

San José State University
Department of Environmental Studies
Introduction to Environmental Issues, Spring 2022

ENVS 001-Section 05

Course and Contact Information

Instructor: Padmaja (PJ) Iyer

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Class Location/Day/Time:

Tuesday and Thursday from 10:30AM-11:45AM

Zoom through February 10th

Starting February 15th - Dudley Moorhead Hall (DMH) 226B

Office Hours:

Available 15 minutes before class and by appointment.

Please email or text to make an appointment.

GE SJSU Studies Category: Area D1: Human Behavior

Course Description

The relationship between humans and the environments around them are constantly changing. The field of environmental studies is engaged in understanding the causes, dynamics, and solutions to environmental problems. In this course, students will learn about a wide array of environmental topics, engage with critical readings and discussions on these issues as well as the scientific research, activism, and policy action that communities in the U.S. and around the world are engaging in to promote environmental justice and sustainability.

Course Format

Even though we will be meeting in person we will be using the online Canvas modules extensively to engage in discussions, submit assignments, take assessments, and gain access to readings and additional videos.

Contacting the Instructor

Course materials such as syllabus, handouts, notes, assignment instructions, etc. can be found on the Canvas website for this course. Students are responsible for regularly checking with the messaging and announcement system through Canvas to learn about any updates.

The best way to contact the instructor is through email or text or by making an appointment.

Learning Outcomes and Course Goals

This course has four main learning objectives, which include:

1. learning about important environmental problems
2. the relationships between humans and their surrounding environments
3. the research around these problems and relationships, and
4. ways in which individual and collective actions can help solve environmental problems and create more sustainable futures.

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Understand and explain key environmental issues.
2. Analyze the interrelationships between resource use, economics, politics, social justice, and environmental degradation.
3. Identify social, political, and technical solutions that will guide change towards more sustainable communities today, and in the years to come.

This course fulfills the following General Education Learning Outcomes (GELO):

1. Place contemporary developments in cultural, historical, environmental, and spatial context.
2. Identify the dynamics of ethnic, cultural, gender/sexual, age-based, class, regional, national, transnational, and global identities and the similarities, differences, linkages, and interactions between them.
3. Evaluate social science information, draw on different points of view, and formulate applications appropriate to contemporary social situations.
4. Apply multidisciplinary material to a topic relevant to policy and social action at the local, national, and/or international levels.

Required Texts/Readings Textbook

Miller, G. Spoolman, S. Living in the Environment. 20th edition. Print ISBN: 9780357142202, 0357142209, eText ISBN: 9780357142332, 0357142330

The book is available at the SJSU Spartan Bookstore and for rent at Amazon.com for about \$34.00. You can also purchase a hardcover or loose- leaf text on Amazon.

Additional assigned readings are available on Canvas.

Course Requirements and Assignments

To be successful in this course it is expected that students will spend time reading, listening to the lectures, watching videos, and participating in course activities, discussion, and writing. Each week will focus on a single module with one or more of the following elements - module objectives and checklist, readings, lectures, assignment or discussion, and any other assessments like position papers, in-class activities or finals. Students will be evaluated based on the following:

Plagiarism Quiz

Provided by the university, this quiz will help you learn the nuances of plagiarism and the consequences at San José State University.

Current Event and Presentation

Each student will find a current event article that relates to a topic of a week of their choosing and will write a 250-500 word reflection of the event and share a 3-minute presentation in class. The current event could come from an accredited newspaper, journal article, lawsuit, or government ruling.

Position Paper Mind Map

The purpose of the Position Paper Mind Map is to help you get a jumpstart on your essay. While developing your Mind Map, you will need to pick an environmental issue, research some facts about the issue, learn about the policies and social movements around the issue and present a possible solution. Please read the rubric carefully to make sure you include all the elements required. It is entirely possible that you might change your ideas for the final paper; that is completely fine. This Mind Map will help you get started and will give you an opportunity to ask me questions and think about your issue. Please note that the textbook counts as a valid primary source and has some excellent information. You might start there during your research.

Position Paper

Each 5-7 (1,250-3,000) page paper focuses on an environmental issue. Based on insights from your connection to the topic, readings, videos, lectures, discussions, and your own research, discuss your perspective on the environmental issue that you chose. **First**, tell your story of why this issue means something to you. Describe your

connection; it might include your reason for interest, or a personal experience related to this issue. **Second**, describe the issue and characterize how it has occurred. Please use valid science and social science data in the analysis of the issue. **Third**, explain the positions on the issue and the movements and policies (if any) that relate to the issue. **Fourth**, explain your stand on the issue and your opinion of the current movements and/or policies regarding the issue. **Finally**, offer your solution to this issue. A solution might include technological innovation, community involvement, another policy, enforcement of existing policies, another solution or combination of solutions.

Module Quizzes

Each module concludes with a short quiz to help prepare for the midterm and to help synthesize the week's lesson and topics.

Assignments and Online Discussions

The assignments are designed to deepen the student's knowledge and connection to the subject. Discussions are designed in the form of a debate. Students are expected to remain respectful and kind in their responses to peers and cite evidence to support their arguments in their posts.

In-Class Work

Each class session will include group work, discussions, hypothetical situations, presentations, and reflections. Students are expected to have completed the reading for the day's topic and participate.

Final Project

The final project explores the natural resources, communities, and environmental issues of a single location. This is a group project of a minimum of 2 and maximum of 3 people. The project involves building a web page using Adobe Spark and presenting your research in class. All of the guidelines are provided in a mock web page.

Grade Distribution

Assessment Area	# Of Points	# Of Items	Total # Of Points	Percentage
Current Event Paper and Presentation	20	1	20	4%
Position Paper Mind Map	10	1	10	2%
Position Paper Final	25	1	25	5%
Final Project	35	1	35	8%
Assignments and Online Discussions	13	8	104	22%
In-Class Work	10	20	200	43%
Quizzes	5	12	60	13%
Plagiarism Quiz	12	1	12	3%
			466	100%

Grade Scale

Grade Distribution		
A+=100%	A= 99- 95%	A-= 94- 90%
B+= 89- 87%	B= 86- 83%	B-= 82- 80%
C+= 79- 77%	C= 76- 73%	C-= 72- 70%
D+= 69- 67%	D= 66- 63%	D-= 62- 60%
F= 59- 0% Unsatisfactory		

Modules and Topics

The schedule is subject to change with fair notice available in advance.

Module descriptions			
Module	Date	Topics and Textbook Reading	Assessments
Module 1	1/27	The Environment and Sustainability - Chapter 1, 2.1, and 2.2	Discussion 1: Environmental Issue Quiz 1
Module 2	2/1,2/3	Ecosystems: What are They and How do They Work? - Chapter 3	Quiz 2
Module 3	2/8, 2/10	Urbanization and Sustainability and Environmental Economics - Chapter 22 and 23	Discussion 2: Free Public Transportation Quiz 3
Module 4	2/15, 2/17	Politics, Environment, and Sustainability - Chapter 24 and Environmental World views, Ethics, and Sustainability - Chapter 25	Assignment 1: Lawsuits Quiz 4
Module 5	2/22, 2/24	Biodiversity and Natural Selection - Chapter 4, 5.1, 5.2, Core Case Study and Science Focus 5.1 and 5.2	Assignment 2 Quiz 5 Position Paper Mind Map Due
Module 6	3/1, 3/3	Climate and Terrestrial Biodiversity - Chapter 7 Sustaining Biodiversity: Saving Species and Ecosystems - Chapter 9	Assignment 3: Extinction Case Studies Discussion 3: Surroundings Quiz 6
Module 7	3/8, 3/10	Forests and Land Ecosystems and Ecosystem Services Chapter 10	Assignment 4: Our Tree Story Quiz 7
Module 8	3/15, 3/17	Aquatic Ecosystems and Biodiversity - Chapter 8 and 11	Assignment 5: Aquatic Biodiversity Quiz 8
Module 9	3/22, 3/24	Special Guest and Family Feud – Final Position Paper Due	
March 28 -April 1 Spring Recess			

Module 10	4/5, 4/7	Water Resources, Access, and Pollution- Chapter 13 and 20	Quiz 9
Module 11	4/12, 4/14	Soil, Food, Plastic, GMOs, and Chemicals - Chapter 12, 21 and 17.3	Discussion 4: GMOs Quiz 10
Module 12	4/19, 4/21	Air Pollution and Ozone Depletion - Chapter 18	Position Paper Final Due: 11/14 Assignment 6 & 7 Quiz 11
Module 13	4/26, 4/28	Renewable and Nonrenewable Energy - Chapter 14.1, 14.2, 14.3, 15, 16 Special Guest	Discussion 5: Nuclear Power Quiz 12
Module 14	5/3, 5/5	Final Project Workshop and Special Topics	
Module 15	5/10, 5/12	Climate Change	Assignment 8: Green Climate Fund (GFC) Project
Last Day of Class	5/20	Share Final Projects and Celebrate (9:45am – 12:00pm)	

University Policies

Per [University Policy S16-9](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), relevant information to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. is available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' [Syllabus Information Web page](#) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>".

Make sure to visit this page, review and be familiar with these university policies and resources.

Student Resources

University Writing Center

The San José State University Writing Center offers a variety of resources to help students become better writers, and all of our services are free for SJSU students. The mission is to enhance the writing skills of SJSU students so students can communicate clearly in any setting (informal, academic, or professional). They accomplish this goal through creating original writing resources, offering workshops, and conducting one-on-one and small-group tutoring sessions.

The SJSU Writing Center has two locations: They conduct drop-in tutoring sessions in Clark Hall, Suite 126; and conduct scheduled appointments on the second floor of the MLK Library. They also offer online tutoring sessions using the Zoom web conferencing platform. All appointments can be made online at sjsu.mywconline.com.

To make an appointment, register for a workshop, or to refer to the numerous online resources offered through the Writing Center, visit the [Writing Center website](http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter>

Student Technology Resources

Computer labs for student use are available at:

- [Associated Students Print & Technology Center](http://as.sjsu.edu/asptc/index.jsp) at as.sjsu.edu/asptc/index.jsp on the Student Union (East Wing 2nd floor Suite 2600)
- [The Spartan Floor](http://library.sjsu.edu/services/services) at the MLK Library at library.sjsu.edu/services/services (Fourth floor)
- [Student Computing Services](http://library.sjsu.edu/student-computing-services/student-computing-services-center) at library.sjsu.edu/student-computing-services/student-computing-services-center
- [Computers at the Martin Luther King Library](http://www.sjpl.org/wireless) for public at large at www.sjpl.org/wireless

Online Citation Resources

For this class, you will be able to use whichever citation style you prefer, as long as you are consistent. Here are some links to useful citation guides for three different citation styles.

MLA: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

APA: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

Chicago: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/717/01/>

For more detailed information on academic integrity, SJSU has very helpful writing hints for students, including some on how to cite sources. Please visit the [SJSU Tutoring and Library Resources](#) for more information.

University Health and Healing Resources

Being a full-time student, working, participating in extracurricular activities, providing support to our loved ones, can all take a pricey toll on our mental and physical health. Please take advantage of the many health and healing resources available at San Jose State University to foster your wellness.

- SJSU Student Health Center: (408) 924-6122 or online through the [SHCPatient Portal](http://shcpatient.sjsu.edu/login_directory.aspx) at https://shcpatient.sjsu.edu/login_directory.aspx.

*SJSU Counseling and Psychological Services: (408) 924-5910 or at counseling.services@sjsu.edu. If you are experiencing a crisis, reach out to *The County Suicide & Crisis Line* at (855) 278-4204 or the *National Suicide Prevention Lifeline* at (800) 273-8255, both are available toll-free, 24*

SJSU Cares

Students experiencing challenges meeting their basic needs including, but not limited to, access to food, shelter, and a safe space are encouraged to contact [SJSU Cares](#). If you feel like your class performance may be affected by these challenges, please contact your instructor, if you are comfortable doing so.