

**ENST 500: Interdisciplinary Approaches to
Fall 2023, Tues 3:30-6:20 pm**

Section: 33072: 4 units

Location: WPH 202

Instructor: Dr. David Ginsburg, Professor (Teaching), ENST

Preferred Pronouns: he/him

Office: CAS 116

Office hours: Thurs, 10:30 am to 12:00 pm or by appointment
via Calendly: <https://calendly.com/ginsbuda>

Email: dginsbur@usc.edu

Course description

ENST 500 will help students to develop advanced skills to address complex environmental issues that society faces today. Different approaches for studying environmental processes and resources will be examined. *Recommended Preparation:* Course is geared towards students enrolled in their first semester of the ENST Masters Degree Program.

Classroom ground rules

- Share responsibility for including all voices in a conversation
- Listen respectfully to your classmate's and your instructor's viewpoints
- Be open to changing your perspectives based on what you learn from others
- Understand that we are bound to make mistakes in this space
- Understand that your words have effects on others
- Take group work during class and outside of lecture seriously
- Understand that your classmates may have different experiences from your own
- Make an effort to get to know your classmates
- Understand there are different approaches to solving problems

Learning objectives

Student learning objectives are aligned with those of the ENST Program (see [link](#)) in which students will:

- Recognize relationships between physical and human interactions in the environment
- Evaluate scientific data in support of a particular topic or policy initiative
- Understand and assess scholarly articles related to course topics
- Formulate an integrated and interdisciplinary response to environmental problems by completing a written assignment and group presentation on a specific conservation management and policy issue

Course modality

ENST 500 will be taught as a synchronous, in-person course and you are expected to be present for each lecture section. Recorded lectures will not be provided to students via Zoom (or any other platform) unless accommodations have been requested via [OSAS](#). Students that miss class are expected to get notes from their classmates.

This course will primarily use Blackboard (Bb) for communication, information and turning in assignments. PDF copies of lecture slides and links to topics discussed during class will be made available on Bb after each lecture is completed. Additional readings will be assigned throughout the semester and will be announced in class, posted on Bb and via email messages sent to the class. This is a 4-unit, graduate level course, which requires in-depth reading and critical analysis outside of lecture.

Textbook and Readings

- Sodhi, N.S. and Ehrlich, P.R. (2011) Conservation Biology for All, 2nd Edition, 358 pp., Oxford University Press. **Available online for free.** Referred to below as CBA. <https://conbio.org/publications/free-textbook/>
- Additional readings will be assigned throughout the semester and will be available on Bb

Description and Assessment of Assignments

You will be graded on the basis of your performance on written assignments, class activities, participation (e.g., article discussions, Bb assignments, etc.) and a final exam. Exam questions will be drawn from course readings, lecture materials and related assignments, activities and discussions. The final exam will be administered via Bb (specific details will be posted on Bb).

If you have a scheduling conflict with an assignment, activity, etc., please notify me via email at least two-weeks in advance to see if alternative arrangements can be made. If it is an excused absence (official USC travel, medical reasons, religious observation, etc.), I will do my best to provide you with a way to obtain the associated points. Otherwise, no make-ups will be allowed.

All assignments must be submitted by the stated deadlines. Late assignments will have 15% deducted each 24 hours, with the first 24 hr deduction starting 15 min after the deadline. Reminder: USC policy prohibits sharing of any course content outside of the learning environment.

Assignments and Activities

- Article presentation and discussion: Individual students will select and post an article and relevant reading questions (for their classmates) from the primary literature and present/lead a discussion (~20-30 min total) during class. Each presentation is worth 75 points total (60 pts presentation plus 15 pts posting article and discussion questions ≥5-days before presentation date).
- **Article analysis:** Students will read a scholarly article (selected by a classmate; see above) and provide a written summary (500-words max; single spaced) to questions posted online, which they will then submit via Bb (**Note:** students leading a given discussion are not required to submit a written summary for that particular week). Students will discuss their findings during class on the day each assignment is due. (10 x 10 pts each; 100 pts total).
- **Science Story:** Students are required to write two separate “Science Stories” over the course of the semester. Each story will be a different length (500- and 1,000-words) and should address a research topic (from the scholarly literature) related to an environmental issue that society is currently facing (e.g., issues discussed in our course). Each story is worth 75 points (65 pts science story plus 10 pts topic submission). We will discuss this assignment in more detail during class.

Grading Breakdown

Assignment	Points	Grade %
Final exam	125	25%
Science Story (2 x 65 pts each)	130	25%
Science Story Topic (2 x 10 pts each)	20	4%
Article presentation & discussion	75	15%
Article analysis (10 x 10 pts each)	100	20%
In-class participation	60	12%
TOTAL	510	

Grading scale

Final course grades will be determined based on the percentage of points earned as outlined below. This scale may be adjusted depending on the progress of the class. If course taken as a “Pass” grade, you must earn a letter grade of C- or greater (see above) in course. A final point score at or below a D+ grade will result in a “No Pass.”

A	94-100	C	73-76
A-	90-94	C-	70-72
B+	87-89	D+	67-69
B	83-86	D	63-66
B-	80-82	D-	60-62
C+	77-79	F	59 and below

Additional policies

Routine attendance and active participation are an important part of each class session. Participation will be evaluated via thought exercises, reading assignments, in-class quizzes and questions. You are responsible for all information, announcements, date changes and any other course material presented, regardless of your participation and presence in the classroom.

The use of phones and other devices for text messaging, email, social media use and web-browsing is not permitted in class except where required for in-class work. Students are encouraged to use a paper notebook and pen for recording notes.

Course Schedule

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

Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments
Aug 22	Introduction & overview	See Bb: Bradshaw et al. 2011	
Aug 29	Conservation biology	CBFA: Ch. 1 See Bb: Ehrlich & Mooney	Article Analysis & Discussion 1
Sept 05	Biodiversity	CBFA: Ch. 2 See Bb: Meyers 2000	Article Analysis & Discussion 2
Sept 12	Ecosystem functions	CBFA: Ch. 3 See Bb: Walker 1992	500 Word Story Topic Due Article Analysis & Discussion 3
Sept 19	Habitat fragmentation	CBFA: Ch. 4, 5 See Bb: Wilcox 1985	Article Analysis & Discussion 4
Sept 26	Shifting baselines	See Bb: See Bb: Papworth et al. 2009	Article Analysis & Discussion 5
Oct 03	500 Word Science Story Reviews: In-Class (See Bb, TBA)		
Oct 10	Invasive species	CBFA: Ch. 7 See Bb: Simberloff 1999	Article Analysis & Discussion 6
Oct 17	Endangered species	CBFA: Ch. 12 See Bb: TBA	Article Analysis & Discussion 7
Oct 24	Agriculture and biofuels	See Bb: TBA	1,000 Word Story Topic Due Article Analysis & Discussion 8
Oct 31	Fisheries & the blue economy	See Bb: Pauly 2018	Article Analysis & Discussion 9

Nov 07	Extinctions	CBFA: Ch. 10 See Bb: Tillman 1994	Article Analysis & Discussion 10
Nov 14	1,000 Word Science Story Reviews: In-Class (See Bb, TBA)		
Nov 21	<i>Thanksgiving Break – No Class</i>		
Nov 28	Environmental justice & air pollution	See Bb: TBA	Article Analysis & Discussion 11
	FINAL EXAM (Take Home): Dec 12		

About the instructor

Dr. David Ginsburg is a Professor (Teaching) of Environmental Studies at the University of Southern California and a Research Associate in Invertebrate Zoology (Echinoderms) at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County. Ginsburg oversees undergraduate research projects across a range university- and externally-funded (ARPA-E, NSF) initiatives. He holds a Ph.D. in Marine Environmental Biology (USC), M.S. in Chemical Ecology (Univ of Guam) and B.A. in Biology from UC Santa Cruz, and has worked in a variety of marine environments from tropical coral reefs and temperate kelp forests to polar benthic habitats. Prior to joining the USC faculty, Ginsburg was a postdoctoral researcher in UCLA's Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering and a Marine Policy Fellow with NOAA. His teaching is focused on environmental studies and sciences, which includes hands-on learning and research experiences in the classroom and field. His awards include the USC Provost's Prize for Teaching with Technology and the Steven B. Sample Mentoring and Teaching Award.

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic integrity

The University of Southern California is a learning community committed to developing successful scholars and researchers dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the dissemination of ideas. Academic misconduct, which includes any act of dishonesty in the production or submission of academic work, compromises the integrity of the person who commits the act and can impugn the perceived integrity of the entire university community. It stands in opposition to the university's mission to research, educate, and contribute productively to our community and the world.

All students are expected to submit assignments that represent their own original work, and that have been prepared specifically for the course or section for which they have been submitted. You may not submit work written by others or "recycle" work prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s).

Other violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication (e.g., falsifying data), collusion, knowingly assisting others in acts of academic dishonesty, and any act that gains or is intended to gain an unfair academic advantage.

The impact of academic dishonesty is far-reaching and is considered a serious offense against the university. All incidences of academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity and could result in outcomes such as failure on the assignment, failure in the course, suspension, or even expulsion from the university.

For more information about academic integrity see [the student handbook](#) or the [Office of Academic Integrity's website](#), and university policies on [Research and Scholarship Misconduct](#).

Please ask me if you are unsure what constitutes unauthorized assistance on an exam or assignment, or what information requires citation and/or attribution.

Students and disability accommodations

USC welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. [The Office of Student Accessibility Services](#) (OSAS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter disability-related barriers. Once a student has completed the OSAS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and accommodations are determined to be reasonable and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be available to generate for each course. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at osas.usc.edu. You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at osasfrontdesk@usc.edu.

Support systems

[Counseling and Mental Health](#) - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call

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

[988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#) - 988 for both calls and text messages – 24/7 on call

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States. The Lifeline is comprised of a national network of over 200 local crisis centers, combining custom local care and resources with national standards and best practices. The new, shorter phone number makes it easier for people to remember and access mental health crisis services (though the previous 1 (800) 273-8255 number will continue to function indefinitely) and represents a continued commitment to those in crisis.

[Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services \(RSVP\)](#) - (213) 740-9355(WELL) – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender- and power-based harm (including sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking).

[Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX \(EEO-TIX\)](#) - (213) 740-5086

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

[Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment](#) - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

[The Office of Student Accessibility Services \(OSAS\)](#) - (213) 740-0776

OSAS ensures equal access for students with disabilities through providing academic accommodations and auxiliary aids in accordance with federal laws and university policy.

[USC Campus Support and Intervention](#) - (213) 740-0411

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

[Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#) - (213) 740-2101

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

[USC Emergency](#) - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

[USC Department of Public Safety](#) - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-1200 – 24/7 on call

Non-emergency assistance or information.

[Office of the Ombuds](#) - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)

A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

[Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice](#) - (323) 442-2850 or otfp@med.usc.edu

Confidential Lifestyle Redesign services for USC students to support health promoting habits and routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance.