# EVR 1001 Syllabus

## Introduction to Environmental Science

EVR 1001 / 82152 / Fall 2026

3 Credit Hours/ 3 Contact Hours

Pre-requisites/Co-requisites: Placement into college level reading is required while placement into college level English is recommended.

## Contact Information

### Instructor

Greg Robinson
Professor of Biology
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850-769-1551 x 2853

Natural Sciences Room 311
Office Hours Will be Posted to Canvas
Expect responses to messages within 48 hours (business days)

### Division Chair

Dana Hutchinson
Chair, Natural Sciences
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### Division Administrative Assistant

Kathy Bleday
Sr. Administrative Assistant
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## Course Information

### Catalog Description:

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.

## Student Learning Outcomes:

**Course Learning Outcomes:** *Upon successful completion of the course student will be able to…*

1. Apply critical thinking to analysis and interpretation of environmental information and model outputs.
2. Apply the scientific method to explain natural experiences and phenomena.
3. Explain the basic chemical, biological, and physical principles of environmental science.
4. Use empirical evidence to describe the historical and modern context of environmental problems and their solutions.

**Student Learning Outcomes**: *To achieve CLOs, student will be able to…*

1. Describe the structure of an ecosystem and explain how matter and energy move through a food chain. (CLO 1, CLO 3)
2. Interpret results of simple climate/weather models. (CLO 1, CLO 3)
3. Identify the steps and order of the scientific method. (CLO 2)
4. Develop a sound and testable hypothesis (CLO 2)
5. 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. (CLO 3, CLO 4)
6. Compare the effects of different agricultural practices on soil fertility (CLO 3, CLO 4)
7. Explain biological principles, such as biodiversity, environmental capacity, and conservation. (CLO 3)
8. Describe the different ways to handle solid waste and hazardous waste and explain how each technique impacts the environment. (CLO 4)
9. Explain why the human population is experiencing exponential growth and explain how this growth affects the environment. (CLO 4)

## Course Materials & Resources:

Essential Environment by Withgott and Laposata, 6th edition. ISBN 978-0-13-471488-2. [e-Text or earlier edition from online are acceptable; online "Mastering" component not required]

## Delivery Method:

This course meets face to face. Course material, assignments, and announcements may be offered via Canvas as a supplemental approach to learning at the discretion of the instructor. Please make sure that you have access to a computer with a webcam and internet service in the event a change in course delivery is needed.

# Student Expectations

In this course, communication and feedback will occur through various channels, including GCSC email, Canvas Inbox, Canvas Announcements, Canvas Discussions, Microsoft Teams or

Zoom, assignment feedback, and instructor office hours. Review the statements below so that you understand the expectations for communication.

As a student at Gulf Coast State College, you are expected to:

- **Adhere to Course Guidelines:** Follow the guidelines detailed in the course syllabus, along with any additional instructions provided by the instructor. This includes understanding and complying with the course objectives, grading criteria, and academic policies.
- **Maintain Regular Contact:** Keep in touch with your instructor and classmates via your GCSC email or other designated communication channels. Regular contact helps clarify doubts, share ideas, and foster a collaborative learning environment.
- **Active Participation:** Engage actively in class discussions and submit assignments on time. Your active participation is crucial for your academic success and contributes to a vibrant learning community.

As your instructor, my commitment to you is to:

- **Provide Timely Feedback:** I will review and provide feedback on your assignments and submissions promptly. My goal is to help you understand your strengths and areas for improvement, which is crucial for your academic growth.
- **Respond Via Canvas Inbox:** I will respond to your emails or messages within 24-48 hours (excluding weekends), unless otherwise noted. I understand the importance of clear and timely communication in addressing your questions and concerns.
- **Post Regular Announcements:** To keep you updated and help you manage your time effectively, I will send out weekly reminders via announcements. These reminders will include important dates, upcoming assignments, and any changes to the course schedule.
- **Maintain Weekly Office Hours:** I will maintain regular weekly office hours, but I can also be available by appointment. This is to ensure I'm available for any questions or concerns that may come up during the week.

## Course Schedule

| Dates | Module | Description |
|---|---|---|
| **Weeks 1-4** | 1 | **Science, Sustainability, and Energy Production**<br>Introduction to Environmental Science as a field of study and discussion of the structure and function of environmental systems and interactions, followed by an in-depth look at the environmental resources humans use for energy production and commercial goods.<br>Textbook Readings: Chapters 1, 2, 15, 16 |

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| | | Assessments: Closing Thoughts Exercise- Energy Resources and International Relations; Concept/Vocab Quizzes 1 & 2, Unit Exam 1 |
| **Weeks 5-8** | 2 | **Humans and the Environment**<br>Wide-ranging coverage of how human activities, including resource extraction, settlement and population growth, economics, and government policy have affected environmental structure and function, and how environmental science has led to shifts in those activities.<br>Textbook Readings: Chapters 6, 18, 5, 17<br>Assessments: Think-Pair-Share: Population Control and Ethics of Sustainability, Environmental Policy Summary, Closing Thoughts Exercise- Ethics and Economics, Concept/Vocab Quizzes 3-5, Unit Exam 2 |
| **Weeks 9-12** | 3 | **The Biological Environment**<br>This module covers the biotic (living) component of ecosystems and the evolutionary and logistic processes that regulate their populations and interactions. We will also discuss biological natural resources such as forest products and game animals and their conservation and management.<br>Textbook Readings: Chapters 3, 4, 8, 9<br>Assessments: Evolution in Action Worksheet, Sustainable Management Activity, Concept/Vocab Quizzes 6-8, Unit 3 Exam |
| **Weeks 13-16** | 4 | **The Physical Environment**<br>The physical and chemical aspects of the environment are covered in this unit – the structural components of the environment including the atmosphere, lithosphere, and hydrosphere and their various cycles and interactions. As always, a major focus is how human activities and resource use have influenced these components, and what that might mean for the future if we continue.<br>Textbook Readings: Chapters 7, 12, 13, 14<br>Assessments: Think-Pair-Share: History, Agriculture, and the Evolution of the Human Diet, Closing Thoughts Exercise- Anthropogenic Climate Change, Data Dive- Global Warming and Sea Level Change, Concept/Vocab Quizzes 9-12, Unit 4 Exam |

# Grading

## GCSC Grading Scale

All grades will be posted in the student grade book in Canvas and will be assigned according to the following scale:

| | |
|---|---|
| A | 90%-100% |
| B | 80%-89% |
| C | 70%-79% |
| D | 60%-69% |
| F | 59% and below |

## Calculation of Grades

Assignments, Activities, and Quizzes: 40%
Unit Exams: 40%
Comprehensive Final Exam: 20%

## Incomplete Grades

To receive a grade of "I" (for "Incomplete") in a class, the student must submit a written request to the instructor prior to the last day of the course. The "Incomplete" option is only intended to help students who have an emergency arise in the last weeks of the class that prevents them from finishing all work. The "Incomplete" provides 30 days from the ending date of the course to make up any missing work. If work is not submitted during this time period, the grade will automatically change to an "F".

# Course Policies

## Accessibility Statement

Gulf Coast State College supports an inclusive learning environment for all students. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that hinder your full participation, reasonable accommodations can be arranged. Prior to receiving accommodations, you must register with Student Accessibility Resources. Appropriate academic accommodations will be determined based on the documented needs of the student. Please visit GCSC's Student Accessibility Resource (SAR) webpage to learn more. For information regarding the registration process, email sar@gulfcoast.edu or call 850-747-3243.

## Attendance Policy

Regular class attendance and participation are significant factors that help to promote success in college. Students are expected to attend all class meetings of all courses for which they are registered.

You are expected to know the instructor's specific attendance policy, as stated in the syllabus for each course. In the event of absence, you should contact your instructor as soon as possible to indicate the reason and to inquire whether make-up work is possible. (Make-up work is offered solely at the discretion of your professor.)

If your absences in a class become excessive, as stated in the course syllabus, your professor may contact you, indicating that further absence may result in your withdrawal from the course. Your professor can withdraw you from a course for excessive absences without your permission.

Instructors will monitor attendance at the beginning of each semester. If you are not in attendance during this period, you may be withdrawn from the course. You will be financially responsible for the course and a "W or NS" will appear on your transcript. Withdrawal from a course may also have implications for financial aid.

### Make-Up Work Policy

**In-class assignments** may not be possible to make up if you are not in attendance the day the assignment is completed; regular attendance is vital to ensuring you do not miss any class work.
**Vocabulary/Concept Quizzes** are administered outside of class on Canvas and can be taken at any point during the unit; they will close the day of the unit exam and any missing quizzes will automatically become zeros.
**Missing Exams**: You will receive a zero if you miss a test. The lowest test score will be dropped, so missing one test is manageable. However, if you miss a second test, you will receive a zero without a substitution or make up.
Most students will not have a legitimate reason to miss more than one test. So, don't throw away your drop test unless it is a dire circumstance. I realize that emergencies and obligations may arise. If this is the case, I will expect evidence of your situation.

## Withdrawal Policy

Two withdrawals are permitted per credit course. After that, a grade will be assigned. Please be concerned about withdrawals. When admitting students into certain programs, universities may calculate withdrawals as grades. It is your responsibility to verify the effects of enrollment and/or withdrawal upon your financial assistance (financial aid, scholarships, grants, etc.).
There are two kinds of withdrawals---student and administrative.

- *Student Withdrawal (W1)* - Students wishing to withdraw must complete the online Student Withdrawal Form before the scheduled withdrawal deadline as published in the College catalog. Student withdrawals initiated prior to the scheduled withdrawal

deadline will be recorded as a grade of “W.” The withdrawal deadline for an off-term or condensed term is one week after midterm.

- *Administrative Withdrawal (W2)* – A faculty member may withdraw a student up to the published withdrawal deadline for violation of the class attendance policy in which case the student will receive a grade of “W.” The withdrawal deadline for an off-term or condensed term is one week after midterm.

Students cannot withdraw from developmental studies courses (college-preparatory classes) after the drop/add period without written permission from their instructor and/or their academic advisor.

## Academic Integrity

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, including cheating or plagiarism, is destructive to the spirit of an educational environment. GCSC professors report every instance of student academic misconduct to the college for inclusion on the student’s records.
Most course syllabi include an academic honesty policy and the consequences for violating this policy. Familiarize yourself with course policies regarding authorized or unauthorized use of AI to avoid the pitfalls of academic dishonesty.

The following definitions will apply:

### "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.

### "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 as well as the purchase of papers or projects. It can also include overuse of an editing program like Grammarly or submitting work written by an Artificial Intelligence (AI) generator like ChatGPT. Make certain to consult your course syllabi for your instructor's guidelines of AI material.

### "Self-plagiarism"

occurs when a student submits the same or considerably similar document to fulfill requirements in different classes. For example, if a student submits a term paper in Religion they originally wrote for an English class, this is self-plagiarism. Once a paper receives a grade in one class, it cannot be submitted again for another class.

"Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)"
is technology that uses machine learning to create new content, such as text, images or code, based on user input. These systems are trained on vast amounts of data, including large language models and image or code generators. Common examples include ChatGPT, GitHub, Copilot, Google Gemini, Perplexity, and the Grammarly AI function.

Sanctions for incidences of academic misconduct, depending on the severity of the incidence and/or its repetition, may range from receiving an F grade (or 0) for the test, assignment, or activity, to failure of the course, to suspension or dismissal from the college.

## Classroom Recording

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 GCSC Student Handbook.

## Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy

The use of generative AI tools in academic work requires clear guidelines to maintain academic integrity. Please review the policy selected for this course regarding the use of AI tools such as ChatGPT, Copilot, Grammarly's AI features, and similar platforms for assignments, research, and other coursework.

See the student handbook for further information. Students with questions about acceptable use should consult their instructor.

Justification for the selection of a zero-tolerance AI policy for this specific course will be discussed as part of Module 1.

### Prohibited Use of AI

*The use of AI-generated content is strictly prohibited in all assignments, coursework, and throughout all stages of the work process, such as brainstorming, outlining, or drafting. This includes but is not limited to, tools such as ChatGPT, Copilot, and Grammarly's AI function. Use of AI tools will be treated as a violation of academic integrity and may result in penalties, including a zero on the assignment and additional disciplinary actions as outlined in the college's academic integrity policy.*

## Anti-Discrimination Policy

Gulf Coast State College does not discriminate against any person in its programs, activities, policies or procedures on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, national origin, marital status, religion, age, gender, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, disability, or veteran status. All questions or inquiries regarding compliance with laws relating to non-discrimination and all complaints regarding sexual misconduct or discrimination may be directed to Amanda Reed, Executive Director of Human Resources/Title II/504/Title IX Coordinator and Employment Equity Officer, Gulf Coast State College, 5230 W. US Highway 98, Panama City, FL 32401; 850-769-1551, ext. 3516. Rules, policies, fees, and courses described in this catalog are subject to change without notice.

## Syllabus Policy

For any syllabus posted prior to the beginning of the term, the instructor reserves the right to make minor changes prior to or during the term. The instructor will notify students via e-mail or Canvas announcement when changes are made in the requirements and/or grading of the course.

# Student Support Resources

Gulf Coast State College is committed to providing you with the resources you need for success as a student and beyond. View all the academic and student support resources provided at GCSC on the Student Services web page.

## Course Technology & Support

To successfully participate in this online course, students must have basic computer and digital information literacy skills and meet the following technology requirements:

- **Computer:** Up-to-date web browser that supports the Canvas learning management system; please refer to the system requirements for compatibility and information on using the Canvas app on mobile devices.
- **Internet Speed**: Minimum bandwidth of 8 Mbps upload/download speed to effectively engage in online activities and access multimedia.
- **Office 365 software:** Available for free download through GCSC Information Technology Services (ITS).

If you need technical support, contact the ITS Help Desk, available 24/7 at (850) 913-3303.