



The Geography of Natural Resources

GGs 303-C01 | GG# 590-C02

Summer – Term Starts 6/25 – 7/28/18

Instructor Contact Details

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Credits : 3.000

Course Overview

Conservation of Resources and Environment addresses the physical, environmental, economic, and human aspects of the availability and use of resources. The conservation and use of natural resources involves all aspects of problems resulting from their unequal distribution or unwise use. Humans exist in an interdependent world where technology and the natural resources must work in a supportive and balanced manner or both the environment and the human population will suffer. Humankind must find ways to make technology and the natural environment work synergistically to guarantee long-term sustainable development that does no permanent harm to our living space. To address this major topic in a sophisticated and holistic manner several subjects for discussion will include spatial dimensions of natural resource, natural resource use and their major impact on the quality of life (including health and safety); the economic well-being of all peoples of the world; the level and type of conflicts that occur among peoples and nations; and the long-term protection of the total ecosystem.

Required Textbook

Natural Resources Conservation; Management for a Sustainable Future (10th Edition).

Daniel D. Chiras, John P. Reganold

Available at the George Mason University (GMU) Bookstore or on Amazon

We will have daily readings and/or activities available in pdf through the Blackboard

Prerequisites: At least 30 total credit hours, completion or concurrent enrollment in all university general education courses or permission of instructor.

Course description

This course will provide analysis of world resources distribution, conservation, and preservation; and problems resulting from their natural occurrence and utilization. Uses knowledge from physical and social sciences to develop complex and sophisticated understanding of issues surrounding natural resource exploitation and management, conservation, and preservation.

Learning Objectives and Outcomes

As a GMU Synthesis course, the course will require students to synthesize the knowledge, skills and values gained from the Mason Core curriculum and expand each student's ability to master new content, think critically, and develop life-long learning skills across other disciplines. At the end of the semester, students will be able to:

- Understand the importance of various natural resources and how they are managed at a local or global scale.

- To develop an understanding of the scientific concepts, evidence that underlie major issues in natural resources and conservation.
- Understand a global distribution of the earth's resources.
- Evaluate and analyze the impact of resource exploitation in various geographical locations.
- Understand the concepts of conservation planning and sustainability of human utilization of natural resources.
- To increase student understanding of the context of natural resource issues.
- Apply critical thinking skills to evaluate the quality, credibility and limitations of an argument or a solution using appropriate evidence or resources.
- Communicate effectively in all your writing assignment(s) and discussion forum using appropriate terminologies, supporting evidence and excellent organization.

You will meet the objectives listed above through a combination of activities such as: online discussion forums, complete assignments on time, exams, etc. Detailed activities will be outlined in subsequent sections.

Course Requirements

- Internet connection (DSL, LAN, or cable connection desirable)
- The course will be delivered via GMU Blackboard
- You will interact with your classmates and the Instructor through the Blackboard
Within the course Blackboard site, you will access the syllabus, learning modules, discuss issues; submit assignments; take quizzes; ask questions, email other students and the instructor.

Course Format/Organization

Blackboard is the learning management tool we use for this course. This course will be delivered entirely online through the course management system, GMU Blackboard. You will need your GMU username and password to log into the Blackboard Management System. Blackboard home page: <https://mymasonportal.gmu.edu>. Below is the overall course navigation that you will see once you log-in (Blackboard).

| Blackboard Course | Description |
|------------------------|--|
| Home Page | Class announcements on quizzes, reading and writing assignments, reminders, and upcoming assignments, etc. all located in this area. |
| Syllabus and Documents | The syllabus, course outline with due dates; Rubric, etc. |
| Course Content | In this section, you will find our weekly detailed modules/lesson plan, lecture notes, additional learning resources such as Web Links, Videos, Reading material besides the assigned chapters from your textbook. |
| Assignments | All assignments (individual and group, class activities, quizzes, short writing assignments) will be in this area) |
| Discussion Board | All discussions as part of your participation grade is in this area |
| Tools | You can send email directly from the Blackboard. Click “ Tools ” then “ Send Email ” |
| My Grades | All your grades are in this area. It is your responsibility to check your grade and class progress from time to time. |

Assignments and Grading

This course will rely upon a variety of methods to assess and evaluate students learning. Grades are broken down as follows. See schedule for due dates in the course outline.

| Assessment description | Percentage (%) | Requirements |
|---|----------------|---|
| Quizzes | 15% | Each week you will have two on-line quizzes. You will have 2 attempts per quiz. The highest score will count towards your final total grade. The quizzes will focus on concepts from the assigned readings, chapter/power-point “lectures.” No make-up! 1 st Quiz for each week is due Thursday [11:59 pm] and 2 nd Quiz due Sunday [11:59 pm] unless otherwise stated due to holidays. |
| Daily Discussion | 5% | Weekly participation is required (2 online discussions/week). This will include online discussion/comments, posting on current events contribution related to assigned topic(s)/concepts of the week. It is your responsibility to ensure that you participate in these discussions in a timely manner. Each discussion will be graded, and this will be critical for your final grade. No-make-up will be allowed’ 1 st discussion of each week is due Wednesday by 11:59 pm while the 2 nd discussion is due on every Sunday by 11:59 pm unless otherwise stated due to holidays. <i>Note: The on-line discussion takes the place of coming to class so don’t skip them!</i> Additionally - series of discussion boards related to each topic will be created “Ask your Instructor” – this is where students can ask for clarification, or just ask a question. In these series anyone can answer the question. We want to work on real-time. These series of discussion will not be graded and are different from “Daily Discussion above”. |
| Critical Response Essays Article Summary & Course Reflection Assignment | 20% | This will include 3 critical response essays; 1-article summary and Final set of Essay Questions related to the class content. You will demonstrate your understanding of the terms, concepts, and problems related to geography of Natural Resources. <i>Note:</i> 1. Instructions regarding all assignments will be given through the Assignment Folder - at the beginning of each week [Monday]. 2. Do not send your assignment response through Email. 3. All assignments should be completed through the Blackboard according to instructions. Mostly it will be through the Assignment Dropbox/Folder. |
| Mid-Term Exam [We will have only 1-Exam] | 25% | [Format of the Exam: MCQs, Fill-in the Blank Questions & Short Answer Questions] |
| Final Paper | 35% | This assignment will comprise of 3 parts as per the description shown on the left <<<< |
| Topic description | 2% | |
| Progress Report | 3% | |
| Final Paper | 30% | |

Grading

Grades will be determined using a standard grading scale and cut-off values as shown below:

| | | | | | | | | |
|---------|----------|----------|---------|----------|----------|---------|---------|----------|
| A (93%) | A- (90%) | B+ (87%) | B (83%) | B- (80%) | C+ (77%) | C (70%) | D (60%) | F (<60%) |
|---------|----------|----------|---------|----------|----------|---------|---------|----------|

Individual Final Project

Each student will develop a project to investigate a problem related to conservation of natural Resources. Additional information regarding your project will be posted through the blackboard. – Assignment Folder.

Through this Final Research Project, you will get practical experience searching the GMU library and utilizing Inter-Library Loan. The quality of articles selected will also be considered in your grade.

Academic Discussion Forum

- Academic discussion forum is used in this class to enhance critical thinking skills by debating critical issues on the conservation of natural resources and environment. Our debate differences should be mindful and respectful.
- Choose your words and discussion topics carefully
- Avoid off-topic postings. These posts will not count for grading and it is my expectation that all students will stay on-topic.
- Use proper punctuation, grammar and edit your comments before posting.
- Keep your comments brief and to the point
- Your discussion grades will be influenced by your ability to demonstrate an understanding of the topic and on one's ability to be concise.
 - Yes 'I agree' statements posts will not count to final participation grade without articulated rationale to support opinion.

Complete Assignment and due Dates

Course weeks run **Monday** through **Sunday**, with Sunday at **11:59 p.m. Eastern Time [ET]** as the deadline for submitting your weekly assignments. It is your responsibility to turn in all assigned work including the week's discussion by the due date. **You are encouraged to read additional notes regarding this above subject below:**

- All assignments for this course will be submitted electronically through the GMU Blackboard site.
- I will not accept assignments submitted through emails unless you get my permission to do so.
- You will need to adhere to assignment(s) deadline given according to the outline schedule or communication that will be given from time to time.
- Assignments must be completed to the best of your ability with correct spelling and acceptable grammar.
- All extensions must be arranged at least three days in advance and students must be prepared to document their reasons for requesting an extension.
- Extensions will not be given beyond the next assignment except under extreme circumstances.

Due Dates

For each week, all assignments must be completed by Sunday at 11:59 pm. For Example:

- Discussion Boards: Your original post must be completed by Wednesday of each week before 11:59 pm and your comment to a classmate post by Sunday at 11:59 pm.
- Critical Response Essay & Article Summary: Assignments are due Sunday at 11:59 pm.
- The final project is due at the end of Module 4 on Sunday at 12 midnight.

Policy on Late Submissions and Quizzes, Assignments

Please do not wait until the last minute (**11:59pm**) for you to complete your quiz/test - computers are machines and sometimes they cannot be reliable (e.g. power outage, wireless connection problem etc.) and cannot be held accountable for your excuse.

- All quizzes will become unavailable on Blackboard site after the due date and time.
- All writing assignments including Critical Response Essays will be available up to 3 days after due date, but will be graded accordingly – **5 points deducted from their possible score for each day**

Online Classroom Policy

- Students are responsible for keeping all graded coursework until the grade appeal period is over.
- The class schedule that is on this online syllabus is a tentative (it can change). Changes will be communicated to way ahead of time, once they occur.
- Students are responsible for information in **ALL** assigned readings, handouts, videos, lectures, and other materials given by the instructor.
Students are expected to log in each week and complete all assignments.
- Late assignments will **NOT** be accepted. Work is due as scheduled. Computer problems are **NOT** good excuses for not turning in work. Failure to login on time is **NOT** a good excuse for not turning in work.
- Students are expected to be courteous to their colleagues during discussion boards or blogs, etc.

Online Academic Integrity

George Mason University operates under an honor system, which is published in the University Catalog and deals specifically with cheating, attempted cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing. You are therefore expected to take this course in adherence to GMU and Department standards for Academic Integrity. Please familiarize yourself with the honor code, especially the statement on plagiarism (<http://www.gmu.edu/org/honorcouncil/guidelines.htm>). I will respond to acts of academic misconduct according to university policy concerning plagiarism. In such cases Plagiarism will result in a failing grade of the assignment in question and/or for the course.

Technical Assistance

- If you need technical assistance at any time during the course or to report a problem, you can visit the George Mason IT Services website for guidance: <http://itservices.gmu.edu> or Email: support@gmu.edu; Phone: 703-993-8870.

PLAGIARISM -- Rules for all Assignment(s)

It is your responsibility to respect procedures related to Honor Systems and Academic Integrity. You are strongly advised not to copy other people's sentences or phrases without giving them credit. This includes sentences where you change a few words and then include the slightly modified sentence in your paper. If you use information from sources other than your own brain, you **MUST** make a reference to the source. This means all written work that you will be assigned throughout the duration of the course should include references accordingly. For this course, we will use the APA style. If 75% of your written work consists of "quotes" from other people's work, then your paper will get a "D" or "F" grade according to the intensity of your quotes.

Students with Disabilities

Students with documented and qualifying learning, physical and psychological disabilities should contact the Disability Services (ODC), which arranges for reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and University policies. Disability Services (ODC) website: <http://ods.gmu.edu/> / Student Union Building I (SUB), Room 2500. Telephone: (703) 993-2474.

Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking:

As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Responsible Employee,” and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason’s Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1412. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason’s confidential resources, such as Student Support and Advocacy Center (703-380-1434) or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) (703-993-2380). You may also seek assistance from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730 or emailing cde@gmu.edu.

Course Outline/Schedule

- You should be referring to the course schedule and blackboard for specific readings, activities, and assignments.

| Week # | Topic Description | Readings & Due Dates |
|-----------------|--|---|
| Week 0 – Week 1 | <i>Self-Introduction</i> | <i>(Self-intro) – No grade</i> |
| Week 1 | Course overview Introduction to Natural Resource Conservation [Chap. 1] | Chapter 1 & 2 D01 (Discussion#1) – 6/27 Quiz 1 – 6/28 End Self-intro 6/29 |
| | Conservation tools: Environmental Economics, Ethics & Critical Thinking [Chap. 2] | |
| | <i>Readings: The State of Nature & The Tragedy of the Commons</i> | D02 – 7/1 Quiz 2 - 7/1 Article Summary – 7/1 |
| Week 2 | Conservation Planning and GIS/Remote Sensing [Chap. 1 – 1.7] | 7/4 [Nothing is due – Independence Day] D03 – 7/5 Quiz 3 – 7/8 Critical Response Essay 1 – 7/8 Topic & Short Paragraph - 7/8 |
| | The Human Population Challenge [Chap. 4] <i>Readings – Check the Blackboard</i> | |
| Week 3 | Forest Management [Chap. 14] <i>Readings – Check the Blackboard</i> | Chapter 14 & 23 D04 – 7/11 Quiz 4 – 7/12 D05 – 7/15 Critical Response Essay 2 – 7/15 |
| | Creating a Sustainable System of Energy [Chap. 23] | |
| End of Week 3 | <i>Mid-Term Exam</i> | <i>7/15</i> |
| Week 4 | Global Warming & Climate Change [Chap. 19] <i>Readings – Check the Blackboard</i> | Chapter 19 & 10 Progress Report 18 Quiz 5 – 7/19 D06 -7/22 Quiz 6 – 7/22 Critical Response Essay 3 |
| | Managing Water Resources Sustainably [Chap. 10] | |
| Week 5 | Plant & Animal Extinction [Chap. 15] <i>Readings – Check the Blackboard</i> | Chapter 15 D07 -7/25 Course Reflection Assignment |
| | <i>Final Paper</i> | <i>Due 7/28</i> |

Syllabus Changes

The course instructor reserves the right to make changes as necessary to the course content during the course of the term. If these changes are made they will be immediately notified to students through individual emails or the blackboard explaining the nature of the change(s). **Check weekly announcement through Blackboard for specific readings.**