

College of Charleston
Fall, 2015

ENVT 200.001: INTRODUCTION TO ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

Instructor: Dr. Todd LeVasseur

Office: Room 207E Education Center (ECTR)

Office Hours: T/R 9:30am to 12pm

Email: levasseur@cofc.edu (I typically respond to emails within 24 hours, but expect longer on weekends)

Phone: 953-3911 (email works better, though)

Any student may email me for a copy of my teaching philosophy.

Instructor: Seth Pritchard

Office: HWWE (Harbor Walk West: this is the building next to the aquarium at the end of Calhoun Street) Room 205 (office)/216 (lab)

Office Hours: TBO and by appointment

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Phone: 843-953-5995

Credits: 3 Semester Hours (fulfills core requirement Environmental Studies Minor)

Prerequisite: You must have attained at least sophomore standing for enrollment.

Course Description and Instructional Format: This course serves as an introduction to interdisciplinary environmental studies. The course will utilize approaches from the natural and applied sciences, humanities, and social sciences to investigate human-nature interactions, where the guiding context is recognition of the current ecocrisis and a desire for sustainability.

Course Goals and Objectives: Specific goals of the course are as follows:

1. To introduce the student to the emerging field of Environmental Studies, providing exposure to some of its methodologies, domains of investigation, and some of its key scholars
2. To develop critical thinking skills about human/nature-environment interactions
3. To understand how ethics and values, politics, economics, media, and technology both mediate and influence how humans interact with their environments

Specific objectives of the course are as follows:

1. To gain a working understanding of biophysical climate change, and the ethical and political responses to it
2. To gain a working understanding of food and water issues, in their physical, ethical, and political manifestations
3. To gain a working understanding of basic ecological concepts like carrying capacity, food chains, and various biogeochemical cycles
4. To systematically explore possible solutions to current and future environmental problems, and barriers to these successes
5. To develop interdisciplinary acumen in regards to understanding human-nature interactions
6. To develop comfort in working with small groups and in participating in class discussions by requiring active engagement in both forms of discussion during every class meeting

Required Materials:

1) All course materials will be made available on OAKS, with websites provided in the syllabus or on OAKS.

Requirements, Expectations, and Resources:

1) *Attendance:* Attendance is mandatory. Roll will be taken at the beginning of each lecture. If you are more than 5 minutes late to class, you will be counted as absent for that day. Tardiness harms your understanding of the material and disrupts the class. Students are responsible for any missed content. It is your responsibility to be present and to be to class on time. Only excused absences render the above moot—it is the student's responsibility to approach the Office of Student Affairs and present them with valid excuses for missing class, at which point we receive an email that says either "documented" or "undocumented." Undocumented excuses count as an **unexcused** absence. After 2 unexcused absences, your grade drops by 1/3 letter (i.e. A to A-, C- to D+, etc.) for each successive absence. After 5 absences (i.e. your 6th absence), you will receive a WF and be dropped from the course. *Please observe the totality of this attendance policy.*

2) *Common Courtesy:* As stated by the Code of Conduct in the CofC Student Handbook, cell phones and other electronic devices must be turned off during the whole class period. Computers are not allowed in the classroom, except on days when they will be needed for in-class exercises. The instructors also reserve the right to ask any student engaging in disruptive behavior (i.e. whispering, reading a newspaper, texting messages, etc.) to leave the class. Repeated observations of students texting, will result in a failing grade for the class participation component of the overall course grade. Please observe this policy with diligence.

3) *Honor Code:* On all work submitted for credit by students at CofC, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The legal code of the College specifically prohibits plagiarism, cheating, bribing, conspiracy, misrepresentation, and fabrication. If it is proven that any student has committed any of the above infractions of the honor code, then that student will automatically fail the course with an XF. In addition, violations of the Academic Honesty Guidelines shall result in judicial action. Students should be aware that unauthorized collaboration (working together without permission) is a form of cheating. **Plagiarism of any type will result in an automatic failing grade and possible administrative action. Inappropriate paraphrasing is the most common type of plagiarism; please refer to the following tutorials for tips on how to avoid it:** <http://libguides.library.cofc.edu/content.php?pid=47664&sid=351353>

4) *Accommodation for Disabilities:* To request classroom accommodation, you must first register with the Center for Disability Services at the beginning of the semester. This office will provide you with documentation that you will then provide to us when you request accommodation. For more information, please see <http://disabilityservices.cofc.edu/>

5) Counseling Resources, a writing lab, and a career resource center are all available to CofC students and are staffed with trained professionals.

6) *Assignments*: Your grade will be determined based on the performance you exhibit for the following:

1. Class participation—this includes attendance, the ability to contribute to class discussions, and active participation in in-class team-based activities, including presenting “success stories” on the last day of class. **15% of grade**
2. Reading quizzes—6 reading quizzes will be posted in advance on OAKS or emailed to the class; students should complete these, print out the answers, and submit them at the start of class for which they are due. Students are to work on their own work, without collaboration with other students, on these quizzes—*evidence of collaboration automatically earns all students involved a 0*. **6 quizzes at 2% each; total 12% of grade.**
3. Movie summaries—2 movies, listed in the syllabus, are to be viewed, with a 350 word summary written. The summary should include key points, a summary of the argument, connections to readings and discussions from class, and a reflection. **2 movies at 6% each; total 12% of grade.**
4. Term exams—there will be a mid-term and a quasi-comprehensive final exam. Study guides will be provided prior to the exams. Exams will be a mix of multiple choice, lists, matching, short answer, and essay questions. **20% each for 40% of grade.**
5. Research paper—students will write two “memos” of 3 pages each, on one of four possible topics (climate change; GMOs; air pollution; energy policy). Specifics will be discussed in class. **9% each for 18% of grade.**
6. 3 1-page reflections—each student will write a 1 page reflection, sharing thoughts/emotions/feelings/criticisms of a reading. The readings are by environmental activists, and efforts they are making to make a positive difference. 300 words, single-spaced, reflecting on how the reading relates to the course, to your own life, to your goals, and anything else triggered by the reading. **1% each for 3% of your grade.**
7. Extra Credit—students will be able to attend guest lectures or a film series and write a one-page summary of the event while relating the event to course goals and objectives. Students may also volunteer for off-campus groups working on environmental issues (as long as the activity is not related to credit for another class or school club/organization). Events will be posted to the OAKS calendar as they become available. Applying for Ecollective money counts for .5 points, and if awarded the project, .5 more points. **Each event is worth .5 points, for a possible 3 points added to the final grade. Any student with perfect attendance will receive an additional .5 points on their final grade.**

NOTE: No late work will be accepted on any of the above assignments.

Grading Scale

93-100	A		73-76	C
90-92	A-		70-72	C-
87-89	B+		67-69	D+
83-86	B		63-66	D
80-82	B-		60-62	D-
77-79	C+		0-59	F

Course Schedule (subject to change):

***It is the student’s responsibility to approach the professors if a reading is not clear or if there are unanswered questions about the reading. The same is true for content covered in class. If you do not verbalize to us that you are having difficulty understanding course content (from class or

readings), then we can only assume that everything is clear. If this is not the case, then you should approach us after class or during office hours. As much of what we read and discuss will be new material, there will most likely be difficulties; if this is your experience, then please see us. Remember, grades are not randomly assigned! When you do well (or not) on an assignment or test, reflect on the factors that made a difference—the time you committed, your awareness of the instructions, your understanding of the material, and the help you sought.***

UNIT 1: Sustainability and Population Dynamics

Tues 8/25: Introduction, receive syllabus, LeVasseur lecture

Thurs 8/27: LeVasseur—**reading quiz 1** on Ayers “History of a Cup of Coffee;” Whitty “The 13th Tipping Point;”

Tues 9/1 : LeVasseur—finish lecture and discuss readings so far assigned; **bring computers**—Ecofootprint calculator Exercise in class; **reading quiz 2 on illusions and nature-health**

Thurs 9/3: Pritchard and LeVasseur: overview of first paper assignment. Pritchard lecture: Population Dynamics, Carrying Capacity and Ecological Footprint.

*Complete on-line plagiarism “Post-Test Your Knowledge” and e-mail results to pritchards@cofc.edu: <http://www.lib.usm.edu/legacy/plag/plagiarismtutorial.php>

Tues 9/8: Pritchard: Finish discussing population growth, demography, etcetera.

Thurs 9/10: Pritchard: BBC Documentary, “How Many People Can Live on Planet Earth?” <http://topdocumentaryfilms.com/how-many-people-can-live-on-planet-earth/> (*Alternate if available: Mother-Caring for 7 Billion*)

Tues 9/15: LeVasseur-ethics; “Deep Ecology;” “Ecofeminism;” “Environmental Justice”

*****Quiz 3 on OAKS**

Unit 2: Energy Use

Thurs 9/17: LeVasseur—commons game; Garrett Hardin reading on OAKS—**answer these** and turn them in to help generate class discussion: what example does he give to illustrate the tragedy of the commons; what does he mean by “mutual coercion mutually agreed upon;” and think of 3 key global commons, list these, and then what do you think the metrics of their health are predicted to be by the time you reach the age of 50?

Tues 9/22: Pritchard—electricity generation, consumption and impacts.

***Movie Review #1 due on *If a Tree Falls*—see OAKS for the metric**

Thurs 9/24: Pritchard- lecture on air pollution

***1 page reflection on Peter Hammarstedt and his views of animals**

Tues 9/29: LeVasseur—lecture on Ecological Economics; “Cassandra/Cornucopian Debate;” Schwartz, “Flourishing and Its Enemies;” “Ecological Economics”

******Quiz 4 on OAKS**

Thurs 10/1 Introduction to Full Cost Analysis (FCA): Accounting primer and Discussion

***Memo #1 due**

Tues 10/6: Full Cost Analysis: Case Study Discussions

Thurs 10/8: Mid-Term Exam

Unit 3: Production and Consumption

Tues 10/13: Pritchard- lecture on waste (personal and municipal); summary and bibliography of papers due.

Thurs 10/15: Pritchard- Lecture: Finish waste and begin lecture on fresh water availability, consumption and future shortages

***Reflection on Tanya Fields and urban/guerilla gardening and Environmental Justice**

Tues 10/20 FALL BREAK—Go outside!

Thurs 10/22: Film *Food, Inc.*

Tues 10/27: Film *Food, Inc.*

***Memo #2 due**

Thurs 10/29: LeVasseur—media and coercion

Unit 4: Climate Change/Destabilization

Tues 11/3: Pritchard—Lecture: Global Climate Change

Thur 11/5: Pritchard – finish Climate Change

***Reflection on Whitney Black and Climate Activism**

Tues 11/10: LeVasseur—Framing and public perception; Anderegg, “Diagnosis Earth;” “If Only Gay Sex Caused Global Warming”

*****Quiz 5 on OAKS**

Thurs 11/12: LeVasseur—ethics of climate change; documentary on Thomas Berry

Tues 11/17: Pritchard- Lecture: Agriculture, food, environmental change and human population growth

Unit 5: What is Sustainability?

Thurs 11/19: Visit Recycling Center or Pritchard lecture on Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs)

Tues 11/24: LeVasseur: lecture on systems and resiliency; “What is Sustainability?”

*****Quiz 6 on OAKS**

*it is highly suggested that students not leave campus early—content covered in this class will be a big part of the final exam

Tues 12/1: LeVasseur—finish tipping points, resilience, adaptation, success

*****movie review: metric on OAKS for *Green Gold*** <http://topdocumentaryfilms.com/green-gold/>

Thurs 12/3: last class—share success stories

FINAL EXAM (quasi-cumulative, but maybe not...)

