This is a writing-intensive course. Per USC GE requirements, there will be a total of 14-15 pages (citations are not included in the page count) of graded writing assignments. We will accomplish this via **two 7-page papers** (essays) on environmental social issues that will require research and citation of sources. Please use a 12-point font; 1-inch margins; double-spaced. Required number of sources: **20 per paper**. The instructor will provide additional guidelines on the required diversity of sources. Each student will present his/her major research points in class during discussion sections. Please use **the MLA format** of citations (author, year, page – in text, with full references on the last pages). Cite all the sources you use! When you submit a paper, you need to give a hard copy to the instructor AND to upload the paper on the Blackboard in “Assignments.”

Grading

Midterm Exam	20%
Final Exam	20%
Two Research Papers (15% each)	30%
Attendance/participation	10%
Quizzes/Homework/Presentations in class	20%

Course learning outcomes:

1. Be able to use critically the many sources of information about environmental policies to solve empirical problems.
2. Be able to use theoretical perspectives to identify and explain domestic and global environmental problems and the linkages among them.
3. Demonstrate the habit of accessing sources of environmental knowledge and the skill to critically interpret, assess and apply evidence.

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

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/>. 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/>.

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/> or to the *Department of Public Safety* <http://capsnet.usc.edu/departments/departments-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us>. This is important for the safety 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/> provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage 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>, 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 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/> will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.

Grading and Correction of Grades

Excerpts for this section have been taken from the University Grading Handbook, located at <http://www.usc.edu/dept/ARR/grades/gradinghandbook/gradingpolicies.html>. Please see the link for more details on grading concerns.

A grade of Missing Grade (MG) “should only be assigned in unique or unusual situations... for those cases in which a student does not complete work for the course before the semester ends. All missing grades must be resolved by the instructor through the Correction of Grade Process. One calendar year is allowed to resolve a MG. If an MG is not resolved [within] one year the grade is changed to [Unofficial Withdrawal] UW and will be calculated into the grade point average a zero grade points.

A grade of Incomplete (IN) “is assigned when work is not completed because of documented illness or other ‘emergency’ occurring after the twelfth week of the semester (or 12th week equivalency for any course scheduled for less than 15 weeks).”

Course Schedule:

Week 1

8/25 Introduction. Course Objectives and Structure.

8/27 Human Impact on the Environment. Ecosystems. Overview and Concepts.

Withgott, Jay, Brennan, Scott. *Environment: The Science behind the Stories*. 4th Edition, Chapter 6.

Week 2

9/1 Labor Day – no class

9/3 Environmental Policies and Governance: Stakeholders in Environmental Issues

EPA Environmental Justice Citizen's Guide, Chapters 1 and 2 (up to page 37 of the guide)
www.epa.gov/compliance/ej/resources/reports/annual-project-reports/citizen_guide_ej.pdf

Week 3

9/8 Climate Change

"Climate Change: Synthesis Report," Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2013

9/10 Environmental Law, Ethics and Economics

Ruhl et al, The Practice and Policy of Environmental Law, Chapter One (Foundation Press), pp. selected pages 14-31

Week 4

9/15 Natural Resources: Oil and Gas Production

Fortune Magazine <http://fortune.com/2012/05/24/why-shell-is-betting-billions-to-drill-for-oil-in-alaska/>

Jennifer Grant et al, "Beneath the Surface: A review of key facts in the oilsands debate"
January 2013, Pembina Institute, p. 1-20

Michael L. Ross, "Blood Barrels: Why Oil Wealth Fuels Conflict," June 2008

9/17 Natural Resources: Fracking. Coal

Catherine Reheis-Boyd, Looking Forward on Hydraulic Fracturing In California,
<https://www.wspa.org/blog/post/looking-forward-hydraulic-fracturing-california>
Ian Urbina, NY Times Series on Fracking, The New York Times, March 3, 2011

Week 5.

9/22 Renewable Energy

California Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS),
<http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/PUC/energy/Renewables/hot/33RPSProcurementRules.htm>

Yergin, the Quest, Chapter 29

Halper, Evan. "Forecast is all sun but still little solar in many states; Utilities back laws to keep people from harnessing energy." Los Angeles Times [Los Angeles, Calif] 10 Aug 2014: A.16

9/24 Renewable Energy (Cont'd)

Yergin, the Quest, Chapter 30

Agence France-Presse. "Blown away? US suspends wind power subsidies, for now"

January 15, 2014, <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/afp/140115/blown-away-us-suspends-wind-power-subsidies-now>

Ralph Vartabedian. Firm seeks to harness Wyoming's wind energy for California. February 08, 2014. Los Angeles Times.

Week 6

9/29 Nuclear Energy: Economic and Environmental Aspects

Withgott, Jay, Brennan, Scott. Environment: The Science behind the Stories. 4th Edition.
Chapter 20.

Los Angeles Times, Analysis of the San Onofre Plant Decommission, July 13, 2013.

10/1 Midterm Exam

Week 7

10/6 Food Production: Sustainable Agriculture. Organic Production. GMOs.

Withgott, Jay, Brennan, Scott. Environment: The Science behind the Stories. 4th Edition.
Chapter 10.

10/8 Deforestation: Main Causes and Projections.

Withgott, Jay, Brennan, Scott. Environment: The Science behind the Stories. 4th Edition.
Chapter 12.

Week 8

10/13 Urban Sprawl and Megacities: Future Trends

Marcy Burchfield, Henry Burchfield, Diego Puga, and Matthew Turner, "Causes of
Sprawl: A Portrait from Space," Quarterly Journal of Economics, May 2006.

10/15 Water Scarcity: Domestic and International Issues. **First Paper Due.**

"Desertification: Its Effects on People and Land," World Ecology Report (2009)

Week 9

10/20 Protection of Endangered and Threatened Species: The Endangered Species Act

Nash, J. Environmental Law and Policy: The Essentials. Aspen Publishers. 2010. Chapter 6
The Endangered Species Act <http://www.fws.gov/endangered/laws-policies/>

10/22 Fish. Ocean depletion.

Fish and Wildlife, in Herson, A. and Lucks, G. California Environmental Law and Policy:
A Practical Guide. Solano Press Books, 2008, pp. 319-340

Week 10

10/27 Air Pollution

Nash, J. Environmental Law and Policy: The Essentials. Aspen Publishers. 2010. Chapter 3
The Regulation of Air Pollution: The Clean Air Act

10/29 Population and Sustainability

Withgott, Jay, Brennan, Scott. Environment: The Science behind the Stories. 4th Edition.
Chapter 8.

Week 11

11/3 The Environment and Human Health. Hazardous Waste.

Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) <http://www.epa.gov/oecaagct/lrca.html>

The Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), <http://www.epa.gov/superfund/policy/cercla.htm>

11/5 Waste Management and Recycling

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. "Landfill Methane Outreach Program."
<http://www.epa.gov/lmop/>

Week 12

11/10 "Cap and Trade" and Other Economic Policies vs Carbon/Pollution Tax

Cap and Trade (Basic Information and Additional Resources - links)
<http://www.epa.gov/captrade/basic-info.html>

Carbon Emissions Trading <http://www.ieto.org/worldscarbonmarkets> (California and Quebec case studies)

11/12 Environmental Policies

Herson, A. and Lucks, California Environmental Law and Policy, Chapter 1 and 2

Week 13

11/17 Environmental Impact Assessments

NEPA Basics (EPA): <http://www.epa.gov/compliance/basics/nepa.html>

Frequently Asked Questions About CEQA: <http://ceres.ca.gov/ceqa/more/faq.html>

Nash, J. Environmental Law and Policy: The Essentials. Aspen Publishers. 2010. Chapter 8

11/19 The Role of Media in Environmental Issues. Non-governmental organizations and grassroots movements

Maria Armoudian, "Kill the Messenger: The Media's Role in the Fate of the World," chapter 11.

Week 14

11/24 International Agreements and Regulations: Challenges and Progress.

Energy Governance Outlook Report: Global Scenarios and Implications, September 2013

11/26 – 11/29 Thanksgiving Break – no class

Week 15

12/1 Sustainability and "Green Economy:" Solutions and Challenges. **Second Paper Due.**

Winston, Andrew. Green Recovery: Get Lean, Get Smart, and Emerge from the Downturn on Top. Harvard Business Press, Boston, MA, 2009, Chapter 2

UN Sustainable development goals <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300>

12/3 Conclusions. Review for the final exam.

Final Exam: Monday, December 15, 8-10 a.m., SGM 101