

# BIOL 204 Humans and the Environment

## Course Syllabus

MWF 1PM RITA 154

Instructor Deb Bidwell

RITA 229 [bidwelld@cofc.edu](mailto:bidwelld@cofc.edu) 843-953-7107

Spring 2019

## Course Description:

Biology 204 is an introductory level environmental and sustainability science course that explores the human connection to the natural world. Inherently interdisciplinary, environmental science combines empirical and applied research in natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities to understand how humans interact with, impact, and are impacted by the natural world. Course content builds environmental literacy, scientific literacy, and information literacy core competencies.

## Instructional Learning Outcomes:

**By the completion of this course, a student will be able to....**

- Describe the purpose and scope of environmental science.
- Identify elements of sustainability and the relationships between them.
- Identify policies and practices that have led to unsustainability.
- Describe earth's operating conditions, and identify the major biomes.
- Explain why most environmental problems are "wicked problems" requiring tradeoffs as part of their solution.
- Identify the scientific, social, political, and economic underlying facets of contemporary environmental issues.
- Evaluate evidence and understand the process of science.
- Search for, find, and critically analyze scientific information.
- Use evidence-based critical thinking to identify common logical fallacies.

## Contact/Communication

### *Private Student-To-Instructor Contact*

- Students should contact me about issues that are specific to the student **by email at [bidwelld@cofc.edu](mailto:bidwelld@cofc.edu)**
- My response turn-around time with emails will normally be **within 24 hours on weekdays and within 48 hours on weekends.**

### *General Student-To-Instructor and Student-To-Student Contact*

- Students should contact the Instructor and other students on issues that are not student-specific and may benefit or apply to the entire class using the OAKS Discussion “Hallway Conversations” open **24 hours a day, 7 days a week.**
- My response turnaround time on the discussion “hallway conversations” will normally be **within 24 hours weekdays and within 48 hours on weekends.**

### *Office Hours*

- In person office hours (group drop-in) **RITA 229 Mondays and Wednesdays 2:30 - 4:30 PM and by appointment**
- Individual appointments may be **arranged by email.**

### *Course Communication and Community Building*

- **OAKS** will be utilized for **content, news, updates, and online office hours.** *New to Oaks?* tutorials here: <http://blogs.cofc.edu/oaks/students/getting-started/>
- **Email and/or News updates on OAKS** will be used to communicate important or sudden changes in course information.
- We will **all work together to build our classroom and online learning community.** I will play a facilitating role in helping you get to know, work with, trust and collaborate with the diverse members of our class. Each member of the class must be willing to participate in a dynamic and engaging learning group that is inclusive. Your participation, willingness to contribute, and your initiative are paramount to having a successful and enjoyable learning experience. We **aim to develop a spirit of camaraderie and team learning that will unite us.**
- This semester we will be doing some group discussion work online using discussion boards through OAKS. You can find a rubric about the expectations for quantity and quality of online discussion comments on OAKS.
- **Netiquette:** In our written course discussions, we will be using complete sentences and proper grammar and will **not be using abbreviations or slang the way we might while texting.** Because it is difficult to interpret tone from written text, and our online communication in the OAKS discussion boards will lack facial expression, body language, hand gestures, and other social clues, it is especially important that we take care to be sensitive to possible misinterpretation and hurt feelings that result in exclusion rather than inclusion. **We will all need to make sure that we are respectful, and professional in our posts.** For example, when we are challenging each other’s ideas, it is vital that we do not allow arguments to become personal. We can disagree about the subject matter in a respectful, intellectual way that still allows for us to work well, and collaborate together.

## Expectations

- Students must earn **100% on OAKS syllabus quiz** to access course materials.
- Students should plan to **log into Oaks at least 3 times per week**.
- Students should dedicate **6+ hours per week** outside of class to be successful.
- This class is **student-driven**. Motivation must come from the student.
- Our class should be **interactive and engaging**.
- Students are expected to **contribute** to our peer **learning community**.
- **There are weekly obligations**.
- **Ask for help early and often**. Don't wait until you feel overwhelmed.

## Required Course Materials

- There is no required text. Readings will be posted through OAKS.
- **Computer/tablet/technology** with access to **internet**.
- **Software/Apps**: OAKS, MyChalreston

## Attendance and Participation

- Student participation includes group discussions in and out of class, and written discussion posts to the online group discussion board. Please see netiquette rules above and rubric regarding posting guidelines and expectations.
- Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss assigned readings.
- Missing more than five regular class sessions with unexcused absences will result in a proportional overall grade reduction beginning at 5%.
- Repeated tardiness more than four times to regular class sessions will result in a proportional grade reduction beginning at 2.5%.
- **Missing more than 7 classes results in a WA (withdrawn for absences)**

## Accommodation

**Center for Disability Services** (<http://disabilityservices.cofc.edu/for-faculty/faqs.php>)

- Any student eligible for and needing accommodations because of a disability is requested to speak with the professor during the first two weeks of class or as soon as the student has been approved for services so that reasonable accommodations can be arranged. This College abides by section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you have a documented disability that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations, please see an administrator at the Center of Disability Services/SNAP, 843.953.1431 so that such accommodation may be arranged.
- Athletes, International, ESL, those serving in the military, and all students with life circumstances that may warrant accommodations are encouraged to **discuss any concerns with the instructor** in a timely manner. I am fluent in Spanish. I understand that we all have way more important things going on in our lives than this class. I aim to be friendly, approachable, understanding, and I will hold you to high standards.

## Honor Code and Academic Integrity:

Lying, cheating, attempted cheating, and plagiarism are violations of our Honor Code that, when identified, are investigated. Each incident will be examined to determine the degree of deception involved. Incidents where the instructor determines the student's actions are related more to a misunderstanding will be handled by the instructor. A written intervention designed to help prevent the student from repeating the error will be given to the student. The intervention, submitted by form and signed both by the instructor and the student, will be forwarded to the Dean of Students and placed in the student's file. A student found responsible by the Honor Board for academic dishonesty will receive a XXF in the course, indicating failure of the course due to academic dishonesty. This grade will appear on the student's transcript for two years after which the student may petition for the XX to be expunged. The F is permanent. The student may also be placed on disciplinary probation, suspended (temporary removal) or expelled (permanent removal) from the College by the Honor Board.

Students should be aware that unauthorized collaboration--working together without permission-- is a form of cheating. Unless the instructor specifies that students can work together on an assignment, quiz and/or test, no collaboration during the completion of the assignment is permitted. Other forms of cheating include possessing or using an unauthorized study aid (which could include accessing information via a cell phone or computer), copying from others' exams, fabricating data, and giving unauthorized assistance. Research conducted and/or papers written for other classes cannot be used in whole or in part for any assignment in this class without obtaining prior permission from the instructor.

<http://studentaffairs.cofc.edu/honor-system/studenthandbook/index.php>

**Center for Student Learning:** I encourage you to utilize the Center for Student Learning's (CSL) academic support services for assistance in study strategies, speaking & writing strategies, and course content. They offer tutoring, Supplemental Instruction, study strategy appointments, and workshops. Students of all abilities have become more successful using these programs throughout their academic career and the services are available to you at no additional cost. For more information regarding these services please visit the CSL website at <http://csl.cofc.edu/> or call (843) 953-5635.

## Assessment

- This class uses a mixed lecture/discussion pedagogy. Class participation in discussions and activities is a graded component. Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss assigned readings. Pop quiz "readiness assessment prompts", active and engaged participation in class discussions, peer to peer collaboration, and attendance are factored into this graded component.
- Written discussion posts (4) will be made through the OAKS discussion board in small groups, critiquing articles/videos, utilizing supporting references, providing peer feedback, and stimulating analysis/debate/discussion.
- Unit exams (3) are summative assessments of student understanding. They are in-class, multiple choice and short answer evaluations.
- A cumulative, final written project will be due at or before the final exam period.

### Grades calculated as follows:

<u>Component</u>	<u>Value (% of final course grade)</u>
<b>Class Participation/Preparedness</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Written Discussions (4)</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Exams (3)</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Final Written Project</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Grading scale:

<b>Grade Equivalent:</b>	<b>Percentage Range:</b>
<b>A</b>	<b>93 and above</b>
<b>A-</b>	<b>90-92</b>
<b>B+</b>	<b>87-89</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>83-86</b>
<b>B-</b>	<b>80-82</b>
<b>C+</b>	<b>77-79</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>73-76</b>
<b>C-</b>	<b>70-72</b>
<b>D+</b>	<b>67-69</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>63-66</b>
<b>D-</b>	<b>60-62</b>
<b>F</b>	<b>Less than 60</b>

Tentative Schedule \*this schedule may be modified as the course progresses.

<b>Week</b>	<b>Lecture topic</b>	<b>Readings/excerpts/videos</b>	<b>Due for grading</b>
1/9-11	Introduction. Mingling. What is nature?	Kahn and Kellert's Children and Nature, Louv's Last Child in the Woods, McKibben's The End of Nature	Must score 100% on <b>syllabus quiz</b> (OAKS online) for access to course materials on OAKS.
1/14-18	(Re)connect-the human nature connection, wilderness	Bratman et al 2015 nature experience, Cronon's The Trouble with Wilderness	
<b>No class on Monday, Dr. MLK Jr. Day 1/23-25</b>	Intro to environ. science, environ. literacy	What can we learn from a vanished society?	<b>Discussion Board Post#1:</b> Trouble with wilderness. Post thread to OAKS by W & <b>reply to 2 peer posts</b> by F
1/28-2/1	Scientific & information literacy	Owen's The Conundrum Logical fallacies	
2/4-8	Life's Principles: a sustainable world already exists	Biomimicry Primer Video: BBC How Nature Works	<b>Discussion Board Post #2</b> – Conundrum. Post thread to OAKS by W & <b>reply to 2 peer posts</b> by F
2/11-15	Earth's operating conditions, ecology	Nature is speaking videos, Yellowstone wolves	<b>Exam 1 Monday 2/11</b>
2/18-22	Evolution and biodiversity	Ceballos et al 2015, 6 <sup>th</sup> mass extinction	
2/25-3/1	Human populations and environmental health	Article: Worst mistake in history? Videos: Story of Solutions, Forget Shorter Showers	<b>Discussion Board Post #3</b> – everybody wants to change the world but nobody wants to change. Post thread to OAKS by W & <b>reply to 2 peer posts</b> by F
3/4-8	Managing resources, environmental economics and policy	Cost of a cup of coffee Cradle to Cradle	
3/11-15	Water resources	Video: Cadillac Desert Article: Taming the blue frontier	<b>Exam 2 Monday 3/11</b>
3/18-22 <b>spring break</b>		<b>spring break</b>	
3/25-29	Land resources, mining	Pebble mine	
4/1-5	Food resources – the green revolution, permaculture	Genetic modification, the first 50K years	<b>Discussion Board Post #4</b> sustainable chocolate
4/8-12	Conventional Energy -coal, fracking,	Coal sludge spill Kentucky	<b>Exam 3 Friday 4/12</b>
4/15-19	Air Quality and Climate Change -	The easiest way to change people's minds, Why facts don't change minds	
<b>Last day of class is T 4/23</b>	Alternatives to Fossil Fuels	A tale of two cities	<b>Course evaluations</b>
			<b>Final written project due by Wednesday 5/1 @3 PM</b>