

Geography 314: Environmental Conservation

Spring 2008

Class Sessions: Monday, Wednesday, Friday 10:20 – 11:20

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Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday (02:00 PM – 04:00 PM), Tuesday (11:00 AM – 1:00 PM) and by appointment or chance

Readings: Allen, J.L. (ed.) 2008: Annual Editions Environment 07/08, McGraw-Hill
Easton, T.A. (ed.) 2007: Taking Sides – Environmental Issues, Twelfth Edition, McGraw-Hill

Course Objectives:

The objective of this course is to provide you with an understanding about the complexities of environmental issues. Special emphasis will be given to the state of the global environment, population growth and food production, water resources, climate change, and toxic pollution. In addition to learning about basic concepts and developments we will explore various aspects of these issues by controversial discussions.

A more general goal of this class is to contribute to your overall “liberal arts” education. Such an education gives you a broad background in the ideas and events that have in some way shaped our modern lives (for better or for worse). It increases your awareness of the diversity and complexity of human life and thought, it “expands your mind”. For this reason, while a liberal arts education does not usually teach you how to do a particular sort of job, it does develop skills that are increasingly necessary in any job. These include the ability to quickly understand complicated readings on unfamiliar subjects, to express your thoughts clearly and persuasively, and to reason critically, creatively, and independently.

Student Requirements:

Your successful performance in this course depends on the following points:

- A) Regular attendance of the lectures
- B) Presentation of one subject in front of the class
- C) Timely completion of the reading and writing assignments
- D) Timely completion of the term paper
- E) Active and well prepared participation at classroom discussions
- F) Participation at the exams

A) Attendance Policy:

Discussions are an important part of the course and essential for the understanding and contemplation of the material. This is one of the reasons why it is essential that you will participate at the lectures. In addition to this I will do my best to make the course interesting and enjoyable for you. You will get 20 points (out of the 100) for your regular attendance and participation in the discussion. You can miss 2 lectures without providing any reason and without any consequences on the points. You can miss another 3 classes without consequences on the points if you provide a valid reason for your absence by e-mail no later than 2 days after the missed class. Not providing a valid reason for more than 2 missed classes or missing more than 5 classes altogether will lead to subtraction of 1 point per missed class.

B) Presentations:

You will present one of the subjects which are listed in the “Course Outline” below. Direct reading of a prepared statement will not be appropriate. The talk should be supported by an appealing visualization of the contents by PowerPoint. The time-frame for the presentation is 20 to 25 minutes.

The criteria for the grading of your performance will be the timing (minus one point for each minute beyond the time-frame), the content (that is the quality of the research or the provided arguments), the quality of the media, and the quality of your presentation. Your presentation will also be evaluated by the students according to the following checklist: 1. The presenter appeared to be an expert on the subject. 2. Contents, arguments and reasoning were convincing. 3. The presentation was well structured. 4. The presenter kept eye-contact to the audience, spoke clearly and did not cling to his notes or slides. 5. The slides were well designed. 6. The presenter adhered to the time limits.

C) Assignments:

- a) Reading assignments: To gain an understanding of the various environmental issues and for the successful completion of the course you will be required to read several articles in preparation for

the lectures. You will find the reading assignments listed in the "Course Outline" below. The material should be read and understood before the classroom session starts, because it will be the foundation for the discussion. AE = Annual Editions, TS = Taking Sides.

- b) Writing assignments: The main ideas of the assigned readings must be summarized on one computer-typed page. The essay must also contain your own conclusion, opinion, or evaluation. Late assignments will not be accepted and the five lowest scores for will be dropped.
- c) Term paper: You will write an essay (computer-typed, Arial 10 point, 1-inch margin, single-spaced, 4 - 5 pages) which elaborates on the subject of your presentation including all relevant references. The term paper is due on May 16. The paper must contain an introduction, a discussion of relevant and multiple sources of information, and a clear and concise conclusion. If appropriate it also must contain a well founded statement of your position regarding the controversial subject.

Literature cited must have the appropriate number (minimum of 8), appropriate type (not only opinions), and proper format (see below for examples).

Example of proper format for references IN TEXT:

Book or Journal Article: The wild boar has caused extensive damage to the wildlife reserve (Smith, 1993).

Examples of proper APA (American Psychological Association) format for LITERATURE CITED:

Journal Article: Adelgid, B. W. (1999). Killing Fraser firs in the Smoky Mountains. *Journal of Exotics and Introduced Species*. 1 (15), 13-15.

Book: Boar, E. W. (1993). *Upsetting the balance of the Merritt Island Wildlife Refuge*. (3rd ed.). London: Island Press.

On-Line Sources: Mussel, Z., Loosestrife, P. (September 23, 1999). *Gaining a foothold in a new environment* [On-Line]. Available: <http://www.eliminatingnativespecies.com/>

Grades:

Your final grade is based on the following components:

- Lecture Exams: 20% of the total course grade
- Presentation: 20% of the total course grade
- Term paper: 20% of the total course grade
- Attendance: 20% of the total course grade
- Writing assignments: 20% of the total course grade

Excellence in performance and effort is expected. Mediocrity is not rewarded.

The total course grade will be assigned according to the following system:

A >= 93%	B >= 83%	C >= 73%	D >= 60%
AB >= 88%	BC >= 78%	CD >= 68%	F < 60%

Academic Integrity

(from the Dean of Students Office)

The University of Wisconsin Oshkosh is committed to a standard of academic integrity for all students. The system guidelines state: "Students are responsible for the honest completion and representation of their work, for the appropriate citation of sources, and for respect of others' academic endeavors." (UWS 14.01, Wisconsin Administrative Code)

Students are subject to disciplinary action for academic misconduct, which is defined in UWS 14.03, Wisconsin Administrative Code. Students on the UW Oshkosh campus have been suspended from the University for academic misconduct.

Students are encouraged to review the procedures related to violations of academic honesty as outlined in Chapter UWS 14, Wisconsin Administrative Code. The system guidelines and local procedures are printed in the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh Student Discipline Code 2006-2007 and can be found on the Dean of Students website at www.uwosh.edu/dean/conduct.htm.

Additional Note:

Please feel free to see me during my office hours or directly after the meetings. I would like to see you all complete the course successfully. Let me know if there is anything I can do to help you with that.

Course Outline (tentative)

Day	Subject	Presentation	Assignment
Mon Feb 04	Introduction, Syllabus		
Wed Feb 06	Introduction		
Fri Feb 08	What is environmental conservation and why do we need it?		
Mon Feb 11	The state of the global environment		
Wed Feb 13	The state of the global environment	1. The history of natural conservation in the U.S.	
Fri Feb 15	Population growth and sustainable development	2. Development of nature reserves in the U.S.	AE 5
Mon Feb 18	Population growth and sustainable development	3. Population growth is a major factor related to environmental degradation	AE 6
Wed Feb 20	Population growth and sustainable development	4. Case study: Population growth and environmental issues in China	
Fri Feb 22	Population growth and sustainable development	5. Case study: Population growth and environmental issues in Mexico	
Mon Feb 25	Population growth and sustainable development	6. Case study: Population growth and environmental issues in India	
Wed Feb 27	Population growth and sustainable development	7. Falling birth rates pose a threat to human welfare	TS 13
Fri Feb 29	Population growth and sustainable development	8. The ecological footprint	AE 18
Mon Mar 03	Population growth and sustainable development	9. More efforts are necessary to protect biodiversity	TS 4
Wed Mar 05	Soil erosion and food production		
Fri Mar 07	Soil erosion and food production	10. The availability of food will turn into a worldwide major problem	D2L #1: World population, agriculture and malnutrition
Mon Mar 10	Soil erosion and food production	11. Case study: Soil erosion and food production in the U.S.	AE 8
Wed Mar 12	Soil erosion and food production	12. Case study: Soil erosion and food production in Asia	
Fri Mar 14	Soil erosion and food production	13. Factory farming is no suitable way to ensure food supplies	D2L #2: Factory farming in the developing world
Mon Mar 17	Soil erosion and food production	14. Genetic engineering is the answer to hunger	TS 14
Wed Mar 19	Exam #1		
Fri Mar 21	Environmental conservation and energy issues		
Mon Mar 24	Spring break		
Wed Mar 26	Spring break		
Fri Mar 28	Spring break		

Day	Subject	Presentation	Assignment
Mon Mar 31	Environmental conservation and energy issues	15. Hydrogen will end our fossil-fuel addiction	AE 15 and TS 10
Wed Apr 02	Environmental conservation and energy issues	16. An increased reliance on wind power is desirable	AE 13
Fri Apr 04	Environmental conservation and energy issues	17. It is time to revive nuclear power	TS 12
Mon Apr 07	Environmental conservation and energy issues	18. The Three-Gorges-Project will be a blessing for China	
Wed Apr 09	Environmental conservation and energy issues		AE 14
Fri Apr 11	Water resources	19. Desertification is a major threat in many regions worldwide	AE 21
Mon Apr 14	Water resources	20. The availability and usage of water resources will pose major threats in the U.S.	AE 20
Wed Apr 16	Water resources	21. Water shortage is turning into a major problem for many regions in the world	D2L #3: A human thirst
Fri Apr 18	Water resources	22. Water pollution needs to be controlled more strictly in the U.S.	
Mon Apr 21	Water resources	23. Water conservation opportunities in the U.S.	
Wed Apr 23	Water resources	24. Case study: Water pollution in the Fox-River Valley	
Fri Apr 25	Water resources	25. Case study: Droughts and desertification in Africa	AE 19
Mon Apr 28	Climate change		
Wed Apr 30	Climate change	26. Global warming will mainly be associated with negative consequences	AE 10
Fri May 02	Climate change	27. There are effective solutions to the problem of global warming	D2L #4: Can we bury global warming?
Mon May 05	Climate change	28. The U.S. should take a more active role in fighting global warming	TS 9
Wed May 07	Toxic pollution		
Fri May 09	Toxic pollution	29. Bioaccumulation still causes major health problems in the U.S.	AE 23
Mon May 12	Toxic pollution	30. DDT should be banned worldwide	TS 16
Wed May 14	Exam #2		
Fri May 16	Final Session		