Syllabus for The Global Environment and Society – EVR 1017, Fall 2019

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

Professor
Dr. Elizabeth Anderson
Email: Please use Canvas messages, unless urgent (epanders@fiu.edu)
Phone: 305-348-0146
Office Hours: Tuesdays and Fridays, by appointment (send Canvas message)

Course Description and Purpose
The main purpose of this course is to encourage in the student an understanding of how the choices we make as nations, societies, families, and individuals impact the biosphere on which we depend for our well-being. This course covers how the emerging global environmental crisis on multiple fronts (the atmosphere, the oceans, forests, food and agriculture, poverty and the environment) is related to human behavior, culture, and social institutions. The course also examines proposals for changing the relationship between human society and the environment to a more “sustainable” path. The course will provide a broad overview of global issues that focuses on the interconnections among markets, society, politics, culture, and the environment. This course will give a lot of bad news about current trends in the global environment, but it will also provide some reasons for hope and positive steps that can and must be taken.

Online Canvas content includes readings (pdfs and links to websites), video clips, movies, and web links. Because this course presents a global overview, many of the videos include people speaking in other languages with English subtitles, or people speaking English as a second (or 3rd, 4th, etc) language. Open communication, tolerance, and respect are key to global learning; students are expected to demonstrate these values in all aspects of their work in this course throughout the semester.

Course Objectives
Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Describe basic concepts about environments, ecosystems, and human social systems, and various ways that people perceive and interact with their biophysical environment;
- Recognize the human “footprint” on the planet with respect to natural resources, natural resource depletion, and pollution;
- Explain why the vast majority of climate scientists have come to the conclusion that global warming and climate destabilization is anthropogenic (human-caused) and rapidly increasing;
- Analyze the energy systems that drive human activity and consequences for human well being;
- Discuss the relative weight of population growth and consumption rates as to their impact on the planet; and
- Debate the prospects for greater sustainability with respect to markets, politics, policy, and environmental movements.

Major & Curriculum Objectives Targeted

EVR 1017 meets the UCC Social Science Group Two Requirement and is a Global Learning Foundation Course.
II. IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Course Policies
Please review the FIU policies page as it contains essential information regarding guidelines relevant to all courses at FIU and additional information on the standards for acceptable netiquette important for online courses.

Technical Requirements and Skills
One of the greatest barriers to taking an online course is a lack of basic computer literacy. By computer literacy we mean being able to manage and organize computer files efficiently and learning to use your computer’s operating system and software quickly and easily. Keep in mind that this is not a computer literacy course; but students enrolled in online courses are expected to have moderate proficiency using a computer. Please go to the "What’s Required" page to find out more information on this subject. Please visit our technical requirements page for additional information.

Accessibility and Accommodation
Obtain more detailed information about the specific limitations with the technologies used in this course. Review Canvas’s Accessibility Guidelines for more information. For additional assistance please contact the FIU Disability Resource Center.

Academic Misconduct Statement
Florida International University is a community dedicated to generating and imparting knowledge through excellent teaching and research, the rigorous and respectful exchange of ideas and community service. All students should respect the right of others to have an equitable opportunity to learn and honestly to demonstrate the quality of their learning. Therefore, all students are expected to adhere to a standard of academic conduct, which demonstrates respect for themselves, their fellow students, and the educational mission of the University. All students are deemed by the University to understand that if they are found responsible for academic misconduct, they will be subject to the Academic Misconduct procedures and sanctions, as outlined in the Student Handbook.

Academic Misconduct includes: Cheating – The unauthorized use of books, notes, aids, electronic sources; or assistance from another person with respect to examinations, course assignments, field service reports, class recitations; or the unauthorized possession of examination papers or course materials, whether originally authorized or not. Plagiarism – The use and appropriation of another’s work without any indication of the source and the representation of such work as the student’s own. Any student who fails to give credit for ideas, expressions or materials taken from another source, including internet sources, is responsible for plagiarism.

Learn more about the academic integrity policies and procedures as well as student resources that can help you prepare for a successful semester.

Proctored Exam Policy
This online section does not require an on-campus exam.

Course Prerequisites
There are no required prerequisites for this course.
 Expectations of the Course

This is an online course, meaning that all of the course work will be conducted virtually. Expectations for performance in an online course are the same as for a traditional course; in fact, online courses require a degree of self-motivation, self-discipline, and technology skills that can make them more demanding for some students.

Students are expected to:

- **Review the How to Get Started information** located in the course content;
- **Introduce yourself to the class** during the first week by posting a self introduction in the appropriate discussion forum;
- **Take the Practice Quiz** to ensure that your computer is compatible with Blackboard;
- **Interact** online with instructor(s) and peers;
- **Review and follow the course calendar**;
- **Log in to the course 3-4 times per week**;
- Respond to discussion boards, blogs and/or journal postings within **2 days**;
- Respond to **Canvas messages** within 2 days; and
- Submit assignments by the corresponding deadlines.

The instructor will:

- **Log in to the course at least 5 times** per week;
- Respond to discussion boards, blogs and/or journal postings within **3 days**;
- Respond to **Canvas messages** within 3 days; and
- Grade assignments within **7 days** of the assignment deadline.

Textbook

Environment and Society
Paul Robbins, John Hintz, Sarah A. Moore
John Wiley & Sons
ISBN-10: 1118451562

Book Info: You may purchase your textbook online at the FIU Bookstore.
III. COURSE DETAIL

This class is broken down into 15 weekly modules. Each weekly module contains readings, videos, and either a short assignment or an exam. You are expected to progress with weekly modules in a timely manner, in accordance with the schedule for assignments and exams. Modules will open at the start of each week (Monday), and once opened will stay open throughout the remainder semester so that you can review materials or re-watch videos.

Course Communication
Communication will take place via Canvas messages. Messages are a private and secure text-based communication that occurs within a Course and among Course members. Users must log on to Canvas to send/receive/read messages. The Messages tool is located on the left side Course Menu (Canvas user interface). It is recommended that students check their messages routinely to ensure up-to-date communication. If you need to get in contact with me more urgently, you may email me at epanders@fiu.edu.

Course Materials
Each week will contain a learning module of curated information on a particular topic. This information typically includes readings from 1-2 chapters of the Environment and Society textbook, plus 2-3 additional short readings from the scientific literature or popular media that are relevant to the topic and to current events. Additionally, I like to include either a full link movie or several short video clips each week on the topic. Think of each of these modules as a kind of museum exhibit or collection of diverse sources and perspectives on the topic of the week.

Each week will have a short introductory video (3-5 minutes) during which I’ll give you an overview of the topic for that week and list of key concepts or ideas. You should start your work for the week by watching this video. Perhaps different from many classes that you may have taken previously in college or high school, I do not include any recorded lectures or PowerPoint presentations of my own. I find that the online format lends itself more to use of mixed media rather than recorded lectures. Therefore, you can think of me as a learning guide. My job is to present you with different paths and opportunities for exploring various topics, but its up to you to hike the trail (figuratively), discover new things, and complete all assignments.

Weekly Assignments (45 points total)
Weekly assignments are due on Sundays by 11:59 pm, as indicated in the detailed course schedule below. Weekly assignments comprise a cumulative total of 45 points towards your grade, and the points per assignment is indicated in the schedule and on the assignment itself. However, I have included additional obtainable points this semester, recognizing that everyone sometimes has an off week or an emergency. Therefore, if you do ALL of the assignments and get the MAXIMUM points for each, there are a possible 50 points you can actually get. I include these additional points instead of giving extra credit or make-up assignments. You are encouraged to do all assignments and if you get above 50 points at the end of the semester, you can make up missed points from exams or get a possible 105 as a final grade for the class (absolute perfection!).

Each assignment has a brief description page associated with it, in which you will find instructions, due date, criteria for grading, and possible points you can obtain with the assignment.

Exams (40 points total)
In order to mitigate any issues with your computer and online assessments, it is very important that you take the "Practice Quiz" from each computer you will be using to take your graded quizzes and exams. It is your responsibility to make sure your computer meets the minimum hardware requirements. Please note assessments in this course are not compatible with mobile devices and should not be taken through a mobile phone or a tablet. If you need further assistance please contact FIU Online Support Services.

There will be five exams during the term. Exams are based on ALL readings, videos, and assignment material from the three-week period before the exam. Exams will have 40 multiple choice or true/false questions, and you will have 20 minutes to complete each exam. Each exam is worth 10 points. Your lowest exam grade will be dropped. I include this practice of dropping the lowest exam grade instead of extra credit or make-up exams. You are encouraged to take all of the exams and always do your best. But I do recognize that everyone has an off day or an emergency sometimes, so therefore if you do poorly on one exam or miss it completely, that grade could be dropped.

**Semester Project (15 points total)**

Each student will participate in a semester-long project. These projects will be somewhat collaborative, meaning that groups of 10 students will be working on the same theme and are encouraged to interact with each other for ideas. However, your grade will be based on your work alone. Each group will also have a FIU graduate student mentor who can provide input, technical guidance, and review early drafts of the final product.

This assignment is designed to facilitate deeper exploration of social-ecological systems but also to introduce you to a new technical skill, for example, conservation technologies, QGIS, ESRI StoryMaps, photojournalism, or interviewing. My idea is that this skill will be something useful in future classes or something you can put on your Resume/CV for job applications.

Themes for this semester include:

- Citizen Science: Tracking Introduced Peacocks in South Florida
- Food Systems: Tracing the Origins of Our Daily Bread
- StoryMaps: A River Runs Through It
- Through My Lens: Climate Change Perspectives in South Florida
- Sense of Place: Exploring Human-Nature Connections

Students will be divided equally between the groups (10 students each group). Group selections will open during the third week of class, when students will sign up for the group of their choice until all 10 spots are full. You are encouraged to sign up early if you are set on one particular project. Please note that two of the projects (Citizen Science; Through My Lens) require students to be in South Florida for most of the semester to complete the assignment.

Descriptions of each project theme and details of the assignment will be posted in Week 2. Students must select their theme by the end of Week 3, submit an outline in Week 9, and submit the final version in Week 13.
This class is graded on a 100-point scale. As mentioned above, there are actually a possible 105 points if you get perfect scores on every assignment and exam. Overall course grades will be assigned as follows:

A: 90-105 points
B: 80-89 points
C: 70-79 points
D: 60-69 points
F: 59 points and below

IV. COURSE CALENDAR

Weekly Schedule of Modules and Assignments

Week 1, August 26-September 1, 2019: Introduction to Environmental Issues and People Who Study Them

Learning Objective: Describe basic concepts about environments, ecosystems, and human social systems, and various ways that people perceive and interact with their biophysical environment. Explore the wonders of nature and learn from the people that study it. Recognize biases and the dangers of a single story as related to history, environmentalism, and global issues.

Assignment:
- Discussion: Introduce Yourself and Your Story (1 point)
- Discussion: Find an Environmental Scientist, share link, and submit paragraph about the person and their research (100 words; 2 points)

Week 2, September 2-8, 2019: Populations and Markets

Learning Objective: Recognize the human “footprint” on the planet with respect to population, issues of scarcity, and the role of markets and commodities in environmental problems. Become familiar with concepts that describe different kinds of population and resource use trends over time. Understand your own ecological footprint and what daily actions most strongly influence it. Examine some of the challenges and opportunities of market-based mechanisms for addressing environmental problems.

Assignment:
- Discussion: Calculate your Ecological Footprint (2 points)
- Exercise 3.3, Environment and Society (5 points)

Week 3, September 9-15, 2019: Institutions and the Commons

Learning Objective: Understand the role of the commons in environmental issues worldwide. Examine the components necessary for successful commons management, according to scholars. Be able to give examples of modern challenges for commons management in areas like irrigation, wildlife conservation, water resources, and climate.
Assignment:
- EXAM 1: Open September 9 @ 9 AM; closed September 15 @11:59 PM. (15 points)

Semester Project:
- Topic Selection DUE September 15 @11:59 PM.

**Week 4, September 16-22, 2019: Environmental Ethics and the History of Conservation**

Learning Objective: Review different ideas on how and why the environmental movement emerged, and how it has evolved over time. Consider Indigenous perspectives on landscapes and their conservation. Become familiar with different types of environmental ethics, such as green ethics, social ecology, deep ecology, anthropocentrism, and ecofeminism.

Assignment:
- Essay: Environmental Ethics Compare and Contrast (500 words; 5 points)

**Week 5, September 23-29, 2019: Environmental Risks and Hazards**

Learning Objective: Analyze environmental risks and hazards as a component of environmental problem solving. Explore the risks of climate change and hurricanes in South Florida. Understand that environmental risks are not evenly distributed between communities.

Assignment:
- Mapping Environmental Risk (5 points)

**Week 6, September 30-October 6, 2019: Political Economy and Environmental Justice**

Learning Objective: Explore the concept of environmental justice on local and global scales. Increase awareness of the fate of consumer waste. Review the recent water quality crisis in Flint, MI.

Assignment:
- EXAM 2: Open September 30 @ 9 AM; closed October 6 @11:59 PM. (15 points)

**Week 7, October 7-13, 2019: Social Construction of Nature**

Learning Objective: Understand the meaning and misconceptions behind the use of the word “natural.” Analyze terms used to describe environmental phenomena, such as desertification and wilderness.

Assignment:
- The Future of Conservation Survey (3 points)
- Essay: What is well being? (2 points)

**Week 8, October 14-20, 2019: Challenges: Food Systems**

Learning Objective: Identify the challenges for sustainability associated with modern food systems, including both human health and environmental risks. Track the fate of food waste and the problems associated with widespread use of plastic bags.
Assignment:
- Grocery Store Assignment (5 points)

**Week 9, October 21-27, 2019: Challenges: Carbon Dioxide and Climate Change**

**Learning Objective:** Become familiar with current trends in global climate change. Review scientific evidence for climate change and dissect views of climate change skeptics.

Assignment:
- EXAM 3: Open October 21 @ 9AM; closed October 27 @ 11:59 PM (15 points)

Semester Project:
- Outline DUE October 27 @11:59 PM (5 points; out of 15 total)

**Week 10, October 28-November 3, 2019: Challenges: Water Resources**

**Learning Objective:** Explore global water issues and reflect upon the different ways that people access water for essential needs. Understand the framework for freshwater management in Florida and track your own daily water usage.

Assignment:
- Tracking Your Water Use (5 points)

**Week 11, November 4-10, 2019: Challenges: Extinction and the Loss of Biodiversity**

**Learning Objective:** Understand why ecologists say we are undergoing the 6th Mass Extinction and the role of different groups in reducing habitat destruction. Recognize why tropical forests and coral reefs are sensitive ecosystems, and the implications of species loss for society. Examine proposed changes to the U.S. Endangered Species Act.

Assignment:
- Essay: Position on the U.S. Endangered Species Act (5 points)

**Week 12, November 11-17, 2019: Opportunities: Social Networks and Partnerships**

**Learning Objective:** Understand the power of social networks and partnerships for environmental conservation and management. Explore how nature is linked to human health and well-being. Revisit stereotypes about environmental stewardship.

Assignment:
- EXAM 4: Open November 11 @ 9 AM; closed November 17 @ 11:59 PM (15 points)
Week 13, November 18-24, 2019: Opportunities: Conservation Technology

Learning Objective: Characterize the different types of forests in the world and the drivers of both deforestation and forest recovery. Become familiar with ways that technology can be used in environmental management and conservation.

Assignment:
- Using conservation technologies (5 points)

Semester Project:
- FINAL VERSION: Due November 24 @11:59 pm (10 points; out of total 15 points)

Week 14, November 25-December 1, 2019: Opportunities: Nature-Culture Linkages

Learning Objective: Gain understanding of the linkages between nature and culture, including how human lives and livelihoods are shaped by their surrounding environments. Explore the ways that biocultural approaches are being incorporated into environmental conservation projects around the world.

Assignment:
- Nature-culture linkages in South Florida (5 points)

Week 15, December 2-8, 2019: What is Sustainability?

Learning Objective: Recognize different viewpoints on the concept of sustainability. Develop and articulate your own viewpoint on sustainability.

Assignment:
- Essay: What is Sustainability? (5 points)

Week 16, December 9-13, 2019:

Assignment:
- EXAM 5: Open December 9 @ 9 AM; closed December 13 @11:59 PM (15 points)