

San José State University
College of Social Sciences / Environmental Studies Department
ENVS 150, Introduction to Environmental Thought and Philosophy
Spring 2024

Instructor: Dr. Will Russell
Class Time: T/Th 10:30am - 11:45am
Location: Boccardo Business Center 126
Office Hours: Tuesday 9:00-10:15 (by apt.)
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Course Description

An introduction to significant works in the field of environmental studies. Topics covered include preservation, conservation, biocentrism, environmental justice, eco-feminism, deep ecology, and environmental activism.

Course Overview and Organization

This course is designed to provide upper division students with an opportunity to investigate the historic and cultural context of environmental thought, history, and philosophy. The evolution of our society has direct and profound influence on our attitudes toward nature. These attitudes are reflected in science, literature, government, religion, art, and our management of natural resources.

Department Program Learning Outcomes

The Department Program Learning Outcomes for all Environmental Studies undergraduates and graduate students are found at <http://www.sjsu.edu/depts/EnvStudies/assessment/>. This course will be used to promote undergraduate student learning for the following outcomes:

SLO 1 - Qualitative Environmental Literacy: Students are able to write a logical analytical paper using good writing style and construction supported by appropriate research.

SLO 3 - Content Environmental Literacy: Students will develop proficiency in the interdisciplinary sustainability principles that are the foundation of environmental studies; they will know the key environmental challenges facing the planet, know

relevant interdisciplinary information about these challenges, and be able to develop/identify feasible solutions

Required Texts

- American Earth: Environmental Writing Since Thoreau. Bill McKibben, Editor. Library of America. 2008.
- Additional readings are linked to each course module on Canvas, and URLs for you tube movies are given in the course modules.

Dropping and Adding

You are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drops, academic renewal, etc. Information on add/drops is available at <http://info.sjsu.edu/web-dbgen/narr/soc-fall/rec-298.html>. Late drop information is available at <http://www.sjsu.edu/sac/policies/latedrops>. Students should be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for adding and dropping classes.

Assignments and Grading Policy

Please read the following assignment descriptions carefully. Failing to comply with the specific directions given below will result in a loss of credit points for each assignment.

In Class Assignments

Individual and group activities will take class during class-time. Participation in these activities will be a significant part of the course.

***Pro tip:** Participation does not mean being verbose. In many cases allowing or encouraging others to speak is more valuable to the group dynamic. Provide the group your insights in an engaging and respectful manner. Statements are always more interesting if they are backed up by logic and evidence.*

Reaction to Weekly Readings

Post a 200-300 word 'Reaction' to each week's readings in the discussion section in Canvas. Be sure to **write in your own voice** - AI programs should be avoided. A successful Reaction will address all of the prompts posted by the instructor for the readings, and will include at least **one quote from each reading** to support your ideas. Parenthetical citations should accompany each quote, and should include the author's name and page number, i.e... (Carson, Pg. 62). In addition, each student must post at least **two discussion questions** that address the broad themes around the topic for the week, or can be specific to individual the readings or authors. You may also post responses to other students' reactions, but this is not required.

Personal Environmental Philosophy

A 750-1000 word personal environmental philosophy will be required from each student. The philosophy should describe your personal environmental perspective in direct reference to the course readings and class discussions. Also include how your personal lens - cultural identity, gender, family history, life experience, etc. influence your philosophy. Be sure to answer the question “How do I as an individual relate to the natural world – am I a part of it, or apart from it?” Include a bibliography with referenced material in APA style that includes at least five outside references (not from the course text). You may include as many references from the text as you like.

Grading Rubric for Personal Environmental Philosophy

Word Count	10
References (APA)	10
Personal Lens	10
Connection to Course readings	10
Style and Grammar	10
Total	100

Environmental Philosophy Presentation

Each student will share their environmental philosophy with the class through an informal presentation. The presentation should include a description of the student's personal lens and how it relates to the themes of the course. The presentation will be conducted **without the aid of electronic devices or written notes**. The total length of the presentation shall not exceed 10 minutes.

Selected Reading Assignment

For this assignment, you will choose one of the readings from American Earth that **was not** assigned by the instructor (or an academic article that relates to the course topic) and present a five-minute summary in class that includes: 1) The topic of the reading; 2) The life and influence of the author; 3) How the ideas presented by the author relate to the other class readings and the topics discussed in class. *Hint:* Choose a reading that you are interested in, not just the shortest reading in the book 😊.

Final Exam

The final will cover all course material up until the day of the exam including: readings and module content, discussions, and assignments. The exam will include short answer, multiple-choice, and essay style questions.

Grading

Your grade in this course will be based on your essays, discussion postings, and exams as follows, with 90-100 % =A; 80-89 % =B; 70-79 % =C; 60-69 % =D; and less than 60 % = F:

Assignment	% Grade
In-Class Assignments	20%
Weekly Reactions	30%
Selected Reading Essay	10%
Environmental Philosophy	20%
Final Exam	20%
Total	100%

University Policies

Academic Integrity

Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at San José State University, and the University's Academic Integrity Policy requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the Office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The policy on academic integrity can be found at http://sa.sjsu.edu/student_conduct.

Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with DRC to establish a record of their disability.

Student Technology Resources

Computer labs for student use are available in the Academic Success Center located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall and on the 2nd floor of the Student Union. Additional computer labs may be available in your department/college. Computers are also available in the Martin Luther King Library.

ENVS 150 / Environmental Thought - Course Schedule
Spring 2024

Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments Due
1/25	Introductions	Course Syllabus	
1/30 T	In Class Activity		Roots and Branches
2/1 Th	Traditional Ecological Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great Law of Peace (linked file) • Chief Seattle (linked file) • Winona LaDuke (linked file) 	Reaction 1
2/6 T			In-Class discussion
2/8 Th	Roots of Environmentalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marsh 71-80 (textbook) • Thoreau 1-2; 26-36 (textbook) 	Reaction 2
2/13 T			In-Class discussion
2/15 Th	Preservation vs. Conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Muir 84-85; 104-112 (textbook) • Pinchot 172-180 (textbook) 	Reaction 3
2/20 T			In-Class discussion
2/22 Th	Ecology and the Early Environmental Movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carson 365-376 (textbook) • Abbey 413-433 (textbook) 	Reaction 4
2/27 T			In-Class discussion
2/29 Th	The Tragedy of the Commons and the Population Bomb!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hardin 438-450 (textbook) • Ehrlich 434-437 (textbook) 	Reaction 5
3/5 T			In-Class discussion
3/7 Th	Racism and the Environmental Movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnic Cleansing and Americas Creation of the National Parks (linked file) • Environmentalism's Racist History (linked file) • The Tragedy of the Tragedy of the Commons (linked file) • Communities of color bear the brunt (linked file) 	Reaction 6
3/12 T			In-Class discussion
3/14 Th	Environmental Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chavez 690-695 (textbook) • Climate Change and the Boarder Crisis (linked file) • Dolores Huerta (linked file) • Mustafa Ali video (linked file) 	Reaction 7
3/19 T			In-Class discussion
3/21 Th	EcoFeminism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vandana Shiva (linked file) • Judi Bari (linked file) 	Reaction 8
3/26 T			In-Class discussion
3/28 Th	<i>No Class meeting</i>	<i>No Class</i>	Selected Reading Summary
4/2-5	<i>Spring Break</i>		

Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments Due
4/9 T	Selected Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share in Class 	
4/11 Th	Deep Ecology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Naess and Sessions (linked file) 	Reaction 9
4/16 T	Selected Readings		In-Class discussion
4/18 Th	Direct Action and Civil Disobedience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hill 907-919 (textbook) • Thoreau's Civil Disobedience (linked file) 	Reaction 10
4/23 T			In-Class discussion
4/25 Th	Current Directions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter from Evo Morales (linked file) • Encyclical (linked file) • Green New Deal (linked file) • Greta Thunberg (linked file) • Haaland (linked file) 	Reaction 11
4/30 T			In-Class discussion
5/1 Th	<i>Individual Student Meetings</i>		
5/3 T	Environmental Philosophies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-Class Philosophy Share 	
5/5 Th	<i>Individual Student Meetings</i>		
5/7 T	Environmental Philosophies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-Class Philosophy Share 	
5/9 Th	Final Exam		<i>Environmental Philosophies Due</i>