



ENST 400: Environment and Sustainability Colloquium

Fall 2024, Weds 3:30-5:20 pm

Section: 33039, 2 units

Location: THH 112

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

Preferred Pronouns: he/him

Office: CAS 116

Office Hours: Weds, 10:30 am to 12:00 pm or by appointment

Email: dginsbur@usc.edu

Course overview

The goal of ENST 400 is to increase our knowledge and awareness of topics focused on the environment and sustainability. Students will be exposed to a variety of disciplines ranging from local and national science themes to environmental campaigns and policy implementation.

Seminars are scheduled on Wednesdays and the audience is primarily ENST undergrads, but some of the core and affiliated ENST faculty attend as well. Over the course of the semester, roughly 8-10 different researchers and practitioners with interdisciplinary interests in the environmental and sustainability fields will present their work.

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 classmates may have different experiences from your own
- Understand that there are different approaches to solving problems

Learning objectives

Student learning objectives are aligned with the ENST Program in which students will:

- Describe key problems in the academic and professional environmental fields of study
- Recognize and evaluate methods for addressing these problems
- Summarize research findings from the synthesis of complex information
- Critique research results and identify future study objectives

Course modality

ENST 400 will be taught as a synchronous, in-person course. We will primarily use Brightspace (**Referred to below as Bsp**) for communication, information and turning in assignments. PDF documents and links to topics discussed in class will be made available on Bsp. Readings from the primary and secondary literature will be assigned throughout the semester and will be announced in class, posted on Bsp and/or via email.

Attendance and participation

Weekly attendance and active participation are required for each class session. **If there is a scheduling conflict with a seminar presentation, assignment or activity you must notify me via email at least 2-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. Unexcused absences will result in the lowering of the final grade by ~0.75% per missed class. You are expected to come to class prepared and contribute to the discussion. Students that miss class are expected to get notes from their classmates.

Description and assessment of assignments

You will be graded on the basis of your performance on written assignments, course activities and participation during lectures. 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.

Overview of graded course work (more details to come during lecture)

- **Discussion topics (everyone):** Prior to each seminar, submit (via Google form) at least two comments and/or questions for the speaker based on pre-class research of their work. Questions will be graded on effort, thoughtfulness, relatedness to the speaker, reading material and originality. **Note:** students pre-assigned to organizing questions for a given speaker are not required to submit “discussant topics” for that particular week. Eight separate sets of comments and questions will be evaluated over the course of the semester and are worth 80 points total (8 x 10 pts each).
- **Discussion topics (group):** Each week, comments and questions submitted by the class will be paired-down, summarized and disseminated to the class by a pre-assigned group (n=2-3 students). Each set of topics is worth 30 points total (25 pts summary plus 5 pts posting information >4-days before the seminar date).
- **Seminar reflection (individual):** Students will choose any 4 seminar presentations to write a 2-3 page (singles spaced, 3-page max) reflection essay on. These essays should address 1) new knowledge you obtained from the talk, 2) questions that emerged from the presentation, 3) conversation and thoughts about how the perspective or policies discussed relate to your own work and education and 4) how this experience will impact your future engagement in environmental and sustainability issues. (75 points total).

Grading Breakdown

Assignment	Points	% Lecture
Seminar reflection	75	38%
Discussion topics (group)	30	15%
Discussion topics (individual)	80	40%
Participation (interp., disc, etc.)	15	8%
Total	200	100%

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 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-	90-93	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

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 Bsp.

Week	Date	Seminar Speaker
1	Aug 27	Course intro and overview
2	Sep 04	Dave Bottjer (USC Earth Sciences – Evolutionary Paleoecology) <i>“Deep time, extinction and the La Brea Tar Pits”</i>
3	Sep 11	TBA
4	Sep 18	Ryan Guillemette (USC/SCCWRP)
5	Sep 25	Tom Ford (The Bay Foundation, Science & Policy)
6	Oct 02	TBA
7	Oct 09	TBA
8	Oct 16	Tok Thompson (USC, Anthropology – Folk & Myth)
9	Oct 23	Richelle Tanner (Chapman College, Environ Sci & Policy)
10	Oct 30	Christine Lee (JPL, Environ Engineering)
11	Nov 06	Johnathan Casey (AOP, Fish and Invert Curator)
12	Nov 13	Lauren Dennhardt (Catalina Conservancy, Conservation)
13	Nov 10	Adam Obaza (PMRG Consulting, Science & Policy)
14	Nov 28	<i>Thanksgiving Holiday – No Class</i>
15	Dec 04	TBA

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic integrity

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 details, see [the student handbook](#) or the [Office of Academic Integrity’s website](#), and university policies on [Research and Scholarship Misconduct](#).

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 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.

Student Financial Aid and Satisfactory Academic Progress

To be eligible for certain kinds of financial aid, students are required to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) toward their degree objectives. Visit the [Financial Aid Office webpage](#) for [undergraduate-](#) and [graduate-level](#) SAP eligibility requirements and the appeals process.

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 consists 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) 740-2500

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.

[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.