



## **ENST 100: Introduction to Environmental Studies**

**Units: 4**

**Fall 2019, MW 2:00-3:20 pm**

**Location: VKC 156**

### **Instructor:**

**Dr. David Ginsburg**

Associate Professor (Teaching)

**Office:** CAS 116c

**Office Hours:** MW 11:00am to noon

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### **Course Description**

This course will give you an overview of how the natural world works, the ways in which humans are perturbing the earth and how 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/>

**Recommended preparation:** ENST 100

### **Course Notes**

We will use Blackboard for communication, information and turning in assignments. Lecture slides will be made available after the lecture is given. Additional readings may be assigned periodically throughout the semester and these will be announced in class, posted on Blackboard and via email messages sent to the class. Sometimes computers will be used in class to work with real life data in excel and run simple simulations – students will be notified when computers are needed. This is a 4-unit, general education course, which requires in-depth reading and critical analysis outside of lecture.

### **Required Readings and Supplementary Materials**

- 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

### **Description and Assessment of Assignments**

You will be graded on the basis of your performance on exams, written assignments, group presentations and class participation. Lecture presentations will be posted on Blackboard after the lectures. Exam questions will be drawn from course readings, lecture materials and

discussions. Each exam will cover the lecture and reading material immediately after the preceding exam (or starting on the first day of class for Exam 1). The final exam will carry the same weight as Exams 1 and 2. (100 pts each; 300 pts total)

**If there is a conflict with an exam, you must email the instructor (DG) at least 1-week in advance** to see if alternative arrangements can be made. **Otherwise, no make-up exams will be allowed.** 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 sometimes a hand-held calculator) are required. Failure to comply with exam policies will result in a zero for that particular exam.

Outlined below is a brief description of the course assignments and activities (additional details will be posted on Blackboard):

The life table analysis is a group project (2-3 per group) in which students develop and answer questions comparing the survival patterns of different groups of humans (e.g., groups that differ in geographic area, time period, gender, socio-economic background, or ethnicity). Students will collect life table data from tombstones in local cemeteries that provide ages, genders and dates at death. (50 pts total)

The news article analysis is a 1-2 page analysis of bias and truth in news articles related to topics covered in class. Students will use a guide (given by the instructor) on how to look for bias and facts in the news for this assignment. Students will discuss their findings during class on the day each assignment is due. (2 articles, 20 pts each; 40 pts total)

The endangered species assignment will involve researching an endangered species and its recovery plan and providing a short write up of your research for use in an in-class discussion. Your research should cover the cause of your species endangerment, the details and cost of the recovery plan, the potential for recovery, and whether or not you think the cost is worth it. (25 pts total)

Students also will write a letter (2-pages max) to a member of congress expressing their views on a particular environmental issue. The letter will be formatted as a formal letter and should be as persuasive as possible using evidence to support your views. Extra credit (2 pts) will be given for sending your letter. (25 pts total)

#### Grading Breakdown

Assignment	Points	Grade %
Exam 1	100	22.5%
Exam 2	100	22.5%
Final	100	22.5%
Life table & survivorship analysis	50	11.5%
News article analyses (2 x 20 pts)	40	9%
Endangered species activity	25	6%
Congress letter	25	6%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>440</b>	

**Grading Scale**

Your final grade will be determined using the following scale (which may be adjusted depending on the progress of the class):

>93 = A; 90-92 = A-; 87-89 = B+; 83-86 = B; 80-82 = B-; 77-79 = C+; 73-76 = C; 70-72 = C-; 67-69 = D+; 63-66 = D; 60-62 = D-; <59 = F

**Additional Policies**

Routine attendance and active participation are an important part of each class session. For the best learning experience, you are expected to have read the course materials (see Course Schedule, below) by the date it is discussed in class. Roll will be taken periodically in the form of thought exercises, reading assignments and in-class questions. You are responsible for information, announcements, date changes and any other course material presented, regardless of your participation and/or presence in the classroom.

As mentioned above, **if there is a conflict with an exam, you must email the instructor (DG) one-week in advance to see if arrangements can be made.** Make-up exams are often sometimes more difficult (because the exam needs to be rewritten specifically for you!), so it is in your best interest to take the exam on the day it is scheduled. If you have an emergency on an exam day, you must get in touch with the instructor (DG) before the exam. Assignments will not be accepted late.

Additionally:

- Come to class prepared
- Be respectful of the instructor 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

**Course Schedule:**

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

Date/Week	Topics & Activities	Readings
Aug 26, 28	Intro & course overview Intro to state of earth What is science?	Ch. 1, 2
Sept 2, 4	<b>LABOR DAY HOLIDAY (Sept 2)</b> Earth systems science <b>News article analysis #1 (Sept 4)</b>	Ch. 3
Sept 9, 11	Climate & Biomes Evolution & biodiversity	Ch. 3, 4
Sept 16, 18	Population growth & ecology <i>Life table and survivorship activity</i>	Ch. 4, 5
Sept 23, 25	<b>Exam 1 (Sept 23)</b> Conservation biology	Ch. 13
Sept 30, Oct 2	Natural resources <i>Endangered species activity</i>	Ch. 6, 7
Oct 7, 9	Land use <b>News article analysis #2 (Oct 9)</b>	Ch. 7

Oct 14, 16	Agriculture & food Energy & biofuels	Ch. 8, see Bb
Oct 21, 23	Water pollution	Ch. 9
Oct 28, 30	<b>Exam 2 (Oct 28)</b> Air pollution	Ch. 10
Nov 4, 6	Solid waste & sustainability <b>Letter to Congress (Nov 6)</b>	Ch. 11
Nov 11, 13	Climate, science & people	Ch. 14, 15
Nov 18, 20	Economics & policy	Ch. 15, see Bb
Nov 25, 27	Global sustainability <b>Life table and survivorship report (Nov 25)</b> <b>THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY (Nov 27)</b>	See Bb
Dec 2, 4	Course catch up & review	
Dec 13	<b>Final Exam: 2:00-4:00 PM, VKC 156</b>	

### 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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](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.  
[equity.usc.edu](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://dps.usc.edu)