



E3: Human Environments

School of Social Ecology
University of California, Irvine

Instructor:

Bryan McDonald
E-mail: bmcdonal@uci.edu
Phone: (949) 278-8676 (voice mail)

Office: SEII room 2301
Office Hours: Thursday 12:30-2:00
Mailbox: SE I 209 (mailroom)

Assistant Instructor:

Steve Weldon
E-mail: sweldon@uci.edu

Office: SST 657
Office Hours: T 12:30-2:00

Class Meetings: T/Th, 9:00 to 11:50 am
Course Code: 50070

Room: Social Science Trailers 101

Introduction

In the past four decades many groups of people, from scientists to policymakers to philosophers, have become concerned with the state of what has come to be called the environment. Concepts such as nature and environment are given meaning by the societies, groups and individuals that use them to define their world and advance their interests. Thus, what are called environmental problems are most often political, cultural and philosophical contests over whose idea of the environment will most impact political processes. This course explores how human ideas and actions have created environmental problems and examine efforts to address such problems.

Science has been constructed as the voice most often used in speaking for nature, and so this course will draw on multiple perspectives from the natural sciences to explore the environment and environmental problems. However, as environmental problems are ultimately social and political problems, the course will also make use of perspectives from the social sciences and the humanities, including: history, political science, philosophy, economics, ethics, literature, and art. In addition to examining current environmental problems, the course will focus on the attempts of people to live, work and play in ways that are both more environmentally sustainable and socially equitable.

Goals of the course include: fostering student's abilities to read and think critically about environmental and political issues, and to communicate ideas and positions in a clear and professional manner.

E3 Online

The course website for E3 includes the syllabus and basic course information, more detail on materials and course requirements, and links to online resources that may be helpful in completing assignments. The website may be used to post announcements. The course website may be viewed on-line at: <http://www.gechs.uci.edu/E3index.htm>

Additionally, it is each student's responsibility to activate and monitor a campus e-mail account. Certain course information may be disseminated primarily through e-mail.

Course Materials

Readings will be discussed in class. You should complete the assigned readings prior to their corresponding lectures. It is recommended that students acquire their own copies; access to the library copies or reserves may be unreliable during periods of peak demand.

Required Reading - Please purchase the following (available at the UCI Bookstore):

- (1) Golley, Frank (1998). *A Primer for Environmental Literacy*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- (2) DesJardines, Joseph (1997). *Environmental Ethics: An Introduction to Environmental Philosophy, 2nd Edition*. New York: Wadsworth.
- (3) Pollan, Michael (1991). *Second Nature: A Gardener's Education*. New York: Delta.
- (4) Livernash, Robert and Eric Rodenburg (1998). *Population Change, Resources, and the Environment*. Population Reference Bureau.

Reserve Readings - The following required readings will be available through ANTPAC reserves. Selected readings may be available online and may be accessed using the listed URL or by following links on the course website.

- (5) Budiansky, Stephen (1995). Chapter Four: "Disorderly Conduct," in *Nature's Keepers: The New Science of Nature Management*. New York: Free Press.
- (6) Kaplan, Robert (1994). "The Coming Anarchy," *Atlantic Monthly*, February. Available online at <http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/foreign/anarchy.htm>.
- (7) Hunter, David (1999). "Global Environmental Protection in the 21st Century," *Foreign Policy in Focus*. Available online at <http://www.foreignpolicy-infocus.org/papers/index.html>.
- (8) Pollan, Michael (1998). "Playing God in the Garden," *Naturally*, *New York Times Magazine*, October 25. Available online at <http://www.junkscience.com/oct98/playgod.htm>.

Course Requirements

1. Class participation. Value 10 points.
2. Country Brief. Due in class on **July 10**. Value 20 points.

You have been asked to prepare an assessment on the status of environmental conditions of a country. Your report should include basic information about the history, geography, demographics, political and cultural context of the country. This report should be in narrative form and should focus on environmental conditions, major challenges and strategies taken for addressing environmental problems. More information about this assignment and useful links can be found on the course website. Use and citing of proper sources will be important to success in this assignment. You will be asked to select a country from a list that will be circulated in class on June 28. 3 pages max.

3. Mid-term exam. To be held in class on **July 17**. Value 25 points.

The exam will consist of ten multiple choice questions worth one point each and five short answer questions worth 3 points each.

4. Issue Research Paper. Due in class on **July 24**. Value 20 points.

You will prepare a paper on an environmental issue of national or global significance. You should select an important topic that is of interest to you. Include information necessary to explain the history of the problem, current status, and future directions that could be taken in addressing this problem. Proper grammar, spelling and use and citing of proper sources will be important to success in this assignment. 5 pages minimum/maximum.

5. Final Exam. To be held in class on **July 31**. Value 25 points.

The exam will consist of ten multiple choice questions worth one point each and five short answer questions worth 3 points each.

The Fine Print

- Assignments must be turned in on time and in class. Electronic copies will not be accepted. A penalty of 2 points will be assessed for each **calendar day** late.
- No MAKE-UP EXAMS will be offered. Students who submit timely, verifiable documentation of acute disability may be excused from one exam. The course grade will be computed as a function of the remaining course assignments.
- Grades will not be curved. What you earn is what you get.

Course Schedule and Reading Assignments

- 6/26 **Lecture 1:** Introduction to Course: The Nature of Nature
No assigned reading
- 6/28 **Lecture 2:** Ecological Literacy
*Budiansky, chapter 4, "Disorderly Conduct."
Golley, chapters 1-13.*
- 7/3 **Lecture 3:** Population and Consumption
*Golley, chapters 14-18.
Livernash and Rodenburg (pp. 2-18).
Des Jardines, Chapter 4.*
- 7/5 **Lecture 4:** Global Environmental Conditions
*Hunter, "Global Environmental Protection..."
Livernash and Rodenburg (pp. 18-40).*
- 7/10 **Lecture 5:** American Environmental History **(Country brief due)**
Pollan, 45 - 64.
- 7/12 **Lecture 6:** Food and Water
Pollan, "Playing God in the Garden."
- 7/17 **Lecture 7:** Urban Environments **(Midterm exam)**
No assigned reading
- 7/19 **Lecture 8:** Environmental Ethics (and Social Justice)
Des Jardines, vii - 36, 128 - 261.
- 7/24 **Lecture 9:** Sustainability or Security **(Issue paper due)**
*Kaplan, "The Coming Anarchy"
Des Jardines, 38-66, 93-127.*
- 7/26 **Lecture 10:** Environmental Rights, Environmental Responsibilities
Pollan, 209 - 238, 269-304.
- 7/31 **Final Exam** to be held in class **(Final exam)**