GENERAL INFORMATION

PROFESSOR INFORMATION

Instructor: David Bray  
Phone: 786-395-3592  
Office Hours: By Appointment, by skype or phone  
E-mail: Please use Canvas messages or if urgent, email me at brayd@fiu.edu  
Website: https://case.fiu.edu/about/directory/people/brayd.html

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. The course has a social science perspective and is thus concerned with 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. We will provide a broad overview that welcomes the student to the Anthropocene and focuses on the interconnections among a variety of issues, although we will explore global climate change or global climate destabilization in some depth. As a social science course, we will give particular emphasis to how markets, society, politics, and culture influence our relationship to the environment. This course will give a lot of bad news about current trends in the global environment that supports human civilization, but it will also provide some reasons for hope and positive steps that can and must be taken.

Online Canvas content includes PowerPoint presentations and animations, adobe (.pdf) readings, video clips, and web links. It is strongly recommended that you print all .pdf readings for ease of reading and note-taking. Printable PowerPoint presentations are in .pdf format.

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 all human activity and their 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 Foundations Course.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION
POLICIES

Please review the FIU's Policies webpage. The policies webpage contains essential information regarding guidelines relevant to all courses at FIU, as well as additional information about acceptable netiquette for online courses.

As a member of the FIU community you are expected to be knowledgeable about the behavioral expectations set forth in the FIU Student Code of Conduct.

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" webpage to find out more information on this subject.

Please visit our Technical Requirements webpage for additional information.

ACCESSIBILITY AND ACCOMMODATION

The Disability Resource Center collaborates with students, faculty, staff, and community members to create diverse learning environments that are usable, equitable, inclusive and sustainable. The DRC provides FIU students with disabilities the necessary support to successfully complete their education and participate in activities available to all students. If you have a diagnosed disability and plan to utilize academic accommodations, please contact the Center at 305-348-3532 or visit them at the Graham Center GC 190.

Please visit our ADA Compliance webpage for information about accessibility involving the tools used in this course.

Please visit the LMS Accessibility webpage for more information:

• Canvas

Obtain more detailed information about the specific limitations with the technologies used in this course.

For additional assistance please contact FIU's 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.
COURSE PREREQUISITES

There are no required prerequisites for this course.

PROCTORED EXAM POLICY

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

TEXTBOOKS

Environment and Society
Paul Robbins, John Hintz, Sarah A. Moore
John Wiley & Sons, 01/28/2014
Second Edition
ISBN-10: 1118451562
You may purchase your textbook online at the FIU Bookstore.

The Madhouse Effect
Michael E. Mann, Tom Toles
Columbia University Press, 2016
ISBN-10: 0231177860
You may purchase your textbook online at the FIU Bookstore.

Additional Notes

There will be two discussion topics in this semester, based on the book The Madhouse Effect by Mann and Toles. You are required to post your opinions, comments and suggestions on the book chapters in the fifth and sixth week of the course. There are two rounds of discussion. Each discussion round begins with a ~500 word posting. In the second half of the week you post a ~250 word response to one of your classmates.

EXPECTATIONS OF THIS COURSE

This is an online course, meaning that all of the course work will be conducted online. 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. Summer courses are particularly intense, so you should expect to have to put in 2-3 hours a day for at least 5 days a week to keep up.

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 Canvas;
- interact online with instructor(s) and peers;
- review and follow the course calendar;
- log in to the course 5 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 6 times per week;
- respond to discussion boards, blogs and/or journal postings within 3 days;
- respond to Canvas messages within 1 day; and
- grade assignments within 3 days of the assignment deadline.

COURSE DETAIL

COURSE COMMUNICATION

Communication in this course 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.

Visit our writing resources page for more information on professional writing and technical communication skills.

DISCUSSION FORUMS

Keep in mind that forum discussions are public, and care should be taken when determining what to post.

Introductory Activity:
Provide a brief biographical overview on Introductory topic area on Discussion Forum of the Canvas. You may include your name, the reason you are taking this course, your expectation of this course, your experience with any aspects of online learning, work experience, educational background to date, and status in your current program, career plans, and personal plans. (No longer than 200 words).

There will be two discussion topics in this semester, based on the book *The Madhouse Effect* by Mann and Toles. You are required to post your opinions, comments and suggestions on the book chapters. First posting in each round is ~500 words, second posting is ~250 word for a total of four postings.

Submit your postings to Discussion Forum on Canvas. There will be a forum for each topic and below is the criteria for an exemplary comment.

A discussion is available for one week. Once you have posted your postings on Canvas discussion forum for the first week, take some time to carefully review your classmates' postings. You are required to read at least 10 of the
discussions posted on the forum before selecting one to respond to. By the end of the week provide your constructive feedback to your classmates’ posting.

CRITERIA

| EXEMPLARY | Development of Ideas | Well-developed ideas; introduces new ideas; and stimulates discussion. |
| EXEMPLARY | Evidence of Critical Thinking | Interact at least twice with other students and/or the instructors. |
| EXEMPLARY | Quantity of Postings | Clear evidence of critical thinking- application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. Postings are characterized by clarity of argument, depth of insight into theoretical issues, originality of treatment, and relevance. Sometimes include unusual insights. Arguments are well supported. |
| EXEMPLARY | Timeliness | Individual message and at least two responses posted before the deadline. |

EXERCISES

You will have 3 exercises during the term which will be taken from the book *Environment and Society*. You should write approximately 1 page for each exercise, single-spaced.

FILM REVIEWS

You will view a number of films and videos during the class, and you will be writing one-page single-spaced reviews of 4 of them, as noted in the syllabus.

QUIZZES AND EXAMS

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.

Exams (60%): There will be three exams during the term. The first two exams each have a total of fifty questions, a mix of multiple choice and true/false. The last exam will have one hundred questions, also multiple choice and true/false. The first exam covers readings and PowerPoints in Weeks 1-2. The second exam covers readings and PowerPoints in Weeks 3-4. The third exam covers Weeks 5-6 AND includes 50 questions from the first two exams.

GRADING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Requirements</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exams (2 @ 15% each; 1 Final at 30%)</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercises (3 @ 4% each)</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussions on book <em>The Madhouse Effect</em> (2 rounds of 2 comments @ 3% each)</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Film Reviews (4 @ 4% each)</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Range (%)</th>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Range (%)</th>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Range (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>95 or above</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>83 - 86</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>70 - 76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90 - 94</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80 - 82</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>60 - 69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87 - 89</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77 - 79</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>59 or less</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

COURSE CALENDAR
Week 1 (January 6-10)

Introduction to Environmental Problems and the Mother of all Environmental Problems: Climate Change.

Learning Objective: Introduction to the Anthropocene and The Great Acceleration. The manner in which human beings are now impacting planetary systems and the climate system in particular.

Readings:

- Taped Lecture: Introduction to the Course
- Taped Lecture: "Introduction to the Anthropocene and the Great Acceleration"
- Video: Anthropocene [https://search-alexanderstreet-com.ezproxy.fiu.edu/view/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cvideo_work%7C3399109](https://search-alexanderstreet-com.ezproxy.fiu.edu/view/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cvideo_work%7C3399109) This is streamed from the FIU library website. The link takes you to the library website and you will need to sign in. After signing in it should take you directly to the film.

Assignment:

- **Discussions**: Introduce Yourself. Due by Friday, January 10, 11:59 pm.
- **Film Review #1** - one page single spaced review of *Anthropocene due by Sunday January 12, 11:59 pm*. Review should summarize aspects of the film that were of most interest to you, and include your reaction to the content. Did you agree with it? Things you disagreed with or didn’t like and why?

Week 2 (January 13-17)

Population and Markets

Learning Objectives: Recognize the human “footprint” on the planet with respect to population, issues of scarcity, and the role of markets and commodities in environmental problems.

Readings:

- **Chapter 2** “Population and Scarcity” in Environment and Society
- **Chapter 3** "The Bet and Markets and Commodities" in Environment and Society

Watch:
Week 3 (January 20-24)

The Tragedy of the Commons and Environmental Ethics

Learning Objective: Understand the role of the commons and the prisoner’s dilemma in environmental degradation and ethical approaches to food and nature.

Readings:
- Chapter 4 - “Institutions and the Commons” in Environment and Society
- Chapter 5 - “Environmental Ethics” in Environment and Society

Watch:
- Taped Lecture: “Institutions and the Commons”
- Taped Lecture: “Environmental Ethics and Cheap Meat”

Assignment:
- Exercise #1: Do Exercise 5.1 on page 80 in Environment and Society on factory farming or Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO). And then as instructed write two paragraphs where you support, oppose or perhaps find some middle ground on factory farming (reforming factory farming?). Due on Sunday, January 26 at 11:59 pm

Week 4 (January 27-31)

History of the Environmental Movement and Environmental Risks and Hazards

Learning Objective: Understanding how and why the environmental movement emerged, and how it has evolved over time. Analyze environmental risks and hazards as a component of environmental problem-solving.

Readings:
- Timeline: www.pbs.org/wgbh/amERICANexPERIENCE/features/earth-days-modERN-environmental-movement/
- Chapter 6 - Risks and Hazards in Environment and Society.

Watch:
• Taped Lecture: “History of the Environmental Movement”
• Video: Rachel Carson: The American Experience
  https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/films/rachel-carson/
• Taped Lecture: "Environmental Risks and E-wastes"

• Assignment: Film Review #2 - one page single spaced review of Rachel Carson: The American Experience due by Sunday February 2, 11:59 pm. Review should summarize aspects of the film that were of most interest to you, and include your reaction to the content. Do you think Rachel Carson is a significant figure? Why or why not?

---

**Week 5 (February 3-7)**

**Biodiversity and Habitat Destruction and First Exam**

**Learning Objective:** Understanding why ecologists say we are undergoing the Sixth Great Extinction and the role of non-governmental organizations and publicity campaigns in reducing habitat destruction

**Readings:**

• “Don’t Flush Tiger Forest” by World Wildlife Fund-US

**Watch:**

• Taped Lecture: "Biodiversity and Habitat Destruction" (in three parts)

**Assignment:**

• Exam I: Open Thursday, Feb. 6 @ 7:00am – Closed Sunday, May 9 @ 11:59pm (Exam covers all material above except for the videos Anthropocene and Rachel Carson)

---

**Week 6**

**(February 10-14)**

**Forests and Deforestation and Suburban Lawns**

**Learning Objective:** Characterize the different types of forests in the world and the drivers of both deforestation and forest recovery and a very different kind of vegetation cover, suburban lawns.

**Reading:**

• Chapter 10 - “Trees” in Environment and Society
• Forest Protection: From Drawdown: The Most Comprehensive Plan Ever Proposed to Reverse Global Warming. (pdf)
Part II (Week 6): Suburban Lawns

Reading:

- Chapter 14 - “Lawns” in Environment and Society

Watch:

- Taped Lecture: “Lawns”

---

Industrial Ecology

Week 7 (February 17-21):

Learning Objective: Analyze how we can re-engineer our industrial manufacturing processes so that they function more like natural systems, where nothing is wasted and, in fact, wastestocks = foodstocks.

Watch:

- Taped Lecture: “Industrial Ecology”
- Video: "The Next Industrial Revolution"
- Video: "Industrial Ecology as a Source of Competitive Advantage: Forwarding Recycled Fashion in America"

Assignment:

- Film Review #3: of “Industrial Ecology as a Source of Competitive Advantage”….Due on Sunday February 23 at 11:59 pm. Review should summarize aspects of the film that were of most interest to you, and include your reaction to the content. Do you think this business model is workable? Can industrial ecology serve to reduce waste and make manufacturing systems more like natural systems?

---

Week 8 (February 24)

Spring Break
Week 9  
(March 2-6)  

**Part I: Reintroduction of Wolves in Yellowstone National Park**

**Learning Objective:** Understand how the re-introduction of a top carnivore can completely restructure ecosystems and the role of industrial food production in environmental degradation.

**Reading:**
- Chapter 11 - “Wolves” in Environment and Society

**Watch:**
- Taped Lecture: “Wolves”

**Assignment:**
- **Exercise #2:** Do Exercise 11.3 “Examining the Wolf Hunting Debate” on page 201 of Environment and Society. Write 1 page single-spaced responding to the questions in the exercise. **Due Sunday March 8 at 11:59 pm.**

**Part II (Week 9): French Fries and Industrial Agriculture**

**Reading:**
- Chapter 16 - “French Fries” in Environment and Development
- Worldwatch Report 188: [Innovations in Sustainable Agriculture.pdf](#) pp. 1-13

**Watch:**
- Taped Lecture: “French Fries and Industrial Agriculture”

**Week 10 (March 9-13):**

**Bottled Water and Plastic Gyres in the Ocean and Exam II**

**Learning Objective:** Understanding that bottled water generates enormous amounts of waste and also wastes your money, so buy a good plastic or metal bottle and fill it with perfectly good tap water

**Reading:**
- Chapter 15 - “Bottled Water” in Environment and Society
- Marine Plastics [https://ocean.si.edu/conservation/pollutionmarine-plastics](https://ocean.si.edu/conservation/pollutionmarine-plastics) Read up to the section “Entanglement and Disease”
Watch:

- **Taped Lecture:** "Bottled Water and Plastic Gyres in the Ocean"
- **Watch:** Plastic Ocean [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ju_2NuK5O-E](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ju_2NuK5O-E)

Assignment:

- **Exercise #3:** Exercise 15.3 A Bottled Water Taste Test. Do exercise and 1 page single spaced report. **Due Sunday, March 15, at 11:59 pm.**
- Exam II: Open Thursday March 12 @ 7 am - Closed Sunday, March 15 @ 11:59 pm

---

Week 11
(March 16--20)

Part I: Climate Change - This Changes Everything

**Learning Objective:** Understanding climate science and why we have trouble accepting it.

**Reading:**

- Preface and Chapters 1 and 2 in *The Madhouse Effect* by Mann and Toles

**Watch:**

- Episode No. 12 of Cosmos: with Neil Degrasse Tyson "The World Set Free"
- Climate Change Film Series #2: *Dry Season: Years of Living Dangerously*
- No Taped Lectures

**Assignment:**

- **Film review #4:** 1 page single-spaced review of Dry Season: Years of Living Dangerously due **Sunday, March 22 @ 11:59 pm.**

---

Week 12 (March 23-27):

Climate Science and the Discovery of Global Warming

**Learning Objective:** Understanding the science climate change and how and when humans first understood anthropogenic impacts on climate.

**Reading:**

- Chapters 3 and 4 - *The Madhouse Effect*
• Pp. 6-12 
• "The Discovery of Global Warming"

Watch:
• Taped Lecture Week 5: "Climate Science"
• Taped Lecture Week 5: "The Discovery of Climate Change"

Assignment:
• Discussion Forum 1: Open Monday, March 23 @ 7:00 am – Closed Sunday, March 29 @ 11:59 pm. Post a ~500 word comment chapters 1-4 in The Madhouse Effect. Summarize what you thought were the one or two things of most interest to you in these chapters (you don’t have to summarize all the chapters). Do you agree with what is said about this issue? Disagree with it? Why?

Week 13 (March 30-April 3):
The Kyoto Process, the Paris Accords, and Climate Skeptics

Learning Objective: Understanding why the nations of the world have not been able to arrive at an agreement about carbon emissions and why some people refuse to accept the science of climate change.

Readings:

Read

• Chapters 5 and 6: The Madhouse Effect
• Explaining the Paris Accords  https://www.nrdc.org/experts/jake-schmidt/paris-climate-agreement-explained-whats-it-and-where-it-taking-us
• Opinion: One Year from Trump’s Withdrawal from the paris Accords  https://www.brookings.edu/blog/planetpolicy/2018/06/01/one-year-since-trumps-withdrawal-from-the-paris-climate-agreement/

Watch:
• Taped Lecture: The Paris Accords
• Taped Lecture: "Climate Change and Climate Skeptics"
• John Oliver’s representative climate change debate.

Assignment:
Discussion Forum 2: Open Monday, March 30 @ 7:00 am – Closed Sunday, April 5 @ 11:59 pm. Post a ~250 word response to the comments of one of your classmates on Chapters 1-4 of The Madhouse Effect. Do you agree or disagree with the comment and why?

Week 14 (April 6-10)

Fossil Fuel Subsidies and Alternative Energy

Learning Objectives: Understand how fossil fuel subsidies distort markets for alternative energy

Readings:

- Chapters 7 and 8: The Madhouse Effect
- Taped Lecture/Videos:
  - *Breakthrough in renewable energy - VPRO documentary - 2016*
  - *Sustainable Energy Part 1*
  - *Sustainable Energy Part 2*
- Taped Lecture: “Alternative Energy”

Assignment:

- Discussion Forum 3: Open Monday, April 6- @ 9:00 am Closed Sunday April 12 @ 11:59 pm. Post a ~500 word comment on the chapters 5-8 in The Madhouse Effect. Summarize what you thought were the one or two things of most interest to you in these chapters (you don’t have to summarize all of the chapters). Do you agree with what is said about this issue, disagree with it? Why?

Week 15: Climate Politics (April 13-17)

Learning Objective: Explore the options for a rapid transition to a post-fossil fuel future and how the current political situation impedes it.

Readings:

- *What’s A Carbon Tax?*
- Notes from a Remarkable Political Moment for Climate Change by Bill McKibben
- 7th Graders strike Against Climate Change from the Washington Post
- What’s in the Green New Deal by David Roberts in Vox

Watch:

- Taped Lecture: Social and Political Movements: The Future of Climate Change
- Video: The Sunrise Movement

Assignment:

- Discussion Forum 4: open Monday, April 13 @ 9:00 am – Sunday, April 19 @ 11:59 pm. Post a ~250 word response to the comments of one of your classmates on Chapters 5-8 of The Madhouse Effect. Do you agree or disagree with the comment and why?

- Final Exam: Open Monday, April 20 @ 9:00 am - Closed Sunday, April 26 @ 11:59 pm