

George Mason University
Department of Environmental Science

EVPP 201 – *Environment and You: Issues for the 21st Century*

Fall 2022

INSTRUCTOR	Stephanie Schmidt (sschmi1@gmu.edu)
CLASS DATES / TIMES	1:30 PM – 2:45 PM on Mondays and Wednesdays <i>(In-person, synchronous class meetings)</i>
LOCATION	Exploratory Hall (EXPL) L111
OFFICE HOURS	1) Monday 3:00 PM – 4:00 PM outside Panera (Fairfax Campus) 2) Friday 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM outside Panera 3) Email me to set up an appointment time
COURSE SUPERVISOR	Dr. Younsung Kim (ykih@gmu.edu)

Course Description

Throughout human history, we have modified our environment. By doing so, we have enriched our lives, improved our health, prolonged our life spans, and secured greater material wealth, mobility, and leisure time. Yet many of the changes we have made to our surroundings have degraded the natural systems that sustain us. Air and water pollution, soil erosion, species extinction, and other impacts compromise our well-being and jeopardize our ability to survive and thrive in the long term.

Environmental science is the scientific study of how the natural world works, how our environment affects us, and how we affect our environment. Understanding these *interactions* helps us devise solutions to society's many pressing challenges. It can be daunting to reflect on the sheer magnitude of dilemmas that confront us, but these problems also bring countless opportunities for creative solutions.

This course introduces the foundational concepts of environmental science, today's most challenging environmental issues including global climate change and biodiversity loss. It helps students understand the interdisciplinary nature of the environment and bring together many diverse perspectives and knowledge from traditional established disciplines. Students will develop a more profound understanding of ecosystems, environmental degradation, and environmental management.

Course Objectives

By the end of the semester, students will be able to:

- 1) Understand the basics of environmental science and ecological principles
- 2) Be familiar with scientific research methods from observations to results generation
- 3) Investigate ecological concepts, principles & applications behind diverse environmental issues
- 4) Integrate different disciplinary knowledge to research a specific environmental issue and the science behind the issue

Mason General Education Requirement

This course fulfills the Mason General Education Requirement for the category of non-lab natural science course. The course helps students engage in scientific exploration, foster curiosity, enhance enthusiasm for science, and apply scientific knowledge and reasoning to personal, professional, and public decision-making.

Textbook

Withgott, J., and Laposata, M. (2019). *Essential Environment: The Science Behind the Stories* (6th edn). NY: Pearson Education, Inc.

Grading

Class participation: 15%	Midterms and final exam: 50% (25% each)
Quizzes: 15%	Environmental issue brief: 20%

Class participation includes attendance, in-class activities, and active participation in class discussions. Exams and quizzes will help you master course topics. There will be short *open-book quizzes*, which will help you prepare the *closed-book midterm and final exams*. More guidance on quizzes and exams will be given in class as time approaches.

The *Environment Issue Brief* will augment your learning, helping you develop detailed knowledge on a specific environmental issue and cultivating your research capacity surrounding environmental science-related literature. The issues will be guided by the instructor, but you may have a latitude to choose your own issue. More detailed guidelines will be explained in class.

Grading Scale (*cutoffs will be strictly enforced*)

A+: 97.50% – 100+%	B+: 87.50% – 89.50%	C+: 77.50% – 79.49%	D: 64.50% – 69.49%
A: 92.50% – 97.49%	B: 82.50% – 87.49%	C: 72.50% – 77.49%	F: < 64.50%
A-: 89.50% – 92.49%	B-: 79.50% – 82.49%	C-: 69.50% - 72.49%	

Course Policies

Course Schedule Details: The schedule can be found in the "Syllabus" tab in Blackboard. Lesson and Unit due dates must be followed closely for students to be successful in this course.

Late/Missed Assignments: Deadlines for assignments will be enforced strictly. You can submit your assignments with a 10% deduction for each day it is late (1 hour late = -10%; 25 hours late = -20%; etc). After one week past, your assignment will not be accepted. **I will make an exception for students with genuine medical or personal problems that get in touch with me at least 2 days before the due date or with a doctor's note.** Bottom line: communicate as early as possible.

Communication: You must use your @gmu.edu email address to communicate with me. **Please check your email daily**, particularly on class days, and respond to emails within 24 hours.

COVID-19 Related Note: Do not hesitate to email me about any health-related concerns and assistance. Please do not wait until the final weeks of the course to ask for help.

University Policies

Student Privacy

Student Privacy is governed by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and is an essential aspect of any course. This means that the instructor will not give information regarding grades or class status to anyone except the student, unless the student has provided the instructor with written permission stating otherwise.

Sexual Harassment

It is the policy of George Mason University to provide an academic and work environment free from sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is contrary to the standards and mission of the University. Sexual harassment is illegal and will not be tolerated. Each member of the University community has a responsibility to maintain an academic and work environment free from sexual harassment. The University will take whatever action necessary to prevent, stop, correct, or discipline harassing behavior. Same-sex sexual harassment violates this policy and is subject to discipline under the same procedures. More information is available at <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/1202gen.html>.

Non-Discrimination Policy

George Mason University is committed to providing equal opportunity and an educational and work environment free from any discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, age, marital status, pregnancy status or genetic information. George Mason University shall adhere to all applicable state and federal equal opportunity/affirmative action statutes and regulations. More information at <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/1201gen.html>.

Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the GMU Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 9932474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS.

Students Services

Services are also available to you if you need some assistance in writing, research, or counseling. For assistance with writing you can schedule an appointment with the Writing Center online at <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>. If you need help with research they can find resources and contact the Environmental Science and Policy research librarian by visiting <http://infoguides.gmu.edu/ESP>. If you have a technical problem please contact IT Services. Finally, if at any time you need additional assistance or support you can find resources at Student Academic Affairs and Student Health Services.

Academic Integrity (Plagiarism)

All written and presented work submitted for this class must be original; i.e., it must be your work and your work alone **that has not been created previously**. You must not simply cut-and-paste the work of anyone else (including your own) into your work, nor should you simply paraphrase existing work. You must use quotations and the proper citation (to be discussed in class). **Be warned: Plagiarism (defined below) will not be tolerated.** If there is any suspicion of plagiarism the case will be turned over to GMU's Office of Academic Integrity with the instructor's recommendation for the maximum penalty. Plagiarism is a GMU Honor Code violation that will have a serious impact on your academic record. Additionally, all other forms of cheating will be dealt with in the same manner.

Plagiarism includes the following:

- 1) Presenting as one's own work the words, work, or opinions of someone else— including yourself— without proper acknowledgment.
- 2) Borrowing the sequence of ideas, arrangement of material, or pattern of thought of someone else, including personal work, without proper acknowledgment.

The University has made software available to the faculty to use for scanning student submissions and it will be used in this class. Contact your instructor if you have any uncertainty regarding the use of other sources before you submit any written assignment.