



Introduction to Environmental Studies

ENST 100 Fall 2019

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Office Hours: TBD

Office: CAS 105 (Go to Environmental Studies Program main entrance: CAS 116, accessible from Trousdale Pky)

Section: 33001D (MWF 1:00 – 1:50)

Room: WPH 102

Units: 4

Prerequisites: none

Textbook and required readings:

- Friedland and Relyea. Essentials of Environmental Science. W.H. Freeman & Co., 2016. ISBN-13: 978-1-319-06566-9
- Additional readings will be assigned throughout the semester and will be available on Blackboard

Course Description/Rationale

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.

Learning Objectives

- Gain knowledge of the physical, chemical, and 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
- Learning objectives in this course are aligned with those of the Environmental Studies Program: <https://dornsife.usc.edu/environmental-studies/learning-objectives/>

Course Notes

This course will use Blackboard for communication, information and turning in assignments. Lecture slides will be made available as a PDF after each lecture topic has been completed. Assignments and additional reading/listening content posted to Blackboard will be announced in class, posted under announcements on Blackboard, and an email reminder sent to the class. In class activities sometimes require a computer/tablet with internet access to work with real life data in excel, run simple simulations or access websites with relevant information – students will be notified when computers are needed. Please notify the instructor if you do not have access to

a mobile device that can access the internet, spreadsheet software like Excel, and wordprocessing software like Word. Since this is a four unit course, students are expected to engage in close reading and critical analysis outside of lecture as well as discussion during class.

I will try to respond to emails within 24 hrs. If you haven't heard from me, please politely remind me by email or in person after class. Though not required, it can be helpful if you email me to let me know you plan to stop by office hours and let me know what you'd like to discuss.

Class Conduct Policies

- Come to class prepared
- 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

Grading Breakdown

Assignments	Points	% of Grade
Midterm 1	100	22.5%
Midterm 2	100	22.5%
Final	100	22.5%
Endangered Species Project	30	6.7%
In-Class Activities (5 pts x 5), one dropped	25	5.6%
Podcast listening questions (5 pts x 2)	10	2.2%
Letter to elected official	30	6.7%
News article analysis (5 pts x 2)	10	2.2%
Nature essays (10 pts x 1)	10	2.2%
Debate	30	6.7%
TOTAL	445	100%

Grading Scale

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale. Points earned will be divided by points possible, and result rounded to the nearest full percentage point.

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

Description and Assessment of Assignments

Below are brief descriptions of the assignments students will complete as part of this class. Rather than writing one long research paper, students will complete a variety of exercises exploring different aspects of environmental studies. Additional information will be provided as needed via Blackboard. Late assignments will not be accepted. Student athletes should contact the instructor with their game/travel schedule early in the semester and provide reminders of when they will not be in class. That way appropriate arrangements can be made.

Endangered Species Project

This assignment will involve researching an endangered species and its recovery plan, then doing an outline style summary your findings for use in an in-class discussion about managing limited resources for species recovery. Research should cover the cause of the organism's endangerment, the details and cost of the recovery plan, the potential for recovery, and whether, or not, you think the cost is worth it. This research should be annotated with references for all information, and will be graded on completeness of the content. Additional assignment details will be distributed through Blackboard.

Letter to Elected Official

Students will select a specific bill identified from <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/>, an environmental issue from articles published at <http://legal-planet.org/> or similar news outlet, and write a letter to an elected official expressing their views on that topic. The letter will be formatted as a formal letter and should be as persuasive as possible, using evidence to support the position presented. Extra credit will be given for actually sending the letter.

In-Class Debate

Groups of 6-8 students will be assigned a specific environmental issue and then debate the issue in front of their peers. Students will be assigned their topic and position in advance so that they can research and strategize.

News Article Analysis

Students will write up a ~1-2 page analysis of bias and fact in news articles pertaining to the topics we are covering in class. I will provide a guide to help students critically read assigned articles. Students should show that they have thoughtfully considered the content, author, message, audience, and additional contextual information relevant to the article. This is not meant to be a synopsis of the article. Students should be prepared to discuss their analysis in class on the due date.

Environmental Perspectives

Students will read a collection of short essays and write a reflective response to one of the essays. These reflections should contain critical assessment of the essay selected and connections to the student's own life and experiences. This is not a synopsis of the essay. The essays present perspectives on the relationship humans have with 'nature', and come from authors with diverse backgrounds. Everyone should come to class prepared to share their ideas and engage in discussion of all assigned readings.

Reading/Listening Questions

Students will periodically respond to short answer questions that accompany additional readings or podcasts assigned through Blackboard.

In-Class Activities/Questions

Students will periodically engage with real word data and information available online during the class period to reinforce concepts covered in lecture and reading. Worksheets will be posted to Blackboard and be made available during the class period. It is expected that students will complete the assigned activity and submit answers at the end of the class period. Group work, discussion, and asking the instructor for help are all encouraged.

Exams

Exam questions will be drawn from course readings and lecture materials, and will include multiple choice, fill in the blank, T/F, short answer and essay questions. All three exams will cover the lecture and reading material immediately after the preceding exam (or starting on the first day of class for midterm 1). The final exam will carry the same weight as a midterm. **No make-up exams or assignments will be allowed without explicit permission.** If a student misses an exam and/or assignment, they will receive a zero for that portion of the course. 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.

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 me before the exam if at all possible.

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

For the best learning experience, you are expected to have read assigned material by the date it is discussed in class. Article and supplemental readings will be posted online. **The readings and schedule of topics may be adjusted throughout the semester depending on progress of the class.**

	Class Topics/Activities	Reading/Listening	Assignments/Deliverables
Week 1 Aug 26, 28, 30	-Introduction and course overview - What is science? What is the state of Earth and how do we know? -In-class exercise #1: Data representation	Chapter 1	
Week 2 Sep 4, 6 NO CLASS SEP 2 – Labor Day	-Earth as a system -Climates, biomes	Chapter 2, 3	
Week 3 Sep 9, 11, 13	-Evolution -Population & community ecology -News analysis #1 discussion	Chapter 4; News article on BB	-News analysis #1 (Wed, Sep 11)
Week 4 Sep 16, 18, 20	-Biodiversity -Coservation biology -Podcast #1 discussion	Chapter 13; Podcast on BB	-Podcast #1 listening questions (Wed, Sep 18) -Make Endangered Species Project selection (Fri, Sep 20)

Week 5 Sep 23, 25, 27	-Human population & growth dynamics -In-class exercise #2: Human population & GDP -Nature essays discussion	Chapter 5; Nature essays on BB	-Nature essays response (Wed, Sep 25)
Week 6 Sep 30 Oct 2, 4	MIDTERM #1 (Monday, Sep 30, topics through Ch. 5 Human Population) -Land use, public lands -In-class exercise #3: Landuse in the US	Chapter 7	
Week 7 Oct 7, 9, 11	-Ecosystem ecology -News analysis #2 discussion	Chapter 3; News article on BB	-News analysis #2
Week 8 Oct 14, 16 NO CLASS OCT 18 – Fall Break	-Agriculture & food -Endangered species management discussion	Chapter 7	-Endangered Species Project summary outlines (Wed, Oct 16)
Week 9 Oct 21, 23, 25	-Energy: non-renewable & renewable -In-class activity #4: Energy use in the US	Chapter 8	
Week 10 Oct 28, 30 Nov 1	MIDTERM #2 (Wednesday Oct 30, topics since Midterm #1 through Ch. 8 Energy) -Air pollution -In-class exercise #5: air pollution activity	Chapter 10	
Week 11 Nov 4, 6, 8	-Introduction to water resources -Water pollution -Podcast #2 discussion	Chapter 9; Podcast on BB	-Podcast #2 questions (Wed, Nov 4)
Week 12 Nov 11, 13, 15	-Waste management & recycling -Letter to elected official discussion	Chapter 11	-Letter to elected official (Wed, Nov 13)
Week 13 Nov 18, 20, 22	-Climate change: physical science -Climate change: social science -In-class activity #6: managing CO ₂ emissions	Chapter 14	
Week 14 Nov 25 NO CLASS NOV 27, 29 - Thanksgiving	-Wrap up climate change -Sustainability	Chapter 15	
Week 15 Dec 2, 4, 6	-Debates -Catch up & review		-Debate notes (Mon, Dec 2)
Wednesday December 18	FINAL EXAM 11 am – 1 pm in WPH 102 (Will focus on topics covered since midterm #2 – but entire semester is fair game)		

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 Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b. 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>.

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. 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. www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Relationship and 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. 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: 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. 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. studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support

The Office of Disability Services and Programs

Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. dsp.usc.edu

Student Support and Advocacy – (213) 821-4710

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

Diversity at USC

Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students. diversity.usc.edu

USC Emergency Information

Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible. emergency.usc.edu

USC Department of Public Safety – UPC: (213) 740-4321 – HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24-hour emergency or to report a crime.

Provides overall safety to USC community. dps.usc.edu