

San José State University
College of Social Sciences/Environmental Studies Department
Course #26546, Section 1, Introduction to Environmental Thought & Philosophy, Spring
Semester 2020

Course and Contact Information

Instructor:	Robert Foran
Office Location:	Washington Square Hall, Room #111E
Telephone:	415-940-4917 (primary, this semester)
Email:	robert.foran@sjsu.edu (primary) / rmforan@gmail.com (secondary)
Office Hours:	Monday & Wednesday, 1:30 – 2:45 pm by appointment
Class Days/Time:	Monday 3 – 5:45 pm
Classroom:	DMH 164
Prerequisites:	Eng. 1A and Eng. 1B; upper division standing or instructor consent.

Course Format

This course uses multiple platforms of engagement such as in-class lectures, class discussions, group work, course readings, writing assignments/journaling, lesson plan development, and class presentations as a means of exploring and communicating ideas, concepts, and theoretical approaches concerning environmental thought and philosophy overtime and into the present through a critical lens. We will also be using Canvas through the MY SJSU Portal as a means of accessing additional class readings, to engage in some class discussions, and as a repository for most of the assignments. Canvas will also be a medium for communications between the professor and the students when we are not physically meeting.

Course Description

This course is 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 justice issues & activism. 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.

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:

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

PLO 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

Course Learning Outcomes

SJSU Studies Area S (Self, Society, & Equality in the United States)

CLO 1 – Students will be able to describe how identities (i.e. religious, gender, ethno-cultural identity, class, sexual orientation, disability, and/or age) are shaped by cultural and societal influences. In addition, students will come to know how identity connects to issues of equality/equity & inequality/inequity within the framework of an environmental philosophical discourse and how it impacts the ways in which we experience the spaces that we live, work, and play.

CLO 2 – Students will be able to describe historical, social, political, and economic processes producing diversity, equality/equity and structured inequality/inequity in the United States in the context of an environmental philosophical discourse and how it applies to historical and current environmental issues.

CLO 3 – Students will be able to describe social actions that have led to greater equality/equity and social justice in the United States. (i.e. religious, gender, ethno-cultural, class, sexual orientation, disability, and/or age) in the context of an environmental philosophical discourse and how it impacts environmental and social justice policy.

CLO 4 – Students will be able to recognize and appreciate constructive interactions between people from different ethno-cultural identities in the context of an environmental philosophical discourse and how it has influenced, and can influence, various environmental and social justice movements.

Required Texts/Readings (Required)

Textbook(s)

- *American Earth. American Earth: Environmental Writing Since Thoreau.* Bill McKibben, Editor. Library of America. 2008.
- *Ishmael: An Adventure of the Mind and Spirit.* Quinn, Daniel. 1992.

- Additional readings are linked to each course module on Canvas, and URLs for YouTube movies are given in the course modules.

Course Requirements: 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. Please note that most assignments will be due by 11:59pm (PST) on the date due, and **no late work will be accepted under any circumstances**. If you foresee yourself falling behind in the class, missing class multiple times, or unable to keep up with the timeline and assignments, I ***STRONGLY*** suggest that you come and see me ***BEFORE*** it becomes insurmountable for you. Just to be transparent, I am ***not*** flexible when it comes to the cry of help at the 11th hour of the semester.

Reaction and Responses

Post a 500-600 word 'Reaction' to the day's readings to the 'Discussions' section in Canvas. The Reaction should address the discussion question posted by the instructor for that day, and include quotes from the text to support your ideas. In addition, each student must post two 'Responses' to other students' posted Reactions. For full credit Responses will encourage dialog by challenging assumptions and asking questions. The Reaction and Responses must be posted by the day of class, **one hour** beforehand.

Activities

Each week, time permitting, we will all participate in an activity that I have created that directly reference the themes that we are covering in our reading, lectures, and the other materials that we explore. It will be part of your participation grade, so it is important that you are present in class in order to get credit. I will be passing around a sign in sheet for every class to keep track of the roster in order for everyone to receive their points for class engagement.

Peer-led Discussions

Each week we will be engaging in a peer-led discussion. Meaning that each one of you will partner up the first day of class with one or two others from your cohort to lead a weekly discussion based on the themes that we cover in the reading, lectures, and other materials that we explore. This is to ensure and support your active research of the literature and your participation in the class overall. Peer-led discussions are a **LARGE** part of your class participation grade, as is your continued engagement with your cohort and with the class material. It is important to be present for your initial presentation of the literature that you and your partner/s will introduce us to and the facilitated discussion that follows, as I will be pulling information from what you cover and making sure that some of it is on the final exam. It is also good practice to facilitate discussions in class as it will prepare you for your final presentation at the end of the semester that will be reflective of your personal environmental philosophy.

Ishmael Quiz

An open book online, take-home quiz on Canvas will be given on the book *Ishmael* by Daniel Quinn. The quiz will include 15-20 short answer and multiple-choice questions. It is a timed quiz, once you begin it, you will have 1.5 hours to complete it. After which time the quiz will be locked for grading. Also, you will need to take the quiz straight through. If you stop and sign out of Canvas for any reason (you are distracted, a friend calls, etc.), you will be locked out. You only get one chance to take the quiz, so please keep this in mind.

Environmental Philosophy-Presentation

Each student will formally present their environmental philosophy in class (10-15 minutes). The philosophy should include direct references to the philosophies, authors, and topics described in the course readings and class discussions. Also include how your personal lens - cultural identity, gender, family history, life experience, etc. influence your philosophy. As a presenter it is your job to make your subject informative and entertaining. Please be professional and creative! Presentations can take the form of a PPTX, a Prezi, or some other slide show. It can also take the form of a skit that you perform with another cohort member, an engaging game or sorts, or some other highly creative form. 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?”

Environmental Philosophy-Paper

In addition, each student will turn in a 1000-1500-word personal environmental philosophy essay. 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). However, you may include as many references from the text as you like. See course schedule for date due.

Final Exam

An in-class written exam will be given at the end of the semester covering all course material (cumulative) including readings, module content, discussions, and assignments. The exam will include short answer, multiple-choice, and essay style questions. You will receive a study guide to aid you in your efforts in successfully passing the final.

Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally three hours per unit per week) for instruction, preparation/studying, or course related activities, including but not limited to internships, labs, and clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.”

Notes on Classroom Environment

We will hopefully, as the weather becomes more hospitable and the days lengthen, hold more classes outside, especially when it comes to our peer-led discussion sessions. I find that this creates a better space for us to engage with each other. And... since it *is* an Environmental Studies course, it allows us the opportunity to kick our shoes off, plant our feet on the earthen soil in order to ground the discourse, and move the theory out of the concrete box and into the world around us. The four walls of the traditional classroom can be great for some aspects of learning, but it is no substitute for actually being outside.

Grading Policy

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:

Determination of Grades

Assignment	% of Grade
Reactions and Responses	20%
In Class Assignments	20%
Ishmael Quiz	10%
Environmental Philosophy <i>Presentation</i> (15%) <i>Written</i> (10%)	25%
Final Exam	25%
Total	100%

Passage of the Writing Skills Test (WST) or ENGL/LLD 100A with a C or better (C- not accepted), and completion of Core General Education are prerequisite to all SJSU Studies courses. Completion of, or co-registration in, 100W is strongly recommended. A minimum aggregate GPA of 2.0 in GE Areas R, S, & V shall be required of all students.

Classroom Protocol

Respect and decorum

All class participants will behave in a manner that provides a positive and comfortable learning environment for everybody.

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](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>. Make sure to visit this page, review and be familiar with these university policies and resources.

Course #26546/ENVS 150: Introduction to Environmental Thought & Philosophy, Spring 2020, Mon. 3:00-5:45 pm

The timeline is mutable and is subject to change with fair notice. The instructor will communicate any changes through the Canvas site, through email, or both.

Course Schedule

Date	Topics	Readings/Activities	Assignments Due
1/27	Course Introduction, and Personal Introductions	*Assigning discussion leaders. *Defining what we mean by the “environment” and “identity” and how that impacts our experience of where we live, work, & play.	
2/3	Traditional Ecological Knowledge	*Mann “Great Law of Peace” *Chief Seattle “Oration 1854” *Winona LaDuke * Peer-led Discussion: TEK	Reaction 1
2/10	Roots of Environmentalism	*Marsh 71-80 (text) *Thoreau 1-2; 26-36 (text) * Peer-led Discussion: Roots of Environmentalism	Reaction 2
2/17	Preservation vs. Conservation	*Muir 84-85; 104-112 (text) *Pinchot 172-180 (text) * Peer-led Discussion: Preservation vs. Conservation	Reaction 3
2/24	Ecology and the Early Environmental Movement	*Carson 365-376 (text) *Abbey 413-433 (text) * Peer-led Discussion: Ecology and the Early Environmental Movement	Reaction 4
3/2	The Tragedy of the Commons and the Population Bomb!	*Hardin 438-450 *Ehrlich 434-437 (text) * Peer-led Discussion: The Tragedy of the Commons and the Population Bomb!	Reaction 5
3/9	Environmental Justice	*Chavez 690-695 (text) * <i>You Tube:</i> Dolores Huerta https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YzMepBzH3pM * <i>You Tube:</i> Mustafa Ali:	Reaction 6

Date	Topics	Readings/Activities	Assignments Due
		www.youtube.com/watch?v=dtC4oFV5Ejo *Peer-led Discussion: Env. Justice under the Cesar Chavez Arch	
3/16	Ecofeminism	*Vandana Shiva "Women in Nature." *Judi Bari "The Feminization of Earth First!" *You Tube: Who Bombed Judi Bari: www.youtube.com/watch?v=HWApvSjMKY *Peer-led Discussion: Ecofeminism	Reaction 7
3/23	Biocentrism	*Quinn - Ishmael	Reaction 8
3/30	<i>Ishmael Quiz --- Online --- No Class Meeting</i> *SPRING BREAK!!!*		
4/6	Deep Ecology	*Naess and Sessions *"On Depth Ecology" *Peer-led Discussion: Deep Ecology	Reaction 9
4/13	Current Directions	*Pope Francis "Encyclical" *Evo Morales "Letter on Climate Change." *Carter "Science and Trump" *Peer-led Discussion: Current Directions	Reaction 10
4/20	EARTH WEEK!!! <i>No Class Meeting</i>	*Attend an Earth Week activity or event on-campus or off-campus this week. Write a brief 1-2-page reflection paper that explains the significance of Earth Day (Week), some historical context, and a brief summary of the event or activity that you attended. (We'll cover details in class on 4/13)	
4/27	Environmental Philosophy Presentations	*NO READINGS*	Earth Week Reflection Papers Due
5/4 & 5/11	Environmental Philosophy Presentations	*NO READINGS*	<i>Written Environmental Philosophies Due (5/11)</i> FINAL DEADLINE

TBA **FINAL EXAM!**