

EVPP 336-A01: (3 credit)

HUMAN DIMENSIONS OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Summer 2020

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Instructor:

Email: vprasad1@gmu.edu (preferred contact)

Phone:

Office hours: Monday: 6:00 pm -7:00 pm (please email me in advance) or by appointment

Wed. Jun 3 Last day to add classes

Wed. Jun 3 Last day to drop classes without penalty

Tues. Jun 9 Last day to drop (50% tuition penalty)

Tue. Jun 16 – Tues. Jun 23 Selective withdrawal period

Course Description

INTRODUCTION

“We have become great because of the lavish use of our resources... It is time for us now as a nation to exercise the same reasonable foresight in dealing with our great natural resources that would be shown by any prudent man in conserving and widely using the property which contains the assurance of well-being for himself and his children.”

Theodore Roosevelt, 1908, in The Essential Theodore Roosevelt, J. Hunt (ed.), Gramercy Books, 1994

“As hard as we may try on a company by company level, we cannot fully succeed until the institutions surrounding commerce are redesigned ... We must design a system where... doing good is like falling off a log, where natural, everyday acts of work and life accumulate into a better world as a matter of course, not a matter of conscious altruism.”

Paul Hawken, Ecology of Commerce, Harper Collins, 1994

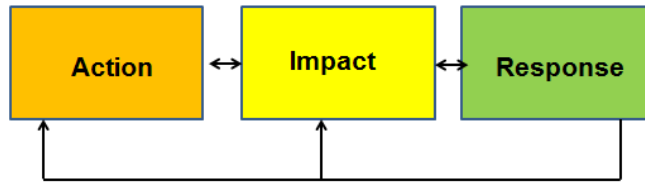
From a survival standpoint, we are at a critical juncture on planet earth. We are facing complex environmental problems that increasingly threaten the balance necessary to sustain the earth's diverse ecosystems. We continue to and have already lost many plant and animal species that are vital to the biodiversity that is the foundation for ecosystem health. We continue to destroy habitat and to generate far more waste, in solid, liquid and gaseous forms, than our planet can neutralize. Toxins, disease epidemics, contamination of water, air and land, species extinctions, ecosystem decline, loss of human cultures, global warming, overconsumption, starvation, population pressure, etc., etc., etc. It is no wonder that many are mocking Henny-Penny, crying "The sky is falling!!!", and from a survey of the mainstream news media, it is easy to understand why! How do we strike a balance between the reality of our many ecological crises and our personal, professional and collective response? What is the difference between being environmentally aware and being environmentally literate? How can we be part of the solution and not part of the problem?

In this course, we will grapple with these questions and focus on positive change. We will explore our own environmental values, develop our environmental literacy and a capacity for place-based ecology, and investigate various ways that our fellow humans are involved in "The Great Turning," the transition from the Industrial Growth Society to a Life-Sustaining Society. We will develop a biospheric perspective, an awareness of our planet's terrestrial system— including air, land, and water— in which life develops. The biosphere is the global ecological system integrating all living beings and their relationships with the lithosphere (rocks), the hydrosphere (water) and the atmosphere (air).¹ In tandem, we will also develop an understanding of the ethnosphere, the full complexity, and a complement of human potential as brought about by culture and adaptation since the dawn of consciousness.

Three key assumptions underlie this course: (1) All life on earth is faced with complex and unprecedented environmental issues that threaten its survival; (2) *Homo sapiens* (humans) have been the cause of these life-threatening environmental issues; (3) Humans have a unique creative capacity that can turn things around if they can become environmentally literate and take action now.

To sum up, this course design follows the following framework:

¹ First coined by geologist, Eduard Suess, in 1874 and expanded to include broader ecological connotations by Vladimir Vernadsky in the 1920s. Source: dictionary.laborlawtalk.com



Blackboard Login Instructions

Access to [MyMason](#) and GMU email are required to participate successfully in this course. Please make sure to update your computer and prepare yourself to begin using the online format BEFORE the first day of class. Check [the IT Support Center](#) website. Navigate to [the Student Support page](#) for help and information about Blackboard. In the menu bar to the left you will find all the tools you need to become familiar with for this course. Take time to learn each. Make sure you run a system check a few days before class. Become familiar with the attributes of Blackboard and online learning.

Required Textbooks

Readings supplied by instructor and posted on the Blackboard (for each specific topic starting from June 1st) Link:

Look for EVPP 336 Summer A01 2020.

Course Learning Outcomes

In this course students will learn to:

1. Explore how theories and methods from the social sciences can be used to assist us in understanding the causes and consequences of—and potentially the solutions to— environmental problems.
2. Promote critical thinking concerning humankind’s role as both the source and solution to environmental problems. And
3. Articulate an interdisciplinary understanding of relationships between human sociocultural variables and contemporary environmental changes

Technology Requirements

Hardware: You will need access to a Windows or Macintosh computer with at least 2 GB of RAM and access to a fast and reliable broadband internet connection (e.g., cable, DSL). A larger screen is recommended for better visibility of course material. You will need speakers or headphones to hear recorded content and a headset with a microphone is recommended for the best experience. For the amount of Hard Disk Space required taking a distance education course, consider and allow for:

1. The storage amount needed to install any additional software and
2. Space to store work that you will do for the course.

If you consider the purchase of a new computer, please go to [Patriot Tech](#) to see recommendations.

Software: Many courses use Blackboard as the learning management system. You will need a browser and operating system that are listed compatible or certified with the Blackboard version available on the [myMason Portal](#). See [supported browsers and operating systems](#). Log in to [myMason](#) to access your registered courses. Some courses may use other learning management systems. Check the syllabus or contact the instructor for details. Online courses typically use [Acrobat Reader](#), [Flash](#), [Java](#), and [Windows Media Player](#), [QuickTime](#) and/or [Real Media Player](#). Your computer should be capable of running current versions of those applications. Also, make sure your computer is protected from viruses by downloading the latest version of Symantec Endpoint Protection/Anti-Virus software for free [here](#).

Students owning Macs or Linux should be aware that some courses may use software that only runs on Windows. You can set up a Mac computer with Boot Camp or virtualization software so Windows will also run on it. Watch [this video](#) about using Windows on a Mac. Computers running Linux can also be configured with virtualization software or configured to dual boot with Windows.

Note: If you are using an employer-provided computer or corporate office for class attendance, please verify with your systems administrators that you will be able to install the necessary applications and that system or corporate firewalls do not block access to any sites or media types.

Course-specific Hardware/Software

Check the syllabus for your course or contact the instructor prior to the start of the course to find out about specific technical requirements for your class. Hardware or software required for your course or program may be available for purchase at [Patriot Computers](#) (the University's computer store that offers educational discounts and special deals).

Course Schedule

MODULES (Monday-Sunday)	EVPP 336 A01: Topics & Reading Assignments TOPIC/READINGS/VIDEOS	ASSIGNMENTS DUE
Module 1 June 1 – June 7	Introduction to the basics of the human dimensions of the environments	Online Discussion #1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial post by Thursday June 3rd 11:59 PM • Responses by Sunday June 7 11:59 PM
	Course Overview Introduction Explaining assignments. Please refer to the syllabus and go through all the text in the syllabus.	
	Basic introduction of ecosystem and historical context of environmental problem Readings: Page, S. E. 2005. Are we collapsing? A review of Jared Diamond's Collapse: How societies choose to fail or succeed. Journal of economic literature, 43(4), 1049-106 Diamond, J.M. 1994. Ecological Collapses of Ancient Civilizations: The Golden Age That Never Was. Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences 47 (5):37-59.	
	Understanding Human dimensions of the environment Human population growth and its impact on environment (US/ and global) Ehrlich, P. R., and A. H. Ehrlich. 1990. Why isn't everyone as	

MODULES (Monday-Sunday)	EVPP 336 A01: Topics & Reading Assignments TOPIC/READINGS/VIDEOS	ASSIGNMENTS DUE
	<p>scared as we are? Pages 13-23 in The Population Explosion. Simon & Schuster, Inc., New York, NY.</p> <p>Vitousek, P.M., Mooney, H.A., Lubchenco, J. and Meillo, J.M. (1997). Human domination of earth's ecosystems. Science. Vol.277. 25 July. 494-499.</p>	
<p>Module 2 June 8- June 14</p>	<p>Understanding environmental problem using human/social lens</p>	<p>Online Discussion #2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial post by Thursday June 10 11:59 PM • Responses by Sunday June 14 11:59 PM <p>Watch documentary 1 at home and submit your reflection based on the syllabus by June 13: link will be provided by instructor</p>
	<p>Environmental Problems as Social Problems (or When there's no Easy Fix) Readings:</p> <p>Rittel, H. W. J., and M. M. Webber. 1973. Dilemmas in a general theory of planning. Policy Sciences 4:155-169. Allen, G.M., and E.M. Gould. 1986. Complexity, wickedness, and public forests.</p>	

MODULES (Monday-Sunday)	EVPP 336 A01: Topics & Reading Assignments TOPIC/READINGS/VIDEOS	ASSIGNMENTS DUE
	<p>Journal of Forestry 84(4): 20-23.</p> <p>Gregory, R. 2000. Using Stakeholder Values to Make Smarter Environmental Decisions. Environment 42(5):34-44</p>	
	<p>Energy consumption and its impact on environment/ Land use change/ forest</p> <p>Readings: Energy Resources and Their Effects on Environment Land Use Changes: Economic, Social, and Environmental Impacts</p>	
	<p>Agriculture and Environmental Change</p> <p>Readings: Agriculture and Climate Change: Posted on the Blackboard</p> <p>Household Food Security in the United States in 2018 posted on the Blackboard</p>	

MODULES (Monday-Sunday)	EVPP 336 A01: Topics & Reading Assignments TOPIC/READINGS/VIDEOS	ASSIGNMENTS DUE
Module 3 June 15- June 21		<p>Online Discussion #3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial post by Thursday June 17 11:59 PM • Responses by Sunday June 21 11:59 PM <p>Watch documentary 2 at home and submit your reflection based on the syllabus by June 18: link will be provided by instructor</p> <p>Student led presentation and video recording posting by June 19th and three lead questions for discussion.</p>
	<p>1. Environment and migration and Gender and the Environment</p> <p>Readings:</p> <p>2. Environmental Change and Migration: What We Know?</p> <p>3. Gender and the Environment</p>	
	<p>Environmental Change and Indigenous people</p> <p>Readings:</p> <p>Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Sustainable Development:</p>	

MODULES (Monday-Sunday)	EVPP 336 A01: Topics & Reading Assignments TOPIC/READINGS/VIDEOS	ASSIGNMENTS DUE
	<p>Towards Coexistence</p> <p>Berkes, Fikret, Johan Colding, and Carl Folke (2000). Rediscovery of Traditional Ecological Knowledge as Adaptive Management. Ecological Applications 10:1251–1262</p>	
<p>Module 4</p> <p>June 22 – June 28</p>	<p>Human Response to Environmental problem</p>	<p>Online Discussion #4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial post by Thursday June 24 11:59 PM • Responses by Sunday June 28 11:59 PM <p>Watch documentary 3 at home and submit your reflection based on the syllabus by June 26: link will be provided by instructor</p> <p>Final research paper is due on June 28th 11:59 PM</p>
<p>June 18th</p>	<p>“Fixing” Environmental Problems</p> <p>Readings: Ostrom, E. 2007. A diagnostic approach for going beyond panaceas. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences 104</p>	

MODULES (Monday-Sunday)	EVPP 336 A01: Topics & Reading Assignments TOPIC/READINGS/VIDEOS	ASSIGNMENTS DUE
	(39):15181. Van Vugt, M. 2009. Averting the Tragedy of the Commons: Using Social Psychological Science to Protect the Environment. <i>Current Directions in Psychological Science</i> 18(3):169-173.	
	Barriers to an Interdisciplinary Understanding of Socio-Ecological Systems Readings: Heberlein, T. A. 1988. Improving Interdisciplinary Research: Integrating the Social and Natural Sciences. <i>Society & Natural Resources</i> 1:5-16. Gallopín, G. C. 2006. Linkages between vulnerability, resilience, and adaptive capacity. <i>Global Environmental Change</i> 16:293-303.	
	Framework and approaches to solving environmental problem Readings: Chapters 1-3 in A Human Dimensions Framework Guidelines for Conducting Social Assessment. Bright, A.D. et al. (2003). USDA Forest Service, Southern Research Station, GTR SRS-65, Asheville, NC	
Module 5 June 29 - July 3	Case studies	Online Discussion #5: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Initial post by Thursday June 24 11:59 PM• Responses by Sunday June 28 11:59 PM

MODULES (Monday-Sunday)	EVPP 336 A01: Topics & Reading Assignments TOPIC/READINGS/VIDEOS	ASSIGNMENTS DUE
		Final exam release on June 29 th and due on July 2 nd
	Community-based resource management (role of human institutions)/Solution: solid waste management/ sustainable agriculture	

Assignments Description

Grades in this course will be based on:

- Your reflections on documentaries (minimum three) **(15%)**; Please check the modules for the deadlines
- Class participation, which reflects in your response in discussion board. Please check the modules for the deadlines **(20%)**
- Student led discussion: **You** will prepare the discussion helping to frame the essential questions and issues, identify key source material, and help lead us to appropriate conclusions **(25%)**, post a presentation and accompanied video by June 19th and request for feedback and questions. Also, please watch at three presentations and response to them in the discussion board dedicate to students-led discussion.
- Student research project **(25%)**. Due on June 28 11:59 PM
- Final exams **(15 %)** due on July 2 11:59 PM

NOTE ABOUT FILMS AND VIEWING GUIDE

We will frequently be using documentary film as an educational medium in this class. Documentary films differ from other films in that they intend to be factual or non-fictional. However, creators of documentaries have specific objectives for creating these films. The documentaries we will be viewing have to do with the learning objectives of this course. We will take time to discuss each film. Additionally, you are expected to write about films (as directed by instructor) as part of your class journal entry. To participate in class discussion and to write about the films in your journal, please use the following viewing guide:

Film Viewing Guide

While viewing a film, make notes on these points:

- a) What are the main objectives of the film and is the film successful in achieving them?
- b) What are the problems with the film and in what ways the films were unsuccessful;
What would you have done differently?
- c) Did this film introduce you to anything you didn't know previously? If so, what?

Additionally, if you knew about the issue previously, did this film make you think differently about the issue(s) it covered?

Student-led presentation/discussion

Preparing a short and effective presentation is one of the most important tasks you will have in your career. You will prepare a presentation (13 to 15 minutes) on the topic suggested below, and instructor will provide you a template and essential elements of the presentation. You will post your presentation and accompanied video by June 19, at the end of the slide you will pose three questions related to your presentation. Once you post your slide on the Blackboard, other students will have a week to response to your slide; they will be required to reply to three presentations. Instruction will facilitate this discussion.

Suggested topics:

- Energy consumption and its impact on environment
- Land use change/ forest and people and its impact on the environment
- Agriculture and food security
- Environmental Change and Indigenous people
- Role of social capital and institution in solving an environmental problem
- Vulnerability, resilience, and adaptive capacity
- Case study: Framework and approaches to solving environmental problem
- Community-based resource management (reduction, recycling, and reuse)
- Sustainable agriculture (industrial, subsistence, scale and efficiency)
- Environment and migration and related issues
- Environment and gender (role of gender and impact on gender)

Rationale of this assignment

You may be wondering WHY you are required to lead a class discussion. There are several immediate benefits from this exercise:

- 1) You practice the critical reading of materials (both those assigned for the day and supplemental) to decipher key points, arguments, and inconsistencies;
- 2) You develop your ability to prepare and present those points, arguments, and inconsistencies dynamically;
- 3) You gain confidence in your ability to read critically, search for supplemental sources, and present effectively;

How to prepare for this Assignment?

You are to read the assigned readings until the second week of the semester, using the important concepts as a guide and then choose a particular focus you want to take on the topic, and find 2 supplemental sources on it, including either 2 peer-reviewed articles OR 1 peer-reviewed article and 1 authoritative web article. After reading the articles related to selected topic, you will develop an outline of the presentation. Instructors will post few samples on the Blackboard to assist you prepare the presentation.

Two things students need to do

Installation: <https://its.gmu.edu/knowledge-base/how-do-i-install-kaltura-capture/>

Kaltura how to videos: <https://coursemedia.gmu.edu/channel/How%20to%20Videos/80406171>

You can also watch this Kaltura Capture webinar to fully understand its features

https://coursemedia.gmu.edu/media/Kaltura+Capture+Lecture+Recordings+%2840+min%29/1_roginkcs

Alternately, you can record your video using WebEx, I can send you a link to record, Please let me know in advance when you are ready to record.

Grading:

You will be graded on:

- 1) The thoroughness of your knowledge of the readings and supplemental information;
- 2) The originality and effectiveness with which you organize your slides to involve the students in a dynamic learning process; and,
- 3) Use of visuals, such as pictures, and diagrams.

Term Research Project: You are to research a specific issue related to the human dimension of environmental change issue of your choice. You are to describe the case from an ecological, cultural and policy standpoints then make recommendations. You can choose to work on this research project either relying on only literature survey or to use a real case study. Evaluation of the term research project will be based on paper (2000 to 2200 words) with Normal margin and 11 or 12 font size preferably Times New Roman and a presentation. The instructor will also look at the individual's contribution to the project for grading purpose. **A rubric of term research project will be posted on the Blackboard.**

Final Exam

There will be a take home final exam. We will draw questions and answers based on class reading and discussion. Everything discussed, read and presented in this course is testable on the exam.

Course Policies

Late Assignments: All assignments must be turned in on the due date given on the assignment sheet.

Instructor-Student Communication: I will respond to your emails within 48 hours. If I will be away from email for more than one day, I will post an announcement in the Blackboard course folder. Before sending an email, please check the following (available on your Blackboard course menu) unless the email is of a personal nature:

1. Syllabus
2. Ask Professor

Feel free to respond to other students in the Ask Professor forum if you know the answer.

Technology. You will need a reliable computer and internet access to view course materials in Blackboard. You will need to video record your two role-plays and you can do that with a smartphone or other video camera, such as Kaltura CaptureSpace in Blackboard.

Grading Scale

F	<63
D	64
C-	70
C	73
C+	77
B-	80
B	83
B+	87
A-	90
A	93

A+	94+
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University Policies and Resources

- a. Academic Honesty: You are expected to be familiar with and abide by the University's Honor Code. The Code can be found [here](#). It is your responsibility to see me if you have questions about these policies. George Mason University has an honor code that states the following:
To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the University Community have set forth this:
- b. Students must follow the university policy for [Responsible Use of Computing](#)
- c. Student services: The University provides range of services to help you succeed academically and you should make use of these if you think they could benefit you. I also invite you to speak to me (the earlier the better).
- d. Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account.
- e. [The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach

programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance. Counseling Center: Student Union I, Room 364, 703-993-2380.

- f. Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the [George Mason University Office of Disability Services \(ODS\)](#) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office. Please note that accommodations MUST BE MADE BEFORE assignments or exams are due. I cannot adjust your grade after the fact.
- g. Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
- h. [The George Mason University Writing Center](#) staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing. University Writing Center: Robinson Hall Room A114, 703-993-1200. The writing center includes assistance for students for whom English is a second language.
- i. [Diversity](#): George Mason University promotes a living and learning environment for outstanding growth and productivity among its students, faculty and staff. Through its curriculum, programs, policies, procedures, services and resources, Mason strives to maintain a quality environment for work, study and personal growth.