

Environmental Studies 101

Seminar on Environmental Issues

Spring 2013 Syllabus

Course overview: All of humanity ultimately relies on the natural environment for its welfare, yet problems often arise from interactions between humans and the environment. The field of environmental studies strives to solve existing environmental problems and avoid future problems. A crucial part of solving and preventing environmental problems is to recognize that humanity does not exist as a separate entity from the natural environment.

"We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect." –Aldo Leopold

This course is designed to provide an opportunity to explore a limited number of environmental issues in a deep and focused way, so that you develop an appreciation for the complexity of environmental problems. It is specifically not intended to be a broad survey of environmental problems. To meet this requirement, we will explore in detail the following issues:

- Are honeybees the “canaries” of modern agricultural practices?
- Population, peak oil, and climate change: can technology balance the equation?
- Wildlife management: why do we now want wolves?

As we explore these issues, central themes will emerge, including changing perceptions of the relationship between nature and culture; the different cultural lenses through which people look at nature; the role of science and the media in environmental policy making; and the responsibilities that we have as individuals and communities to maintaining healthy, sustainable environments.

Liberal Arts Education: An additional goal of this class is to further your liberal arts education. What does this mean? The liberal arts education focuses on general learning, intellectual ability, and critical thinking rather than technical or professional skills. The goal of this class is not just to convey specific information about environmental issues (although you will learn much about this) but to teach you how to interpret this information critically, and how to understand modern environmental issues in their social, historical, and political context. A liberal arts education provides the tools we need to be active citizens of our communities. As we will learn this semester, active citizenship plays a key role in resolving the complex environmental dilemmas that we as a society face today.

In spring 2008, UW Oshkosh adopted a set of Essential Learning Outcomes to help define the meaning of a liberal education. One of these outcomes is the recognition that a liberal education recognizes our “Responsibility, as individuals and communities.” This includes “Knowledge of sustainability and its applications.” This course is designed to help us think about our responsibilities to each other, to our communities, and to our environment.

This course requires and a great deal of reading, writing, and participation in class discussions.

Instructor: Shannon Davis-Foust
Office Location: Halsey 255
Telephone: 920-424-1548
Email: davisfos@uwosh.edu
Office Hours: 1:00-2:00 Mondays, 10:00-11:00 Fridays
Class Days/Time: M, W 11:30-1:00
Classroom: Halsey 175

Required Books

- Askins, R. 2004. *Shadow Mountain: A Memoir of Wolves, a Woman, and the Wild*. Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group. (ISBN: 9780385482264)
- Jacobsen, R. 2009. *Fruitless Fall: The Collapse of the Honey Bee and the Coming Agricultural Crisis*. Bloomsbury USA. (ISBN: 9781596916395)
- McKibben, B. 2010. *Eaarth: Making a Life on a Tough New Planet*. Times Books. (ISBN: 9780805090567)

Policies

- It is your responsibility to be prepared for and attend each class. Notify me as soon as possible by email (or phone if necessary) if you plan to be absent for any reason. I consider infrequent absences as excused absences if I have been notified *in advance* of the class.
- Arrangements for any special need must be made *in advance*, except in the case of unforeseen circumstances. Late assignments will be accepted if arrangements were made in advance, but with a point reduction of 10% per day.
- Email and D2L will be used throughout the term. Emails constitute legal, official University communication. Not checking your email is not an excuse for performance problems in the class. Contact Academic Computing or any Campus Computer Lab supervisor for assistance with email and D2L.
- As a courtesy to others - and to yourself - please turn off all electronic distractions during class. If your cell phone goes off you will be asked to leave and you will lose all points for the day. If I see you using any unauthorized device during class I may not say anything, but I will subtract 10 points from your participation grade for each occurrence.
- Laptops may be used in this class, but I do not recommend them. Your participation grade will be lowered if I see that are using your laptop for anything outside of class.
- Writing assignments are expected to be of the highest quality. Anything turned in shorthand will be given a 0 until you hand in a legitimate version (at which point penalties for handing in the work late will apply).

Expectations

What I expect of you

- To be familiar with the course policies.
- To seek help with the course material if you need it.
- To communicate with me regarding special needs.
- To actively participate in class discussion.
- To turn in quality assignments on time.
- To be respectful of your classmates' opinions.

What you can expect from me

- To provide course materials on time
- To present factual and organized information.
- To be enthusiastic and knowledgeable about course material.
- To be respectful of your perspectives on an issue.
- To objectively grade your assignments and exams.
- To set high standards and help you meet those standards.

Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. If you decide to engage in academic misconduct you will be subject to the Student Academic Disciplinary Procedures as outlined in the Student Disciplinary Code (<http://www.uwosh.edu/dean>). Under Chapter UWS 14 (Student Academic Disciplinary Procedures), "academic misconduct" means an act in which a student (UWS 14.03):

- a) seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation;
- b) uses unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise;
- c) forges or falsifies academic documents or records;
- d) intentionally impedes or damages the academic work of others;
- e) engages in conduct aimed at making a false representation of a student's academic performance; or
- f) assists other students in any of these acts.

Disabilities

Students who have physical or learning disabilities that wish to request academic adjustments should notify the Disabilities Office so that appropriate accommodations can be made. For more information contact the Counseling Center or Disabilities Services (424-2404).

Grading

Exams (3).....300 pts

Assignments (5).....100 pts

Participation.....100 pts

Grading Scale

93 – 100% = A

80 – 82.9% = B-

67 – 69.9% = D+

90 – 92.9% = A-

77 – 79.9% = C+

63 – 66.9% = D

87 – 89.9% = B+

73 – 76.9% = C

60 – 62.9% = D-

83 – 86.9% = B

70 – 72.9% = C-

< 60% = F

Exams

Exams will primarily be in the format of short answer/essay, so study accordingly. If you will miss an exam due to a University-sponsored activity (e.g. athletics contest), your coach should have provided you with a letter. Bring a copy of that letter to permit a make-up exam. If you miss an exam for any other UWO-approved reason (e.g. illness or bereavement), go to the Dean of Students Office in Dempsey Hall, obtain a written excuse, and bring the written excuse to permit a make-up exam.

Absolutely NO late exams will be scheduled for reasons of holiday or end-of-term travel.

Pop Quizzes

Pop quizzes will be given if class participation is consistently poor. Your scores will be factored into your participation grade.

Writing Assignments

Five writing assignments between 500-600 words are due in the D2L dropbox (in Word or pdf format only) by 12:00 noon on the dates specified on the schedule. Your paper will be considered late if submitted after 12:00pm and docked 10% per day.

Your written responses should be on specific parts (of your choice) from the reading assignments.

These writing assignments are *not* reports or reviews of the reading. You should write for a general audience. The title should be attention-grabbing and descriptive of your topic. The opening paragraph of each paper should contain a single question that you are addressing. You should ask big-picture questions that foster discussion. For example, do not ask, “How many bushels of corn were harvested in Minnesota in 2004?” A better question would be, “What implications does the increase in corn production have on family farms?”

You are encouraged to share personal reflections and experiences, but be careful not to stray too far. Your writing must be based on the current reading assignments. Factual information must be properly and consistently cited (APA style) and all essays should contain at least one quotation. I encourage you to do research and incorporate references external to class material, but make sure to critically examine the credibility of all your sources of information. Wikipedia is not considered credible; however, it can be used as a starting point.

The following rubric is an outline of the qualities your essay grades will be based upon. Please see the document entitled “How to Write a Good Essay” for more information.

Exemplary (90-100%)	Superior originality, ideas are clearly presented and fully developed, ideas are strongly supported by passages from the reading, paragraphs are logically organized and begin with topic sentences, redundancy is absent, citations are properly and consistently used, grammar/spelling/punctuation/capitalization is correct, body of paper is between 500-600 words.
Good (80-89%)	Proficient response, ideas are mostly clear and developed, ideas are mostly supported by passages from the reading, organization is structured and understandable, redundancy is mostly absent, citations are generally correctly used, grammar/spelling/punctuation/capitalization is mostly correct, paper does not meet length requirements.
Average (70-79%)	Ideas are understandable and somewhat relate to the reading, organization is generally poor, sentence structure has errors, there is redundancy, citations are inconsistently used or improperly formatted, grammar/spelling/punctuation/capitalization has regular errors, paper ends abruptly with little or no conclusion, paper does not meet length requirements.
Below Average (69% & below)	Ideas poorly relate to the reading, organization is unclear, sentence structure has errors, citations are absent or references unclear, there is considerable redundancy, directions are not followed, grammar/spelling/punctuation/capitalization has several errors, paper ends abruptly with no conclusion, paper falls far short of minimum length.

Class participation

This class is a seminar, meaning that a significant portion of your grade is based on class participation, so come to class prepared to share your viewpoints and discuss the readings. Speaking is essential for gaining skills to effectively communicate your knowledge and points of view. The classroom is a great place to practice communication skills. Always be respectful of others and keep in mind that a different point of view isn’t necessarily a wrong point of view.

The following rubric is a rough outline of the qualities you will be graded on for participation.

Exemplary (90-100%)	Perfect attendance/one excused absence, maintains a positive attitude, team player, engaged in class topics both inside and outside of class, encourages others, respects others, participates in most discussions, is critical of the material, always alert
Good (80-90%)	One or two excused absences, maintains a positive attitude, team player, participates in most discussions, respects others, is critical of the material, often alert
Average (60-80%)	One or two excused absences/one unexcused absence, usually has a positive attitude, sometimes participates in discussions, respects others, occasionally daydreams
Below Average (50-60%)	Two or more unexcused absences, complains, does not typically participate in discussions, respects others, sometimes falls asleep
Poor (below 50%)	Three or more unexcused absences, complains and complains, prevents others from learning, almost never participates in discussions, disrespects others, does not complete assigned work, snores loudly

Spring 2013 Schedule*

Section 1: Are honeybees the “canaries” of modern agricultural practices?

Week of	Topics/Activities	Assignment (due)
28 Jan	<i>Lecture:</i> “Introduction to ES 101” In class reading “Lines in the Mind” by Meadows	W: Jacobsen Ch. 10
4 Feb	<i>Discussion:</i> Jacobsen <i>Lecture:</i> “Yogi Bear Teaches BooBoo some Ecology” <i>Film:</i> <u>Vanishing of the Bees</u>	<i>M:</i> Jacobsen Ch. 1,2 <i>W:</i> Jacobsen Ch. 3 (Written response due in the D2L dropbox by noon on Friday if your last name begins with A-M)
11 Feb	<i>Discussion:</i> Jacobsen <i>Lecture:</i> “From Beasts of Burden to Biotechnology”	<i>M:</i> Jacobsen Ch. 4,5 <i>W:</i> Jacobsen Ch. 6 (Written response due in the D2L dropbox by noon on Friday if your last name begins with N-Z)
18 Feb	<i>Discussion:</i> Jacobsen <i>Lecture:</i> “The Externalities of Modern Agriculture”	<i>M:</i> Jacobsen Ch. 7,8 <i>W:</i> Jacobsen Ch. 9 (Written response due in the D2L dropbox by noon on Friday if your last name begins with A-M)
25 Feb	<i>Discussion:</i> Finish Jacobsen – are bees the “canaries” of modern agriculture?	<i>M:</i> Jacobsen Ch. 10,11 and epilogue <i>W:</i> Exam I

Section 2: Population, peak oil, and climate change: can technology balance the equation?

4 Mar	<i>Exercise:</i> In class ecological footprint quiz <i>Lecture:</i> “Tools to Measure Environmental Impact” <i>Discussion:</i> Hardin 1968, Diamond 1995 <i>Lecture:</i> “Population Dynamics” <i>Film:</i> <u>World in the Balance: The People Paradox</u>	<i>M:</i> Hardin 1968 “Tragedy of the Commons” <i>W:</i> Diamond 1995 “Easter’s End” (Written response due in the D2L dropbox by noon on Friday if your last name begins with N-Z)
11 Mar	<i>Discussion:</i> McKibben and Styx <i>Lecture:</i> “350: The Most Important Number on Earth” <i>Films:</i> (split class) <u>An Inconvenient Truth</u> and <u>The Great Global Warming Swindle</u>	<i>M:</i> McKibben p.1-23 Styx 1996 “A Climate Repair Manual” <i>W:</i> McKibben p.23-46 (Written response due in the D2L dropbox by noon on Friday if your last name begins with A-M)

Week of	Topics/Activities	Assignment
18 Mar	<i>Spring Break</i>	
25 Mar	<i>Exercise:</i> Climate change role play <i>Discussion:</i> McKibben, Bradley, Körner and Hadley <i>Lecture:</i> “Phenology and climate change”	<i>M:</i> McKibben p.47-59 <i>W:</i> Bradley et al. 1999 “Phenological changes reflect climate change in Wisconsin” Körner and Hadley 2010 “Phenology under global warming” (Written response due in the D2L dropbox by noon on Friday if your last name begins with N-Z)
1 Apr	<i>Discussion:</i> McKibben, Campbell and Laherre, Heinberg and Fridley <i>Lecture:</i> “Our Addiction to Oil” <i>Film:</i> <u>Gasland</u>	<i>M:</i> Campbell and Laherre 1998 “The End of Cheap Oil” <i>W:</i> Heinberg and Fridley 2010 “The End of Cheap Coal” (Written response due in the D2L dropbox by noon on Friday if your last name begins with A-M)
8 Apr	<i>Discussion:</i> McKibben – Should we give Earth a new name?	<i>M:</i> McKibben p.102-119 <i>W:</i> Exam II

Section 3: Wildlife management: - why do we now want wolves?

15 Apr	<i>Discussion:</i> Askins and Manning <i>In class:</i> Leopold 1968 Thinking Like a Mountain <i>Film:</i> <u>Greenfire</u> <i>Lecture:</i> “Reintroduction of Wildlife”	<i>M:</i> Askins prologue, p.3-35, 53-73 <i>W:</i> Manning et al. 2009 “Restoring landscapes of fear with wolves in the Scottish Highlands” (Written response due in the D2L dropbox by noon on Friday if your last name begins with N-Z)
22 Apr	<i>Discussion:</i> Askins and Nei <i>Lecture:</i> “Wildlife Management: From Invasive to Endangered” <i>Guest Speaker:</i> Wildlife Biologist from WDNR (or <i>Film:</i> <u>Ghostbird</u>)	<i>M:</i> Askins p. 77-115 <i>W:</i> Nei 2001 “Sociopolitical dimensions of wolf mgt and restoration in the US” (Written response due in the D2L dropbox by noon on Friday if your last name begins with A-M)
29 Apr	<i>Discussion:</i> Askins and Maclennan <i>Film:</i> <u>Killing Coyote</u>	<i>M:</i> Askins 119-138; 153-176 <i>W:</i> Maclennan et al. 2009 “Evaluation of a compensation scheme to bring about pastoralist tolerance of lions” (Written response due in the D2L dropbox by noon on Friday if your last name begins with N-Z)
6 May	<i>Exercise:</i> Role play	<i>M:</i> Leopold 1924 “The River of the Mother of God” <i>W:</i> Exam III

*This schedule is subject to change.