

**Instructor: Dr. Douglas Becker**  
Email: [dfbecker@usc.edu](mailto:dfbecker@usc.edu)

Office: VKC Basement 42A  
Tues/Thurs 9:30-11:00  
and by appointment

### **Environmental Issues in Society (ENST 150)**

Lectures: 11:00-12:20 T/Th

Location: SOS B46

Spring 2019, 4 units

**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.

#### **Text and Readings**

- Withgott, Jay *et al.* Environment: The Science behind the Stories. 5<sup>th</sup> Edition. ISBN: 9780321897428. Other editions of the textbook are OK to use.
- Additional reading materials for this class will be posted to Blackboard. Students are expected to complete the assigned readings prior to each 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.

**Research paper:** This is a writing-intensive course. Per USC GE requirements, there will be a total of 15 pages of graded writing assignments. We will accomplish this via a **15-page paper** on environmental issues that will require research and citation of sources. Please use 1-inch margins; double-spaced. Required number of sources: **15 per paper**. The instructor will provide additional guidelines on the required diversity of sources as well as greater details as to the expectations on the paper in a formal paper prompt early in the semester.

#### **Learning objectives:**

- an interdisciplinary approach to complex environmental problems using basic tools of policy and international processes;
- 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 environmental 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 critically analyze and apply both quantitative and qualitative data in reasoning and evaluation of both to environmental problems, in proposed solutions, and in consideration of the student's own potential solutions and/or management of the issues

## Grading

Midterm Exam	25%
Research Paper (15 pages)	25%
Final Exam	25%
Group Presentation in section	5%
2 quizzes on reading	5% each 10% total
Attendance & Participation (Lecture and Discussion Section)	5%
Discussion section Assignments/Homework	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

The midterm and final are both in class, with both objective and critical analytic components (including blue-book essays). The final is cumulative. The paper, as referenced above, will require a student select a single environmental issue and explore the nature of the challenge, political discourses on the issue, and proposed solutions. Attendance is required for both lectures and discussion sections and are tracked on Blackboard as well as by the teaching assistants for discussion sections. There are a series of group presentations in the discussion sections. These are groups of 3-4 on a topic selected from a list of topics. You may not select a group presentation that is the same issue as you research paper. There are also two scheduled quizzes, specifically on the reading material. Finally, there are a couple of homework assignments in the sections. They will be explained in the sections.

### Course goals:

1. Be able to critically analyze 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.

### Grading Scale

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale

A	93-100
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69

D 63-66  
 D- 60-62  
 F 59 and below

### 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 12<sup>th</sup> week equivalency for any course scheduled for less than 15 weeks).”

### Course Schedule

Week	Topic	Readings
<b>Week 1:</b> <b>Jan 8: Introductions to Environmental Issues</b>  <b>Jan 10: Environmental Norms, and what is “Sustainability?”</b>  <b>Disc: Introductions, and what are the most important environmental issues?</b>	Introductions, Norms in the International System and in Domestic Politics, and the relationship between norms and law	Withgott: Ch. 1-2  Withgott Ch. 6
<b>Week 2:</b> <b>Jan 15: Relationship between Economics and the Environment</b>  <b>17: Environmental Negotiation Regimes</b>  <b>Disc: The evolution of cooperation on environmental protection</b>	Global action on environmental protection and the relationship between economic development and environmental protection	Alexandra Lindenthal and Martin Koch, “The Bretton Woods Institutions and the Environment: Organizational Learning within the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).” <b>Blackboard</b>  Porter, Brown, and Chasek, Chapters 3 and 5, <b>On Blackboard</b>
<b>Week 3:</b> <b>January 22: The Millenium</b>	The Millennium Development Goals and the Sustainable	Kamau, Chasek and O’Connor, pages 1-46 <b>on Blackboard</b>

<p><b>Development Goals</b></p> <p><b>January 24: The Sustainable Development Goals</b></p> <p><b>Disc: The Sustainable Development Goals</b></p>	<p>Development Goals</p>	<p>Kamau, Chasek, and O'Conner, Chapters 5 and 7</p>
<p><b>Week 4:</b> <b>January 29: The Causes and Effects of Climate Change</b></p> <p><b>January 31: From Kyoto to Paris</b></p> <p><b>Disc: Public Diplomacy &amp; Climate Change</b></p>	<p>Climate Change and Global Action</p>	<p>Withgott : Ch. 18</p> <p>Withgott Ch. 17</p> <p>Chasek and Wagner, From Kyoto to Paris <b>Blackboard</b></p>
<p><b>Week 5:</b> <b>February 5: Traditional Energy Sources</b></p> <p><b>February 7 Alternative Energy Sources</b></p> <p><b>Disc: Energy Sources Pros and Cons</b> <b>Exercise/Homework</b></p>	<p>Energy sources and infrastructures: the Pros and Cons of each energy source available and future research</p>	<p>Withgott : Ch. 19</p> <p>Withgott, Ch 20-21</p>
<p><b>Week 6:</b> <b>February 12: Mining and Drilling</b></p> <p><b>February 14: Arctic Drilling</b></p> <p><b>FEBRUARY 14: FIRST QUIZ!!</b></p> <p><b>Disc: Arctic Council</b></p>	<p>The environmental hazards of mining and drilling operations and the governmental reactions</p>	<p>Withgott: Ch. 23</p> <p>Robert Harriss, " Arctic Offshore Oil: Great Risks in an Evolving Ocean." <b>Blackboard</b></p>
<p><b>Week 7:</b> <b>February 19: Desertification</b></p> <p><b>February 21: Ecological Security: Resource Conflicts in</b></p>		<p>Lindsay Stringer, "Can the UN Convention to Combat Desertification guide sustainable use of the world's soils?" <b>Blackboard</b></p>

<p><b>an age of environmental degradation</b></p> <p><b>Disc: Mid-Term Review</b></p>		<p>Cullen S Hendrix and Idean Saleyhan, "Climate Change, Rainfall, and Social Conflict in Africa." <b>Blackboard</b></p>
<p><b>Week 8: February 26: Endangered Species</b></p> <p><b>February 28: Mid-term!</b></p> <p><b>Disc: Mainstreaming Sustainability in Economic Development</b></p>	<p>Protection of Endangered Species</p>	<p>Rosalind Reeve, "Wildlife Trade, sanctions and compliance: Lessons from the CITES regime." <u>International Affairs</u>, 2006. <b>Blackboard</b></p> <p>No Reading, Mid-Term Prep!</p>
<p><b>Week 9: March 5: Population and Overpopulation</b></p> <p><b>March 7: Urbanization</b></p> <p><b>Disc: China's One Child Policy</b></p>	<p>Population, Urbanization, Use of Resources, and the Environmental Challenge of the Growing World</p>	<p>Withgott : Ch. 3 and 8</p> <p>Wittgott Chapter 13</p>
<p><b>MARCH 12, 14</b></p>		<p><b>SPRING BREAK!!</b></p>
<p><b>Week 10: March 19: Air Pollution</b></p> <p><b>March 21: Deforestation</b></p> <p><b>Disc: Acid Rain Negotiations</b></p>	<p>Air Pollution, Transnational Pollution, Deforestation, and Collective Action</p>	<p>Wittgoth Ch. 17</p> <p>Withgott, Ch 5, 12</p>
<p><b>Week 11 March 26 A: Agriculture</b></p> <p><b>March 28: B: GMOs</b></p> <p><b>Disc: Media and Environmental Issues—An Exercise</b></p>	<p>The food we eat</p>	<p>Withgott : Ch. 9-10</p> <p>Readings on GMOs <b>Blackboard</b></p> <p>Armoudian on Media and Environment <b>Blackboard</b> for discussion sections</p>

<b>Week 12:</b> <b>April 2: Oceans</b>  <b>April 4: Freshwater</b>  <b>Disc: Is there a right to water?</b>	Pollution and Sustainable Development and Utilization of Ocean and Water Resources	Withgott : Ch. 16  Withgott, Ch 15
<b>Week 13</b> <b>April 9: Trash</b>  <b>April 11: Toxicity in Consumer Products</b>  <b>April 11: SECOND QUIZ</b>  <b>Disc: Presentations</b>	Landfills, Recycling, Impact of Trash, and then Toxicity in Plastics and in the Cosmetic Industry	Withgott : Ch. 22  Withgott, Ch 14
<b>Week 14:</b> <b>April 16: Biodiversity</b>  <b>April 18: Corporate Green Initiatives</b>  <b>Disc: Presentations</b>	Promotion of Biodiversity and the impact of the Biodiversity Treaty  Green Corporate Initiatives  <b>Research Paper is DUE – April 18</b>	Withgott : Ch. 16  The greening of Walmart <b>Blackboard</b>
<b>Week 15:</b> <b>April 23: Sustainability</b>  <b>April 25: The Value of Small Actions: Banning Straws</b>  <b>Disc: Final review</b>	Where do we go from here? And Can Small Actions Lead to Big Results?	Withgott : Ch. 24  Readings and Opinion Pieces on the Upcoming Straw Ban
<b>Final Exam for A (MW 2:00-3:20) is Friday December 7, from 2-4 pm in SOS B 46</b>	<b>Final Exam for B (T/TH 8:00-9:20) is Tuesday December 11 from 4:30-6:30 in SOS B 2</b>	

### Support Systems

*Student Counseling Services (SCS) - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call*

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

<https://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling/>

*National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1-800-273-8255*

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

*Relationship & Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-4900 - 24/7 on call*

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. <https://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp/>

*Sexual Assault Resource Center*

For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: <http://sarc.usc.edu/>

*Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX compliance – (213) 740-5086*

Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class.

<https://equity.usc.edu/>

*Bias Assessment Response and Support*

Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. <https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support/>

*Student Support & Advocacy – (213) 821-4710*

Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. <https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa/>

*Diversity at USC – <https://diversity.usc.edu/>*

Tabs for Events, Programs and Training, Task Force (including representatives for each school), Chronology, Participate, Resources for Students

*USC Department of Public Safety – UPC: (213) 740-4321 24-hour emergency or to report a crime.*

Provides overall safety to USC community. [dps.usc.edu](http://dps.usc.edu)

### **Academic Conduct**

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. Students are expected to submit original work. They have an obligation both to protect their own work from misuse and to avoid using another's work as their own. All students are expected to understand and abide by the principles of academic honesty outlined in the University Student Conduct Code (see University Governance, Section 11.00) of SCampus ([www.usc.edu/scampus](http://www.usc.edu/scampus) or <http://scampus.usc.edu>). The recommended sanctions for academic integrity violations can be found in Appendix A of the Student Conduct Code.

### **Emergency preparedness/course continuity**

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.

### **Students with Disabilities**

USC is committed to making reasonable accommodations to assist individuals with disabilities in reaching their academic potential. If you have a disability which may impact your performance, attendance, or grades in this course and require accommodations, you must first register with the Office of Disability Services and Programs ([www.usc.edu/disability](http://www.usc.edu/disability)). DSP provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in GFS (Grace Ford Salvatori Hall) 120 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776. Email: [ability@usc.edu](mailto:ability@usc.edu)