

ESCI 101 – Environmental Studies – A Scientific Approach Syllabus – Winter Quarter, 2010

Instructor: David H. Shull

Lecture Location: AH 100

Meeting time: TR 10:00-11:20 PM

CRN: 12634 Office hours: M 10 AM - 12PM, W 10AM - 2PM

Teaching Assistant

Office: ES 303 Office hours: MW 2 - 4 PM or by appt

The information contained in this syllabus will change throughout the quarter according to our pace, the availability of guest lecturers and other factors. Please note these changes as they are announced in class or posted on the course web site (Updated 12/29/2010).

Course Objectives

1. Better understand the nature and scope of contemporary problems in the environment
2. Apply scientific methods and principles to study how the natural world operates and to define natural and anthropogenic changes
3. Recognize the effects of individuals and society on the environment

Upon successful completion of this course students will be able to

1. Describe the structure and function of significant environmental systems.
2. Use scientific reasoning to identify and understand environmental problems and evaluate potential solutions.
3. Critically evaluate arguments regarding environmental issues.
4. See the impact of your way of life on the environment.
5. Apply your understanding of environmental issues to lifestyle choices.

Readings: All required reading assignments will be available online. Links to these readings can be found on the course web page under "schedule". Michael Pollan's book *Omnivore's Dilemma* is assigned as a supplemental reading. This book is available in the book store, on-line, and if you're a freshman you should already have it.

Notes on my Approach to this Course

Even though this is a huge class, with more than 440 students, it is important that we can all discuss ideas and share information in the classroom as much as possible. I recognize that the collection of students in this class possess a wealth of ideas and experiences and that sharing these ideas can enhance the learning experience for all of

us. I will incorporate your ideas into the classroom as much as possible through in-class discussions, student presentations, perhaps some debates, and by other means. I expect that we all will show respect for the ideas of classmates and guest speakers.

Your grade will be based on the following scale:

95-100% of high score in class = A
90-94% of high score in class = A-
87-89% of high score in class = B+
84-86% of high score in class = B
80-83% of high score in class = B-
77-79% of high score in class = C+
74-76% of high score in class = C
70-73% of high score in class = C-
60-69% of high score in class = D
0-60% of high score in class = F

Assessment and Grading

Your grade will depend on your scores on three exams, several quizzes on the assigned reading material and any extra credit you might have earned. Each of the first two exams will be worth around 50 points and the comprehensive final will be worth around 100 points. The exams will be graded on a curve relative to the highest score on each exam. You will be required to complete the quizzes on reading assignments by 10AM on the due date (see the due dates on the schedule).

Important Notes on Exams and Quizzes

The quizzes will be offered through the course web site. They will be available for a 24-hour period before the due date and must be completed during that time window. The content of the quizzes will be the assigned reading and you will have 10 minutes to complete them. If you read the material before taking the quiz, you should have no difficulty completing it. If you attempt to take the quiz without first completing the reading, you probably won't have time to search for the answers within the reading material. Students will learn their score immediately after taking the quiz. Midterm exams and the final exam will be given in class. They will be closed book. Shortly after each exam, your scores will be posted on the course website. If there is a problem with your student I.D. number, your grade, or if you have not received credit for a quiz or exam that you have taken, **you will have seven days from the posting of the scores to correct this by sending an email to the teaching assistant.** You must address problems with exams or extra-credit assignments within seven days of the scores being posted at which point the grade you received will become permanent. There will be no exceptions to this policy.

Make-up exams

I highly recommend that you do not miss either midterm exam. Make-up exams will be given only under extreme circumstances and if the student notifies the instructor prior to the exam. If you do miss a midterm exam, there will be an opportunity to take a make-up exam on the same date as the final exam. Make-up midterms will be mainly multiple-choice and essay format and will be closed book. You will only be able to make up one missed exam. If you miss both midterms, you will receive a zero grade for one of those exams.

Extra Credit Information

There are two ways to earn extra credit in this class and you may earn a maximum of 10 points for the entire course.

1) Complete an environmental restoration project with the LEAD program (10 points). To earn 10 LEAD extra credit points you must contact the LEAD office to sign up for one of the projects announced on <http://www.ac.wvu.edu/~lead>. You must arrive on time and work for the entire allotted time. At the end of the work party you must sign a participation roster and fill out a form with your name and student number. **Within 7 days of the event you must write a 250 word summary addressing the following items and email it to our teaching assistant.** Late essays will not be graded and all LEAD events will fill up so sign up soon. If you sign up and do not attend you will lose all future opportunities to earn extra credit. If you arrive late or leave early you will not receive credit for your work.

To receive credit, you must answer the following questions in your summary essay:

1. What work party did you participate in?
2. What environmental problem were you trying to solve?
3. What scientific basis exists for the restoration work you completed?
4. How effective was the restoration project? Explain your answer.
5. What could the LEAD staff do to improve the effectiveness of its program?

2) [Make a movie](#). (10 points) Using iDVD, Microsoft Movie Maker, traditional video editing, or any movie making/editing program that you have at your disposal, make a short movie (7 minutes max) highlighting some environmental issue. You can even check out movie cameras from WWU. This movie can be informational, documentary, humorous, political, persuasive, controversial, but not obscene or offensive. Up to two students can work together as a group on this project. If you would like to earn 10 bonus points in this manner you must:

- Submit a one page "screen play outline" to David Shull in class by the due date (see below). Include your name and email so I can contact you after reviewing

the outline. I will look them over and give you the go-ahead within two weeks. This outline should contain information on the video content and how you are going to do it.

- Submit your finished product to me about one week before the end of class (see due date below). You can submit them earlier if you would like.
- An impartial panel will screen all submissions and I will play the best ones in class (kind of like the Sundance film festival).
- Finally, there will be a class vote for the best film.
- The winner will receive an automatic 100% on the final.

Winter Quarter 2009: Key Dates

Thursday, January 21st, Extra credit movie screenplays due

Tuesday, February 2nd, Exam 1

Tuesday, March 2nd, Exam 2

Tuesday, March 9th, Final day for extra credit, extra credit movies due

Monday, March 15th, 8 AM - 10 AM, Final Exam

Attendance and Cheating Policy

Regular attendance is expected although I won't be taking attendance. Cheating will not be tolerated. If you have to cheat to do well in this class, then perhaps college is not for you. Anyone caught cheating on an exam will receive a zero for the exam and most likely will be subject to further disciplinary action according to university policy. Please be sure you are familiar with WWU's definition of and method for dealing with academic dishonesty, including plagiarism. This policy will be enforced fully and without exception. It also applies to extra credit assignments. Please refer to the Current WWU General Catalog for more details.