

**College of Charleston**  
**Spring, 2016**  
**T/TR 1:40-2:55pm RSS 249**

**ENVT 200.002: INTRODUCTION TO ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES**

**Instructor:** Dr. Todd LeVasseur

**Office:** Room 207E Education Center (ECTR)

**Office Hours:** Wed. 9am-12pm

**Email:** [levasseur@cofc.edu](mailto: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:** Harbor Walk West, Room 205 (office) and Room 216 (lab)

**Office Hours:** TBA (tentative hours are T/Th from 3:30-5:00)

**Email:** [pritchards@cofc.edu](mailto:pritchards@cofc.edu)

**Laboratory web site:** [http://pritchards.people.cofc.edu/pritchard\\_website/Fine\\_Roots.html](http://pritchards.people.cofc.edu/pritchard_website/Fine_Roots.html)

**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" (keep in mind that if you are sick, you must have a doctor's note to present the Office, or it will be "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 6<sup>th</sup> 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 for the assignment 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. **10% of grade**
2. Reading quizzes—5 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*. **5 quizzes at 2% each; total 10% 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 5% each; total 10% 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. **25% each for 50% of grade.**
5. Research paper—students will write a “memo” of 3 pages each, on one of four possible topics (climate change; GMOs; air pollution; energy policy). Specifics will be discussed in class. **8.5% of grade.**
6. Archaeology of a consumer item—students will research a consumer item in their bedroom/house, investigating what is required to produce, sell, and use that item; and the social pressures applied on us to use that item. **8.5% of grade.**
6. 3 1 to 2-page reflections—each student will write a 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. Reflections should share at least 3 key insights you found important that the activist shared, and why; summarize what kind of activism they do and what inspires it; and analyze how the reading relates to the course, to your own life, and if appropriate to your life goals. **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.**

**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

Thurs 1/7: Introduction, receive syllabus, Pritchard lecture

Tues 1/12: Pritchard lecture: Population Dynamics, Carrying Capacity and Ecological Footprint.

Thurs 1/14: Pritchard: Finish discussing population growth, demography, etcetera.

\*Complete on-line plagiarism "Post-Test Your Knowledge" and e-mail results to [pritchards@cofc.edu](mailto:pritchards@cofc.edu): <http://www.lib.usm.edu/legacy/plag/plagiarismtutorial.php>

Tues 1/19: Pritchard: Documentary: Watch and discuss BBC documentary OVERPOPULATED

\*Pritchard and LeVasseur: overview of first paper assignment

Thurs 1/21: LeVasseur—**reading quiz 1 on OAKS** on Ayers "History of a Cup of Coffee;" Whitty "The 13<sup>th</sup>

Tipping Point;"

Tues 1/26: LeVasseur—finish lecture and discuss readings so far assigned; **bring computers**—Ecofootprint calculator Exercise in class

Thrs 1/28: LeVasseur-ethics: "Deep Ecology;" "Ecofeminism"

\*\*\***Quiz 2 on OAKS**

\*\***reflection on Tanya Fields and urban/guerilla gardening and Environmental Justice**

### Unit 2: Energy Use

Tues 2/2: LeVasseur—commons game

Thrs 2/4: Pritchard— Energy: Fossil Fuels (Non-renewables) and Renewables

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

Tues 2/9: Pritchard- lecture on air pollution

\***reflection on Peter Hammarstedt and his views of animals**

Thrs 2/11: LeVasseur—lecture on Ecological Economics; "Cassandra/Cornucopian Debate;" Schwartz, "Flourishing and Its Enemies;" "Ecological Economics"

\*\*\*\***Quiz 3 on OAKS**

Tues 2/16: Introduction to Full Cost Analysis (FCA): Accounting primer and Discussion

\***paper assignment #1 due**

\***discuss paper assignment #2**

Thrs 2/18: Full Cost Analysis: Case Study Discussions

**Tues 2/23: Mid-Term Exam**

### Unit 3: Production and Consumption

Thrs 2/25: Film *Food, Inc.*

Tues 3/1: Film *Food, Inc.*

Thrs 3/3: Pritchard- Lecture: Agriculture and the Environment

SPRING BREAK—Go outside, be an animal, get healthy with the more-than-human world!

Tues 3/15: Pritchard- Lecture on waste resources

Thurs 3/17: Pritchard- Lecture: Finish waste and begin lecture on fresh water

Tues 3/22: LeVasseur—media and coercion

**\*Memo due**

Unit 4: Climate Change/Destabilization

Thurs 3/24: Pritchard—Lecture: Climate Change

Tues 3/29: Pritchard – finish Climate Change

Thur 3/31: LeVasseur—Framing and public perception; Anderegg, “Diagnosis Earth,” “If Only Gay Sex Caused Global Warming”

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

Tues 4/5: LeVasseur—ethics of climate change

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

Thurs 4/7: Visit Recycling Center or Pritchard lecture on Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs)

Tues 4/12: LeVasseur: lecture on systems and resiliency; “What is Sustainability?” and on nature/health connections

**\*\*\*Quiz 5 on OAKS**

Unit 5: What is Sustainability?

Thurs 4/14: LeVasseur—finish tipping points, resilience, adaptation

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

Tues 4/19: Success stories from students

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

