



Distance Learning

GGG 303-C01: The Geography of Natural Resources

Summer – Term Starts 6/26 – 7/29/17

Instructor Contact Details

Name : Maction Komwa, PhD
Office : Exploratory Hall, Room 2210
Email : mkomwa@gmu.edu
Phone : 703-993-5646
Credits : 3.000

Teaching Assistant Contact Details

Piash Debnath
Email: pdebnat2@gmu.edu

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

ISBN-13: 978-0132251389 ISBN-10: 0132251388 Edition: 10th

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

(All other course materials will be available on the course Blackboard pages.)

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.

With the successful completion of this course, 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.
Course Information	The syllabus, course outline with due dates
Weekly Modules	In this section, you will find our weekly detailed modules, 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.

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.

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	10%	There are 5 quizzes [Quiz is posted a day before due date]
Discussion Board and Class Participation	10%	Weekly participation is required. This will include online discussion/comments on suggested topics by the Instructor, current events contribution/comments by Students.
Short Writing Assignments (SWA)	15%	There will be 2 short writing assignments (individual work). Instructions for all SWAs is available through the Blackboard – Assignment Folder, posted a week before due date.
Exam 1	15%	Exam 1 [Format: MCQs, Fill-In The Blank Questions & Short Answer Questions will include topics/modules covered
Final Exam	20%	Final Exam is not cumulative – (same format as Exam 1). Chapters/Topic for the exam will be communicated to students.
Group Final Paper	30%	This group assignment will comprise of 3 parts as shown or described in the Group Final Paper. Details and rubric can be found in the check Assignment Folder. A group will comprise of 2-3 members
Group Topic description	2%	
Group Paper Outline	3%	
Final Group Paper	25%	

Course weeks run **Monday** through **Sunday**, with Sunday at **11:59 p.m. Eastern Time** 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.

Interaction in this course will be conducted through the Blackboard via discussion forums, emails, and chats. The platform provided within this course are meant for class purposes only, unless otherwise stated. Online classes are different from the traditional class settings so pay attention to what you write since it cannot easily be erased or forgotten.

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 Assignments, Dates, and Extensions

- All assignments for this course will be submitted electronically through the GMU Blackboard.
- 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.
- 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.

Policy on Late Submissions and Quizzes, Assignments

- There will be a 5-point deduction for each day late of your assignment.
- 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 not to submit your assignment on time.
- All quizzes will become unavailable on Blackboard after the due date and time.
- All short writing assignments will be available but will be graded accordingly (see 5-point deduction).

Grading Scale

Grade	Percentage	Grade	Percentage	Grade	Percentage	Grade	Percentage
A+	98 -100%	B+	88 – 89%	C+	78 – 79%	F	below 60%
A	93 -97%	B	83 – 87%	C	70 – 77%		
A-	90 -92%	B-	80 – 82%	D	60 – 69%		

TA & My Schedule

I would like to assure you that Piash (TA) and myself will be active throughout the term session period (5/26-7/29). We will monitor the Blackboard activities daily, Monday through Friday. We will be able to answer your questions on time (a response within 24-hours or sooner). Questions posted late Friday will take a bit longer for a response. All the same, we will sporadically check your postings on Saturdays and Sundays.

Academic Honesty

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.

University Services

George Mason University has a number of academic support and other resources to facilitate your success. Some of these resources are presented below:

- i. Counseling and Psychological Services [<http://caps.gmu.edu/>]
- ii. Learning Services, University Career Services [<http://careers.gmu.edu/>]
- iii. Writing Center [<http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>] and other Learning Services within GMU.
- iv. University Catalog: <http://catalog.gmu.edu/>
- v. University Policies: <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/>

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

Course Outline/Schedule

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

Module # Week #	Topic Description	Readings & Due Dates (highlighted)
Module 1: Week 1 ⇓	Course overview & Critical thinking Introduction to Natural Resource Conservation GIS & Remote Sensing	Chapter 1 & 2 Additional material [BB]
	Conservation tools: Environmental Economics	
	<i>Orientation Quiz</i>	Available from 6/26-7/2
	<i>Discussion 1: Students Introductions</i>	Available from 6/26-7/2
	<i>Discussion 2: The State of Nature & The Tragedy of the Commons</i>	Available from 6/26-7/2
	<i>Quiz 2: Chapters 1 & 2</i>	Available from 7/1-7/2
Module 2: Week 2 ⇓	Human Population Challenge	Chapter 4 & 5 Additional material [check Bb]
	Food and Agriculture: World hunger issues	
	<i>Group Topic & Short Paragraph</i>	Due 7/9
	<i>Short Writing Assignment # 1[Individual]</i>	Available from 7/3-7/9
	<i>Discussion 3: Human Population & Food</i>	Available from 7/3-7/9
	Independence Holiday – July 4 [No class activity]	
End of Week 2	Exam 1:	Available from 7/8-7/9
Module 3: Week 3 ⇓	Forests, grasslands, and parks: Issues and conservation	Chapter 14 & 23
	Energy issues and conservation	Additional material [Bb]
	<i>Discussion 4 on Forest and Management</i>	Available from: 7/10 – 7/16
	<i>Discussion 5 - Current events contribution by students on Energy Conservation</i>	Available from: 7/10 – 7/16
	<i>Quiz 3: Chapters 14 & 23</i>	Available from: 7/15– 7/16
	<i>Short Writing Assignment # 2[Individual]</i>	Available from: 7/10 – 7/16
	<i>Group Paper Outline</i>	Due 7/16
Module 4: Week 4 ⇓	Global Warming & Climate Change	Chapter 10 & 19
	Managing Water Resources Sustainably	Additional material [Bb]
	<i>Discussion 6 on Climate Change</i>	Available from: 7/17 – 7/23
	<i>Discussion 7 on Current events contribution by students on Water Resources</i>	Available from: 7/17 – 7/23
	<i>Quiz 4: Chapters 10 & 19</i>	Available from: 7/22 – 7/23
Module 5: Week 5 ⇓	Plant & Animal Extinction Environmental GIS & Planning	Chapter 15
	<i>Discussion 8 on Plant Extinction</i>	Available from: 7/24 – 7/29
	<i>Group Final Paper</i>	Due 7/29
End of Week 5	Final Exam Available from: 7/28 – 7/29	

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 Bb for specific readings.