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Introduction to Environmental Science

Course Description

Environmental Science is an introduction to the study of major environmental problems and issues confronting modern society. Topics include ecosystem structure and function; population patterns and dynamics; food, water, soil and energy resources; pollution of the air, water and land; and resource management.

This course is 3 credit hours/3 contact hours. No pre-requisite or co-requisite is required.

Pre-requisites and/or Co-requisites: none
Semester and year taught: Fall 2024

Recommended Text

Essential Environment by Withgott and Laposata, 6th edition, 2020. ISBN 978-0-13-471488-2. Publisher: Pearson. There is also an electronic textbook (eText) that is available in the bookstore and it is much cheaper than the regular print textbook. You can also go online and look for cheaper, earlier editions of the textbook if you want!

Course Materials

I recommend that you purchase the electronic textbook for this course. You should also have a notebook for your lecture notes and a month by month calendar so you can see when all your assignments are due. Some course materials will be posted on Canvas so access to a computer will be helpful. Remember, there are lots of computers on campus for you to use. Also end-of-the-year evaluations will use Canvas so make sure you have access to Canvas on your phone or on a computer.

Grading

There are four unit tests and a cumulative final. There are also a series of assignments (some in class and some online) that count towards your Activity Grade. Your course grade will be computed as follows: your Activity Grade counts 20%, your Final Exam counts 20%, and the three highest unit test grades (out of the four tests you will take) count 60%.

There are no make-up tests and no extra credit work. You are expected to participate in the class, take notes, study on your own, seek help when needed, and take your tests on time. Failure to do these tasks will most likely result in a lower course grade.

The grading scale at GCSC is as follows: A = 90-100; B = 80-89; C = 70-79; D = 60-69; and F = 0-59. You can graduate from GCSC with an A, B, C or D in a course; however, some universities require that all of your grades be C or higher.

Exam Schedule

Test 1	Chapters 1, 5 (105-115), 2 (30-45), 3, 4
Test 2	Chapters 6, 18, 9, 8
Test 3	Chapters 7, 12
Test 4	Chapters 15, 16, 13, 14
Final Exam	Chapters 10, 17 and all the other material too

Testing

Tests will be given during class time as this is a face-to-face class.

Instructor is available outside of class for ten (10) office hours per week.

Curriculum Information:

This course is taught as a traditional face-to-face lecture. During the course of the semester there may be discussions and group projects that take place during the scheduled class time. There may also be individual assignments that get completed in class as well as on Canvas.

Almost all of the material will be presented during the scheduled class time. There will be lectures each day the class meets along with discussions and time to complete in-class assignments. Occasionally students will be required to watch a video of the lecture if the instructor is out sick; however, this happens very infrequently.

Broad Goals of the Course

Students will be able to explain how living things interact with each other and their environment and they will describe how humans have altered the Earth.

Student Learning Objectives: after completing the course, students will be able to ...

1. Describe the structure of an ecosystem and explain how matter and energy move through a food chain.
2. Explain why the human population is experiencing exponential growth and explain how this growth affects the environment.
3. Distinguish between industrial, traditional, slash and burn and organic farming practices and explain how each technique impacts the environment.
4. Explain how renewable and non-renewable energy sources are used to provide the energy humans need to maintain their lifestyle and list the pros and cons of each energy source.
5. Describe the different ways to handle solid waste and hazardous waste and explain how each technique impacts the environment.

Attendance and Withdrawal Policies at GCSC

Since this is a face-to-face class, you are expected to come to campus every Tuesday and Thursday and attend class. Failure to attend class the first two weeks of the semester will result in your withdrawal from the course as a no-show. You can withdraw yourself from the course up until the scheduled withdrawal date which is one week after midterm. After that date, you cannot be withdrawn from the course.

Accessibility Policies at GCSC

Any student who feels he or she may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the Office of Student Accessibility Resources. The Office of Student Accessibility Resources will coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

Academic Integrity at GCSC

Honest participation in academic endeavors fosters an environment in which optimal learning can take place and is consistent with the college's mission. Academic misconduct is destructive to the spirit of an educational environment and therefore will not be tolerated.

The following definitions will apply:

- a. "Cheating" includes but is not limited to use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests or examinations; dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments; the acquisition without permission of tests or other academic materials belonging to a member of the College's faculty.
- b. "Plagiarism" includes, but is not limited to, the use by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.
- c. The term "academic misconduct" includes any or all forms of cheating and plagiarism.

In addition, academic misconduct may include the following:

- Destroying, damaging, or stealing another person's work or work materials including, but not limited to, lab experiments, computer programs/files, term papers, projects, or copy of an examination.
- Theft, damage, or misuse of library resources; removing uncharged material from the library; defacing or damaging library materials; intentionally displacing or hoarding library materials within the library for one's unauthorized private use, or any other abuse of reserved materials.
- Theft, damage, or misuse of computer resources including, but not limited to, computer accounts codes, passwords, or facilities; damaging computer equipment or interfering with the operation of any computer system in the college.

Other GCSC Policies: HB 233

In accordance with federal and state privacy laws, students may record class lectures for their own personal educational use, in connection with a complaint to the college, or as evidence in internal or external legal proceedings. Students may not publish or upload the recordings or any components thereof without the knowledge and written permission of the faculty member. Failure to obtain permission to publish could lead to the students' having to pay damages, attorney fees, and court costs. For more information about what can be recorded, please see the guidelines in the current Student Handbook on the Gulf Coast State College website.

Issues surrounding Covid-19

If you are sick, stay home. Please contact me so that I can work with you. **If you have been exposed to Covid-19 or if you test positive, you must also contact David Thomasee at 850-873-3582.** He is the college's Safety Officer and he will let you know when you can safely return to campus. For the most recent information on this deadly virus, please refer to the Gulf Coast State College website regarding COVID-19: <https://www.gulfoast.edu/covid-19-coronavirus.html>.

Classroom Conduct Policy for the Natural Sciences

In order to promote a learning environment in which you as a student may receive the greatest consideration, we will do all we can to prevent unnecessary interruptions and class disruptions. It is the policy of the Division of Natural Sciences that disruptions will not be tolerated in the classes administered by this division.

1. **Everyone is required to be in class on time.**
Anyone entering the classroom after the instructor has begun class is late and is a disruption to the class. The instructor will implement an appropriate policy to discourage late arrivals.
2. **The student must have prior consent of the instructor before leaving the class early.**
If you must leave class early, notify the instructor before the beginning of the class. We do not conduct "open" classrooms where individuals may arrive and exit at their discretion. This activity is disruptive to those trying to learn and will not be allowed. If you leave early without notifying the instructor, you will not be allowed back in the classroom without first obtaining permission from the Chair of the Natural Sciences Division.
3. **The instructor will not to allow talking or other distractions to occur at inappropriate times.**
Talking and other disruptive behaviors, including the use of electronic devices, are a distraction to other students and have no place in a college environment. Students who engage in such behavior will be asked to stop. If the behavior continues, the student will be asked to leave and confer with the Chair of the Natural Sciences Division concerning the nature of the behavior before being allowed back into the classroom.
4. **Guests and non-enrolled students, including children, are not allowed in classrooms/labs.**
5. **The instructor has the authority to handle any infractions of discipline.**
The student has the right to appeal to the Chair of the Natural Sciences Division.
6. **Food and beverages in open containers are absolutely forbidden in labs.**
Water bottle use is encouraged, especially if the student brings a reusable bottle to class.
7. **Unauthorized cell phone use during class is prohibited by the following policy.**
All cell phones must be turned off (not on vibrate) and put away (in a pocket, a purse, or a back pack) by the time class starts and may not be visible until the instructor has left the room at the end of class except when used for class activity. Sending or receiving cell phone calls, pages or text messages is not allowed except for law enforcement officers, firefighters or other first responders. Other than these, any student who leaves the classroom to use a cell phone will not be permitted back in class and an absence may be assessed. Use of a cell phone in class can be construed as a Disruptive Act as defined in the Student Code of Conduct in the GCSC Student Handbook and as a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy. Unauthorized cell phone use may result in dismissal from the class. The student cannot be readmitted to the class without seeing the Chair of the Natural Sciences Division and obtaining clearance to attend class.