

Introduction to Environmental Studies

Fall 2009

46. 175 201

MWF 11-11:50 AM

Office Hours: by appointment

South Campus, Dugan 206

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Course Description: This course introduces environmental issues from a range of disciplines and perspectives. We begin in **Module I** with an overview of a number of classic works in the field, tracing the history of modern environmentalism to its roots. **Module II** provides an empirical underpinning for ecosystem and natural resource management. **Module III** applies these empirical tools to international issues, with an emphasis on international environmental law and policy. **Module IV** applies the theoretical, scientific, and policy expertise gained in Modules I-III to the various crises of global food policy in the 21st century. **Module V** closes with an overview of the various world-views and ideologies that fall under the ‘environmentalist’ umbrella.

Course wiki

The website for this course is ikesharpless.pbworks.com.

Required Texts

You must have both of the following texts, which will be used for modules II and III. I recommend that you buy these texts from a discounted used online site like www.abebooks.com, and that you do so as soon as possible. The book *About Looking* by John Berger, which contains the assigned essay “Why Look at Animals”, is on reserve at the O’Leary library.

- Chasek, Pamela S., Janet Welsh Brown, David L. Downing. *Global Environmental Politics*, 4th edition. 2006. ISBN 13 - 978-0813343327 (primarily for Module III)
- Hassenzahl, David M., Peter H. Raven and Linda R. Berg. *Environment*, 6 editions. 2008. ISBN 13 - 978-0470119266 (primarily for Module II)

Recommended Texts

We will not be reading any of the following books in their entirety this semester. Rather, this is the approved list of texts you will select from to write your longer paper. I own a copy of each, and will bring them to class for circulation and to discuss their relative merits and difficulty level. If you would like to write your longer paper on one or more texts not included in the list below, ask me well in advance.

- Pollan, Michael. *The Omnivore’s Dilemma*
- Nestle, Marion. *What to Eat*
- Friedman, Thomas. *Hot, Flat, and Crowded: why we need a Green Revolution, and how it can Cure America*
- Nussbaum, Martha. *Frontiers of Justice* (on species membership)
- Singer, Peter. *Animal Liberation*
- Scully, Matthew. *Dominion: The Power of Man, the Suffering of Animals, and the Call to Mercy*

- Lovelock, James. *Gaia: The Practical Science of Planetary Medicine*
- Leopold, Aldo. *A Sand County Almanac*
- Jensen, Derrick. *Endgame, Vol. 1: The Problem of Civilization*

Grading

If you have any questions about whether and how a specific action will affect your grade—or about specific learning disabilities or religious holiday observance, etc.—please contact me (preferably via email or directly before/after class).

Grading Scale: On all assignments the grading scale is as follows: A 4.0 (94 and above), A- 3.7 (90 to 93), B+ 3.3 (87 to 89), B 3.0 (83 to 86), B- 2.7 (80 to 82), C+ 2.3 (77 to 79), C 2.0 (73 to 76), C- 1.7 (70 to 72) D+ 1.3 (67 to 69), D 1.0 (63-66) and F (62 and below).

- Short paper (15%)
 - if you are unsatisfied with the grade on your first short paper, you can rewrite it (or write a paper on an approved topic of your choosing) and I will average the two grades. If the rewritten paper receives a lower grade than the original, I will ignore it. I will be glad to work with students on individual rewrites.
- Midterm (20%)
- Policy quiz (20%)
- Book review/critique (25%)
 - If the book critique is submitted with enough time for me to examine it, I will be glad to grade a rewrite and average the score of the original and the rewrite.
- Attendance (variable, as much as -20%)
 - I will circulate an attendance sheet during each class. One unexcused absence throughout the semester will be excused, but each additional unexcused absence will lower your grade by a third of a letter.
- Participation (20%)
 - Half of this grade will come from students uploading relevant print or internet media to the pbworks website by Thursday night for group discussion every Friday. Much of each Friday's assignments, and most of the grade for these submissions, will come from reading and commenting on each other's submissions.
 - The other half of this grade will be based on actual participation in class
- (optional) extra credit assignment (5-10%, based on assignment)

Note on Grading Papers and Late Submissions

I will subtract points for spelling and grammatical errors – be sure to check your work carefully before submitting it; you can rewrite papers if you are dissatisfied with your grade. I will also dock your assignment grade by a third of a letter grade for every unexcused class day a paper is overdue.

Academic Honesty

Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated. If you have any questions about what does and does not constitute plagiarism, refer first to the U. Mass Lowell Undergraduate Catalogue under 'Academic

Integrity'. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me by email, phone, or in person. I would much prefer to clarify a small confusion than to be forced to give you a failing grade in the class.

Citation Policy

Use whichever standard citation format works for you, but use the same format throughout your work and be sure that all relevant information is included. If possible, include a web citation in addition to—but not instead of—a text citation. While useful for in-class queries and quick references, Wikipedia is not a valid citation source.

Technology Policy

I welcome you to bring your laptops to class, but only to enrich class discussion with online research and to take (hopefully quiet) notes. I fully endorse the use of 'Web 2.0' applications, but only if they are relevant to the material at hand. Outside of the classroom, you are welcome to use such sites as www.stumbleupon.com to locate your weekly media sources. If you do so, feel free to add me as a friend at surlyotter.stumbleupon.com for greater ease of online communication. Accessing Facebook, etc. is strictly forbidden while in class, and any violations beyond the first will be subject to the docking of a third of a letter grade.

In addition to the obvious quick searches available online via Wikipedia and Google, the following are all useful **online reference sources** for use both in class and at home. I will provide additional links to videos and news sources throughout the semester; the sources below are intended as general references and as a starting point for Friday assignments.

General News Media –

- www.economist.com
- www.ft.com
- www.bbc.co.uk
- www.nytimes.com
- www.npr.org
- <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/>
- www.wsj.com
- <http://www.newser.com/>
- <http://www.odemagazine.com/>
- <http://www.newyorker.com/>
- <http://www.onpointradio.org/>
- <http://www.tnr.com/>
- www.harpers.org
- www.theatlantic.com
- <http://newstimeline.googlelabs.com/>
- <http://english.aljazeera.net/>
- <http://www.newsvine.com/>
- <http://mondediplo.com/>
- www.motherjones.com
- www.foxnews.com

Science

- <http://www.top100science.com>
- <http://www.newscientist.com>
- <http://www.sciencedaily.com>
- <http://www.sciencefriday.com>

University Webcasts

- <http://webcast.berkeley.edu/>
- <http://ocw.mit.edu/OcwWeb/web/home/home/index.htm>

Environmental (general)

- <http://dotearth.blogs.nytimes.com>
- www.grist.com
- news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature
- Encyclopedia of Earth,
<http://www.eoearth.org>
- www.treehugger.com
- www.motherearthnews.com
- <http://gliving.com>
- <http://greenoptions.com>
- <http://www.greenmaven.com>
- <http://www.deepecology.org>
- <http://lowbagger.org>
- <http://antigreen.blogspot.com>
- <http://envirowonk.com>
- <http://www.ecoversity.org>
- <http://www.alternativeconsumer.com>
- Green Options blog directory,
<http://greenoptions.com/blogroll/>

Environmental Conventions

- Fletcher Ginn Library – Multilaterals project: <http://fletcher.tufts.edu/multilaterals.com>

International

- UNEP, www.unep.org
- Global Development and Environment Institute, <http://ase.tufts.edu/gdae>
- International Institute for Environment and Development, <http://www.iied.org>
- www.globalissues.org

Videos

- TED talks, www.ted.com
- NOVA, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova>
- FRONTLINE, “Poisoned Waters”, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/poisonedwaters/>

Short paper multimedia examples: life cycle analysis and resource use in coffee

- TED/WWF – water use in one latte: <http://www.worldwildlife.org/ted/latteflash.html>
- GOOD, water use chart: <http://awesome.good.is/transparency/web/trans0309walkthisway.html>
- Starbucks and McDonald’s chart: <http://www.princeton.edu/~ina/infographics/starbucks.html>

Course Outline

nota bene – reading assignments are subject to revision anytime up to the class prior to their assignment. If you miss a class, be sure to verify the next day’s readings

Wed. Sept 2 – Introductions and class policies

Module I: ‘Classics’

Fri. Sept 4 – The Early Origins of Environmentalism

- Malthus, T.R., “An Essay on the Principle of Population”, preface and chapters 1 and 2, available at <http://www.faculty.rsu.edu/~felwell/Theorists/Malthus/essay2.htm>
- Darwin, Charles, “On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection”, chapter 14, “Recapitulation and Conclusion”, available at <http://www.literature.org/authors/darwin-charles/the-origin-of-species/chapter-14.html>
- Carson, Rachel, “Silent Spring”, pp. 1-13 (selections from chapters 1 and 2), available on Google Books at <http://tinyurl.com/lbju5l>

Wed., Sept. 9 – Collective Action Problems and Western Anthropocentrism

- Hardin, Garrett, “The Tragedy of the Commons”, available at http://www.garretthardinsociety.org/articles/art_tragedy_of_the_commons.html
- White, Lynn Jr., “The Historical Roots of our Ecological Crisis”, available on the pbworks course documents page

Fri., Sept. 11 – Towards a Steady-State Economics

- Meadows, D., abstract of “The Limits to Growth”, available on the pbworks course documents page
- Meadows *et al*, “Beyond the Limits to Growth”, available at <http://www.context.org/ICLIB/IC32/Meadows.htm>
- United Nations, “Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment”, available at <http://tinyurl.com/lvmqjk>

Mon., Sept. 14 – Growing Consensus

- World Commission on Environment and Development, “Our Common Future”, chairman’s foreward, available at <http://www.un-documents.net/ocf-cf.htm>
- Shiva, Vandana, “Staying Alive”, forward, introduction, and chapter 1, available on Google Books at <http://tinyurl.com/ml5lkz>

Wed., Sept. 16 – The Way Forward

- UNCED, “Agenda 21”, chapters 1 and 2, available at <http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/agenda21/>
 - We will be examining this document as a template for policy solutions on an international level – we will divide Agenda 21 into sections, each of which will be read and presented on by a group of students

Fri., Sept. 18 – Collaborating on Environmental Classics

- Collaborative assignment: post your favorite ‘classic’ environmental piece, comment on one of the articles I distribute, or find your own topic of interest
- Read at least 3 pieces posted by other students

Module II: Understanding Environmental Science

Mon., Sept. 21 – Introducing Environmental Science

- Raven *et al*, chapters 1 and 2

Wed., Sept. 23 – Ecosystems

- Raven *et al*, chapters 3 and 4

Fri., Sept. 25 – Ecosystems, day 2

- Raven *et al*, chapters 5 and 6
- Short paper assignment explained

Mon., Sept. 28 – Population and the Urban Environment

- Raven *et al*, chapters 8-10 (selected passages tba)

Wed., Sept. 30 – Energy

Raven *et al*, chapters 11-13 (selected passages tba)

Fri., Oct. 2 – Short Paper Due and Current Events Discussion

- Short paper due either via paper copy or [here](#).
- Current events assignment (pertaining to material since last assignment)

Mon., Oct. 5 – Resource Use

- Raven *et al*, chapters 14-16 and chapter 18 (selected passages tba)

Wed., Oct. 7 – Pollution

- Raven *et al*, chapters 20-24 (selected passages tba)

Fri., Oct. 9 – Session on Biodiversity: Introducing the ‘Animal Issue’

- Raven *et al*, chapter 17
- Berger, John, “Why Look at Animals”, in *About Seeing*, available on reserve at the O’Leary library
- Browse the “LCS presentation” PowerPoint, available on the course documents page
- Study guide for midterm provided

Wed., Oct. 14 – Study for Midterm as Needed

Fri., Oct. 16 – Midterm Exam

Module III: Understanding International Environmental Policy

Mon., Oct. 19 – Introducing Global Environmental Politics

- Chasek *et al*, ch. 1

Wed., Oct. 21 – The Actors on the World Stage

- Chasek *et al*, ch. 2

Fri., Oct. 23 – Session on: International Trade Law

- Readings tba
- Current events assignment (pertaining to material since last assignment)

Mon., Oct. 26 – Cases, day 1 (subject to paring)

- Chasek *et al*, ch. 3, part 1 (page #s tba)
 - o Transboundary Air Pollution
 - o Ozone Depletion
 - o Climate Change
 - o International Toxic Waste Trade
 - o Toxic Chemicals

Wed., Oct. 28 – Cases, day 2 (subject to paring)

- Chasek *et al*, ch. 3, part 2 (skipping desertification – page #s tba)
 - o Whaling
 - o International Trade in Endangered Species
 - o Biodiversity Loss
 - o Fisheries Depletion
 - o Forests

Fri., Oct. 30 – Cases Wrap Up and Current Events Assignment

- Current events assignment (pertaining to material to date)

Mon., Nov. 2 – Which Regimes Work, and Why?

- Chasek *et al*, ch. 4

Wed., Nov. 4 – Corporate Management of Environmental Issues and Current Events Assignment

- “Corporate Social Responsibility: Just good business”, *The Economist*, January 17 2008. Available on the pbworks course documents page [here](#).
- McDonald’s “Worldwide Corporate Responsibility Report: Responsible Food for a Sustainable Future, 2008 Highlights”, available on the pbworks course documents page.
- Current events assignment on CSR

Fri., Nov. 6 – Brief focus on US Environmental Policy: the Endangered Species Act

- Raven *et al*, ch. 2, pps. 24-33
- “ESA Basics” from the US FWS, available on the course documents page [here](#).
- “A History of the Endangered Species Act of 1973”, from the US FWS, available on the course documents page [here](#).

Mon., Nov. 9 – Prep for Policy Quiz and Recap Policy Module

- Readings tba

Fri., Nov. 13 – Policy Quiz

Module IV: Focus on Global Food Policy

Mon., Nov. 16 – The Food System is Clearly Broken, but how do we Fix it?

- Pollan, Michael. “Farmer in Chief,” *The New York Times Magazine*, available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/12/magazine/12policy-t.html>
- Roberts, Paul. “Spoiled: Organic and Local is so 2008”, *Mother Jones*, available at <http://www.motherjones.com/environment/2009/02/spoiled-organic-and-local-so-2008>
- Bryan Walsh, “Getting Real about the High Price of Cheap Food”, *Time*. Available at: <http://www.time.com/time/health/article/0,8599,1917458,00.html>

Wed., Nov. 18 – Environmental Ramifications of the Global Food Supply

- Raven *et al*, ch. 19

Fri., Nov. 20 – Current Events Assignment and Discussion

- Current events assignment on food and environment

Mon., Nov. 23 – Spotlight on Animal Agriculture

- FAO/LEAD, *Livestock’s Long Shadow* (executive summary only – skim the rest if you’re interested): <ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/010/a0701e/A0701E00.pdf>
- “As More Eat Meat, a Bid to Cut Emissions”, *NY Times* article available on the course documents page
- biotech/aquaculture/animal agriculture PowerPoint, available on the course documents page

Wed., Nov. 25 – Spotlight on Agribusiness and the Global Food System

- readings tba

Mon., Nov. 30 – global food policy, topic to be determined

Module V: Environmentalism and Environmentalisms

Wed., Dec. 2 – Introducing the Panoply of Environmentalisms

- readings tba

Fri., Dec. 4 – Where do you fall?

- Class assignment and discussion

Mon., Dec. 7 – Deep Ecology

- Leopold, Aldo, “Thinking Like a Mountain”, <http://www.eco-action.org/dt/thinking.html> (1949)
- Further reading tba

Wed., Dec. 9 – Animal Rights, Animal Welfare, and Environmentalism

- Readings tba

Fri., Dec. 11 – Special Session on Topic to be Determined by Discussion

- readings to be determined

Monday, Dec. 14 – Book Review Discussion/Workshop and Course Recap

- readings tba

Tues., Dec. 22 – Book Review/Critique Discussion