

Mount Holyoke College, Spring 2015
Introduction to Environmental Studies (ES 100)



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Office Hours: Lauret Savoy on Tu 2:30-3:30 pm, W 10:30 am-noon, and by appointment
Catherine Corson W 1:00-2:30 pm, Th 1:45-2:45 pm, and by appointment

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Course Description and Objectives: This course is designed to introduce you to the field of environmental studies, which includes not only scientific analysis, but also philosophical, historical, economic, political, cultural, and artistic aspects of environmental concerns. Through interdisciplinary lenses, we will explore many of the complexities and interrelationships of environmental concepts, processes, and problems. Focusing on critical issues such as climate change, biodiversity, food and water security, and environmental justice, we will consider the current level of understanding and some of the links among science, ethics, cultural values, and economic and political decision-making. The course will encourage you to cultivate skills in listening, reading, writing, and critical thinking, in addition to leadership, and it will help you identify areas of interest for future study. In the end, we hope that what we consider together will encourage you to think deeply about current environmental issues and act responsibly as informed citizens of the world.

Required Text and Other Materials:

Environment by Peter Raven, Linda Berg, and David Hassenzahl (8th edition). Copies are on sale at Odyssey Bookshop, and the 8th edition is on three-hour reserve in the library.

Readings on Moodle and class handouts

Class Structure: This is primarily a lecture and discussion course designed to introduce 1) the broad field of environmental studies, and 2) some key topics or issues within the field. Expect to participate during each class. We will have student-led discussions, video showings, oral presentations, a library workshop, and campus field trip. Each of you will be responsible for the following: 1) commentaries on the readings each week (submitted on Moodle); 2) a three-page final paper; 3) an oral presentation; and 4) class attendance. We will also have one mid-term exam and one end-of-term exam, both taken in class. Doing the readings (before class), attending class regularly, thinking critically, writing thoughtfully, and expressing yourself orally in class are keys to success in this course.

Moodle: All assignments, readings other than the textbook, and other course material will be posted on Moodle. Each student should upload assignments, including weekly commentaries, onto the Moodle response prompts.

Late Assignments: Late assignments will receive a full grade reduction for each 24-hour period after the due day (i.e., an A paper receives a B if turned in a day late, a C if turned in two days late). No paper extensions will be granted and the exams cannot be rescheduled except in the most unusual of circumstances and with significant advance notice. (It is your responsibility to ensure that each assignment is actually submitted.)

Requirements and Policy: For this course to work well, everyone must read each week's selections carefully *before* class, and come to each meeting prepared to discuss the issues and raise questions about the content. Regular class attendance and active, prepared participation are essential and required! Above all, we ask that you bring creativity, imagination, and commitment to the course.

Evaluations will be determined in the following manner:

first examination	15%
second examination	15%
reading commentaries	15%
class attendance	15%
description, preliminary list of sources, questions for librarian, and annotated bibliography	15%
three-page final paper	15%
oral presentation of final project	10%

Reading Commentaries: The night before each class with readings, you are required to post on Moodle a short one- to two-paragraph summary of 1) the key points of the readings, and 2) at least one critical thought/reaction/insight or question that you had after finishing the readings. (You do not need to do this for the first day of class, the Library Workshop/Campus Tour week, the reviews before exams, or your final presentations.) Each commentary will be given a grade of either a check (if satisfactory) or a zero (if not submitted or unsatisfactory). The final grade for commentaries will be based on the percentage of those submitted and checked. The reading responses are due by midnight the day BEFORE they are listed in the syllabus, so that we have time to look at them before class. No late commentaries will be accepted except under the most unusual of circumstances and with prior notice and instructor approval.

Final Paper: Being an effective communicator is vital to being an effective agent for the environment, and the course emphasizes the quality of research and writing. Early in the semester, each of you will select a commodity to research during the semester. You will be responsible for preparing four items: 1) a one-paragraph description; 2) a preliminary list of sources; 3) an annotated bibliography; and 4) a final, polished paper. Due dates are below on the schedule and on the project guidelines handout. Caro Pinto, a reference librarian and our LITS liaison, will speak about effective research strategies, including finding sources, using proper citations, and avoiding plagiarism. All sources must be cited using Chicago style in the papers. We will go over the guidelines for these papers in class.

Oral Presentation: At the end of the semester, we will hold an open forum or summit on the commodities that you've selected. Each of you will be responsible for giving an illustrated, three-minute presentation of your topic. This will be a fun event giving us all a glimpse of the fascinating variety of case studies that everyone has been working on over the semester.

Exams: There will be two exams in the course: one on the first half of the semester and one on the second. (The second exam will not be cumulative.) A study guide for each exam will be passed out one week ahead of time, and the lecture period before each exam will be an in-class review session.

Field Trip: On 2/24 & 2/26, half the class will take the campus tour with Dr. Leszek Bledzki (outdoors), and the other half will do a library research workshop with Caro Pinto, reference librarian. The outdoors trip will run regardless of the weather, so please dress warmly enough to be outside the entire class period.

Academic Dishonesty: Evidence of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, cheating, copying another's work, and fabricating information or citations, constitutes an automatic failing grade, and

suspected dishonesty will be handled in concert with the Dean of the College. Please see the link to the Mount Holyoke College tutorial on plagiarism if you are uncertain of what constitutes plagiarism (“The Proper Use of Sources Tutorial” at <http://www.mtholyoke.edu/lits/ris/Plagiarism/>).

Accommodations: Students who need test or classroom accommodations due to a disability must be registered in advance with AccessAbility Services and have a letter stating the needed accommodations, which should be given to us as soon as possible—no later than the first week of classes or, if issued during the semester, by a week after it has been issued. We encourage you to make an appointment with us to discuss how we can make the best possible arrangements to enable you to do your best. Confidentiality will be maintained in all cases.

Technology in the Classroom: Use of computers is allowed for note-taking. However, please remember that the classroom is a cell-phone-free and internet-free zone.

Time Management: This course entails a substantial, but not overwhelming, amount of reading and writing. It is very manageable if you structure your time well. Here is a link to good suggestions for time management and study skill development:

https://www.mtholyoke.edu/sites/default/files/studentprograms/docs/skillbuilding_timemanagement.pdf

Schedule of Topics

Please watch for updates (on Moodle) to the following schedule of readings. Chapters refer to the 8th edition of the required textbook by Raven *et al.* (*Environment*). (If you have the 7th edition please check to confirm that the chapter you are reading matches the topic for that lecture.) The scheduled readings and lectures below may change if events (such as blizzards or changes in guest speakers’ schedules) require it.

Week 1: Introduction to Environmental Studies

1/20 ***Introduction - What Is Environmental Studies?***

The Beholding Eye

Food for Thought: “Where You At?” (self-scoring quiz)

1/22 ***Is There an Environmental Crisis? Global Environmental Issues—Let’s Talk about Consumption***

Readings:

- Raven *et al.*, Chapter 1: “Introducing Environmental Science and Sustainability” (up to p. 10)
- Leonard, Annie, “Introduction” in *The Story of Stuff* (Free Press, 2010).
- Durning, Alan Thein and John C. Ryan, “Prologue” (pp. 4-7) & “Conclusion” (pp. 67-71) in *Stuff: The Secret Lives of Everyday Things* (Northwest Environment Watch, 1997).

In class video: *The Story of Stuff* (21 min)

Week 2: History of Environmental Movement(s) and Environmental Politics

1/27 ***A History of the Environmental Movement(s)***

Readings:

- *New York Times*, “70 Years of Environmental Change” (interactive article, April 21, 2010).
- Merchant, Carolyn, “Shades of Darkness: Race and Environmental History,” *Environmental History*, 8, no. 3 (2003): 380-394.
- Leonard, Liam, “Environmental Movement,” in Mulvaney, Dustin, ed., *Green Politics: An A-Z Guide*. The Sage Reference Series on Green Society: Toward a Sustainable Future (Sage Publications, 2011).
- Bullard, Robert, “Confronting Environmental Racism in the Twenty-First Century” in Deming, A., and Savoy, L., eds., *The Colors of Nature: Culture, Identity, and the Natural World* (Milkweed Editions, 2011).
- Raven *et al.*, Chapter 2: “Environmental Laws, Economics, and Ethics”

1/29 ***U.S. Environmental Policy and Management***

Reading:

- Kraft, Michael, and Vig, Norman, Chapter 1: “Environmental Policy over Four Decades: Achievements and New Directions,” and Appendices in *Environmental Policy: New Directions for the Twenty-First Century* in Vig and Kraft, eds. (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Press, 2010).

Week 3: Energy Production

2/3 ***Fossil Fuels***

Readings:

- Raven *et al.*, Chapter 11: “Fossil Fuels”
- EPA: “The Process of Hydraulic Fracturing”
- [Just FYI if interested: EPA, “Natural Gas Extraction – Hydraulic Fracturing”]

2/5 ***Renewable Energy***

Guest Lecturer: Professor Alexi Arango (Physics)

Reading:

- Raven *et al.*, Chapters 10: “Energy Consumption” and 12: “Renewable Energy” (up to p. 247)

2/9 *Last Day to Withdraw from a Course without "W" Notation Recorded*

Week 4: Climate Change

2/10 ***The Science of Climate Change: Is the World Warming?***

Readings:

- Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) “CLIMATE CHANGE 2014 Synthesis Report: Summary for Policymakers”
- Raven *et al.*, Chapter 20: “Global Climate Change”
- [Just FYI if interested: IPCC assessment “Climate Change 2013: The Physical Science Basis: Summary for Policymakers”]

2/12 ***Politics of Climate Change***

Readings & Viewing:

- Video – *An Inconvenient Truth* (watch on Moodle before class)
- Gore, Al, “Chapter 16: Political Obstacles,” from *Our Choice: A Plan to Solve the Climate Crisis* (NY: Melcher Media, 2009).
- Klein, Naomi, “Introduction: One Way or Another, Everything Changes,” from *This Changes Everything* (NY: Simon & Schuster, 2014).
- Klein, Naomi, “Why #BlackLivesMatter Should Transform the Climate Change Debate,” *The Nation*, December 12, 2014.
- [Just FYI if interested: EPA: Climate Impacts on Society]

DUE 2/13 By midnight on Moodle: Please submit a short description of the commodity you’ve chosen to research over the semester.

Week 5: Review and Connections

2/17 ***What Have We Learned: From Is There an Environmental Crisis? to the Politics of Climate Change***

2/19 **First In-Class Examination**

DUE 2/23 By midnight on Moodle: Please submit a) a preliminary list of sources, including at least one scholarly source, about your commodity, and b) questions for the workshop with the reference librarian (Caro Pinto).

Week 6: Library Research and Campus Tour

2/24 & 2/26 ***Library Workshop* (with Caro Pinto, Reference Librarian)
Campus Ecology Tour (Outdoors with Dr. Leszek Bledzki, Senior Research Associate)**

Week 7: Ecosystems and Biodiversity

3/3 ***Ecosystems and Energy*
Guest Lecturer: Kate Ballantine (Environmental Studies)**

Reading:

- Raven *et al.*, Chapter 3: “Ecosystems and Energy” pp. 49-57 (The Flow of Energy through Ecosystems) to end of chapter; and Chapter 4: “Ecosystems and the Physical Environment”

DUE 3/5 By midnight on Moodle: Please submit an annotated bibliography with at least three scholarly sources for your chosen topic.

3/5 ***Biodiversity***

Readings:

- Raven *et al.*, Chapter 16: “Biological Resources”

- “Biodiversity” in Mulvaney, Dustin, ed., *Green Politics: An A-Z Guide*. The Sage Reference Series on Green Society: Toward a Sustainable Future (Sage Publications, 2011).

Week 8: Agriculture and Food Justice

3/10 ***Agriculture and Food***

Reading:

- Raven *et al.*, Chapter 18: “Food Resources”

In class video: *Food, Inc.* (watch rest at home after class)

3/12 ***Food Insecurity***

Readings:

- Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, “Pioneer Valley Food Security Plan” 2013 Summary (full plan available at <http://www.sustainableknowledgecorridor.org>)
- Raven *et al.*, Chapter 18: “Food Resources” (complete chapter)

In class video: *A Place at the Table* (watch rest at home after class)

Spring Break 3/14 – 3/22

Week 9: Environmental Justice, Health, and Water Politics

3/24 ***Environmental Justice and Health***

Readings:

- Baker, Nena, “Chapter 2: Chemicals We’ve Loved: Consumer Conveniences” from *The Body Toxic: How the Hazardous Chemistry of Everyday Things Threatens Our Health and Well-Being* (New York: North Point Press, 2008).
- Bullard, R., *et al.*, “Executive Summary” and “Introduction” in *Toxic Wastes and Race at Twenty: 1987-2007* (United Church of Christ Report, 2007).
- Carson, Rachel, *Silent Spring* (Chapters 1-3) (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1962).

3/26 ***Urban Environmental Issues: Race, Class and Climate Change***

Guest Lecturer: Serin Houston (Geography)

Readings: TBD



Week 10: Water Politics and Connections & Review

3/31 ***Water Scarcity and Politics***

Readings:

- Raven *et al.*, Chapter 13: “Water: A Limited Resource”
- Postel, Sandra, 2010, “Water: Adapting to a New Normal” in the *Post-Carbon Reader Series*

In class video: *Blue Gold* (watch rest at home after class)

4/2 ***What Have We Learned: From Ecosystems and Energy to Food, Justice, & Water***

4/6 *Last Day to Declare Ungraded Option and/or Withdraw from a Course with a "W" Notation Recorded*

Week 11: Exam & Presentations

4/7 **Second In-Class Examination**

4/9 ***Presentations: Consumption, Commodities, and Communities Forum***

Week 12: Presentations

4/14 ***Presentations: Consumption, Commodities, and Communities Forum***

4/16 ***Presentations: Consumption, Commodities, and Communities Forum***

Week 13: Presentations and Concluding Thoughts

4/21 ***Presentations: Consumption, Commodities, and Communities Forum***

4/23 ***Being an Engaged Environmentalist: Concluding Thoughts***

Readings:

- Raven *et al.*, Chapter 24: "Tomorrow's World"
- Lappé, Frances Moore, "Power Invisible," *The Systems Thinker*, 19, no. 4 (2008): 2-6.
- Leonard, Annie, "Epilogue" and Appendices in *The Story of Stuff* (Free Press, 2010).

DUE 4/24 By midnight on Moodle: Commodity paper (three-page, double-spaced paper)

But please don't forget to enjoy Pangy Day festivities!!



