

EVPP 201 Fall 2021 (DE Section)
Environment and You:
Issues for the 21st Century

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Course description

This course is an introduction to broad aspects of (anthropocentric) environmental issues or problems in the contemporary world. The academic approach to this information is intended to be that of an environmentally aware citizen and not that of an advocate for any particular position. The central focus of the course is an inquiry into the influence of human activities on the environment and the methodologies used to ameliorate those impacts. As a class, we will examine the severity of different threats posed by various environmental problems. However, a major goal of the course is for each student, individually, to develop their own level of environmental awareness.

This course is listed as 100% online, and all discussions, student presentations, and exams will be done online through Blackboard and Blackboard tools. This course is listed as asynchronous and will not have an official class meeting time.

Course Objectives

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

- 1) Understand the basics of environmental science and ecological principles
- 2) Identify environmental risks, and understand technical issues and methods for risk assessment
- 3) Make personal decisions based on their ability to investigate, understand, and critically evaluate their environmental concerns
- 4) Develop the advanced understanding of a specific environmental issue and demonstrate their knowledge through research and presentation.

Mason Gen. Ed. Requirements and Learning Outcomes

Learning Outcomes: The general education natural sciences courses engage students in scientific exploration; foster their curiosity; enhance their enthusiasm for science; and enable them to apply scientific knowledge and reasoning to personal, professional and public decision-making. Lab courses must meet all five learning outcomes. Non-lab courses must meet learning outcomes 1 through 4.

To achieve these goals, students will:

1. Understand how scientific inquiry is based on investigation of evidence from the natural world, and that scientific knowledge and understanding:
 - i. Evolves based on new evidence
 - ii. Differs from personal and cultural beliefs

2. Recognize the scope and limits of science.
3. Recognize and articulate the relationship between the natural sciences and society and the application of science to societal challenges (e.g., health, conservation, sustainability, energy, natural disasters, etc.).
4. Evaluate scientific information (e.g., distinguish primary and secondary sources, assess credibility and validity of information).

Course Requirements & Student Expectations

Textbook and Reading requirements

- Essential Environment: The Science Behind the Stories 6th Edition. By: Jay Withgott and Matthew Laposata. [ISBN 13: 978-0134714882]

Grading

Students are assessed in four graded areas that include: class participation, unit quizzes, exams, and an environmental issue report. The following chart shows percentage allocation by course activity or requirement. Due dates for each graded item will be listed throughout the course and can be found by clicking the "Schedule" tab on the Blackboard navigation menu.

45%	Class Participation: Quizzes & Discussion Boards
30%	Midterm and Final Exam
25%	Environmental Issue Report [Topic selection Summary, Rough Draft, Environmental Issue Report and Video Presentation, and Presentation Peer Review]

Late policy

Activities and Discussion Boards are considered late if not completed or posted by the specified due dates. Discussion Boards will be accepted up to 24 hours late for partial credit (50% of total points available). Unit quizzes and Exams will only be available during the specified periods and late work will not be accepted. Environmental Issue report- related assignments will be accepted late but with a penalty that will be discussed on a case-by-case basis. Throughout the semester there may be opportunities for extra credit. Extra credit work will not be accepted after the established due dates.

Letter Grade Categories

A+	98-100	B+	88-89	C+	78-79	D	65-69
A	93-97	B	83-87	C	73-77	F	<65
A-	90-92	B-	80-82	C-	70-72		

Discussion Boards

Each week you will be expected to respond to a question and/or issue related to the course content and video/article information from various sources (will be provided). On the left-hand margin of our online Blackboard course you will see a section called "Discussion Board." Here is where you will post your response to a question related to the content. Students will be responsible for responding to the discussion questions posted on the Discussion Forum. You will need to make an initial submission and then respond to at least two of your colleagues. Discussion posts need to be between 200-250 words and responses should be between 100-150 words.

The discussion board posts are due on the Wednesday of each week by 11:59 pm KST, and the responses to your colleagues' posts are due on the Friday of each week by 11:59 pm KST.

Unit Quizzes

Each Unit contains one quiz. These quizzes are intended to prepare you for the course exams and will mimic the content question style of the exams. Quizzes are open-note. You can take each quiz a maximum of 2 times, and your average score between the two attempts will count as your final grade. Feedback displays when a question is answered incorrectly. After the due date, I will record your quiz score based on your attempts, and you will be able to access the correct answers to the quiz as well as any relevant feedback so you can use them to study for the exams.

Exams

The midterm and final are administered online using Respondus Lockdown Browser and your computer's webcam to prevent cheating. The webcam can be built into your computer (internal webcam) or can be the type of webcam that plugs in with a USB cable (external webcam). Watch *this short video* to get a basic understanding of LockDown Browser and the webcam feature. A *Quick Start Guide for Students* is also available Exam instructions require you to use a webcam to film your testing location and you as you take the exam. Failure to comply with the guidelines or to attempt to obfuscate or manipulate the video recordings will result in an F grade for the exam for cheating, and I may report you to the Honor Code office for further discipline.

A five-day window will be provided to take each exam and it is up to each student to ensure they schedule time during that window to take the exam. The midterm will cover units 1 & 2 and the final will cover Units 3 and 4. Exams are not comprehensive; however, some subject matter builds upon information in previous sections. Exams will not be offered at any other time except the times listed in the course schedule. Exam questions are similar in style and subject matter to the quiz questions. All exam questions will come directly from lecture material. Exams are closed-note.

Environmental Issue Report

The goal of the issue report is to help you develop detailed knowledge on an environmental problem and gain experience sharing that knowledge. You must select a subject relevant to this class that interests (excites) you and probe that matter deeply – become an “expert” on that subject. The issue report is a multistep assignment that will take some time to complete. To be successful, you will need to work on the report throughout the semester. A full list of the requirements, detailed instructions, due dates, and resources are in the “Environmental Issue Project” section of the course in Blackboard.

Course Schedule and Due Dates

One of the main challenges to successfully completing an online course is maintaining a sufficient pace to finish all requirements before the end of the semester. To ensure students are able to complete the course a weekly schedule has been developed to sufficiently pace students. The schedule can be found in the “Schedule” tab in Blackboard. Lesson and Unit due dates must be followed closely for students to be successful in this course.

Technology Requirements

The technology requirements for this online course are listed below:

Hardware

- A Windows or Macintosh computer with at least 2 GB of RAM and a fast, reliable broadband Internet connection (e.g., cable, DSL).

- Recommended computer monitor and laptop screen size be 13-inches or larger for optimum visibility of course material.
- Computer speakers or headphones to listen to recorded content.
- A headset microphone for live audio sessions using course tools like Blackboard Collaborate.
- A webcam for taking exams using Respondus Lockdown Browser and for student presentations.
- Enough space on your computer for 1) install the required and recommended software and, 2) save your course assignments.

Software

- Web browser (See [Blackboard Support](#) for supported web browsers)
- Blackboard Courses (Log into <http://mymason.gmu.edu>, select the Courses Tab)
- Blackboard Collaborate (select from the course menu)
- Adobe Acrobat Reader ([free download](#))
- Flash Player ([free download](#))
- Microsoft Office ([purchase](#))

For hardware and software purchases, visit [Patriot Computers](#).

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.

Additionally, students must use their MasonLive email account to receive important University information, including messages related to this class. See <http://masonlive.gmu.edu> for more information.

Sexual Harassment

It is the policy of 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 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 and Student Services

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.

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. You must not simply cut-and-paste the work of others into your work, nor should you simply paraphrase existing work. You must use quotations and the proper citation (see Syllabus Appendix – Citation and Reference Guidelines). 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 manor.

Plagiarism includes the following:

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