# Geography 303:
# Environmental Geography

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**Office Location**: 130J Sierra Hall **Office Hours**: M 11-12 pm or by appointment

**Introduction**
In our world today, the environment is being called on to supply the growing needs of an expanding human population in the developing countries and increasing affluence in the developed countries. In many areas, we are already taking more from Earth's systems than they can provide in a sustainable fashion. This course is focused on the study of the environmental issues we face today. The discipline of Environmental Geography stands at the interface between humans and Earth and explores the interactions and relations between them. In order to promote a more sustainable and equitable future, this course will provide with an overview of the environmental problems we face today and potential sustainable solutions when available.

**Required Text:** *Environmental Geography: Science, Land Use, and Earth Systems* by William Marsh and John Grossa. 3rd Edition. Other reading will be assigned throughout the semester so please attend class.

**Course Webpage**:
http://www.csun.edu/~sd1229/ . Please check the course webpage on a regular basis. Additional reading assignments will be posted along with other important announcements!

## Intended Outcomes:
In accordance with best teaching practices, intended outcomes for this course are made transparent to students at the beginning of the semester. These outcomes represent the knowledge and skill set from which you will be required to demonstrate your competence by the end of the semester. Assessment and evaluation tools used during the quarter will be designed to determine your success in acquiring and applying these knowledge and skill sets. (**see specifics at end of syllabus**)

**Evaluation:**
Students will be evaluated by a variety of evaluation tools, including midterm exams, writing assignments, and a final project focused on a local environmental issue. Students will be evaluated on their ability to demonstrate basic knowledge/comprehension of the subject matter as well as the ability to apply critical thinking skills to the subject matter, by evaluating issues, applying knowledge acquired in novel situations, synthesizing multiple points, issues and knowledge. Listed on the below are the intended learning outcomes for this course and the evaluation and assessment tools used in the class to determine your success. The specific grading regime for this course is as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Midterm Exams (3)** | **75%** |
| **Written Assignments** | **10%** |
| **Final Project** | **15%** |

The following scale will be used for the exams as well as for your final grade:

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | 90 - 100% | B | 80 - 89% | C | 68 - 79% |
| D | 55 - 67% | F | 54% and below | | |

**Midterm Exams:**
There will be a total of 3 midterm exams. These exams will consist of a combination of multiple choice and short answer questions. Each exam counts for 25% of your total grade.

**Written Assignments:**
Throughout the semester, I will assign several short assignments. Some of these will be writing assignments and some of them will be online exercises. These assignments combined will account for 10% of your grade. They will be handed out in class, therefore you should attend class as much as possible…IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO KEEP ON THE COURSE MATERIALS.

**Final Project:**
Each student will come up with a case study of a local environmental issue. Every Friday, a student will present their case study. In addition to the presentation, you must turn in a written report of the issue which will be turned in on the day of your presentation. I will provide a handout for this assignment the second week of class.

**Academic Conduct:**
Please note, under no circumstances should you consider any form of cheating or plagiarizing in this course. I ABSOLUTELY WILL NOT TOLERATE IT, don't be fooled by congenial approach. If you are caught you will be given a failing grade for the course and you will be reported to the Dean of Social and Behavioral Sciences and also to the Dean of Academic Affairs for disciplinary measures.

**TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE**

***This schedule is subject to change. Changes will be announced during class. You must attend class for this reason.***

| Week | Date | Topic | Reading |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1/23 - 1/25 | Introduction: A World In Crisis | Chpt 1 |
| 2 | 1/28 - 2/1 | Globalization and The Concept of Sustainability | Chpts 2-3 |
| 3 | 2/4 - 2/8 | Global Cycles and the Living Environment | Chpts 4-5 |
| 4 | 2/11 - 2/15 | The Spread of Humanity<br>**Monday 2/11: No Class** | Chpts 6-7 |
| 5 | 2/18 - 2/22 | Agriculture, Food Production, and the Environment | Chpt 8 |
| | 2/20 | **Midterm** | - |
| 6 | 2/25 - 2/29 | Energy Generation and Use | Chpts 8-9 |
| 7 | 3/3 - 3/7 | Energy Generation and Use | Chpts 8-9 |
| 8 | 3/10 - 3/14 | Climate, Land Use, and Global Warming | Chpts 10 -11 |
| 9 | 3/17 - 3/21 | Spring Break: No Class | - |
| 10 | 3/24 - 3/28 | Air Pollution | Chpts 10-11 |
| | 3/26 | **Midterm** | - |
| 11 | 3/31 - 4/4 | Water Resources:<br>**Monday: Cesar Chavez Day** | Chpt 12 |
| 12 | 4/14-4/18 | Water Pollution | Chpt 13 |
| 13 | 4/21 - 4/25 | Hazardous Waste & Soil Degredation | Chpt 14-15 |
| 14 | 4/28-5/2 | Development and Exploitation of Open Land | Chpts 16-17 |
| 15 | 5/5-5/9 | Managing the Global Environment | Chpt 18 |
| 16 | 5/12 - 5/16 | **Final Exam Week** | - |
| **Final Exam: Wednesday, May 14 (10:15-12:15)** | | | |

**Intended Outcomes:**
In accordance with best teaching practices, intended outcomes for this course are made transparent to students at the beginning of the semester. Students should be able to demonstrate at least basic competency with knowledge and skill sets listed below in order to earn a passing grade in this course. The assessment and evaluation tools used during the semester, designed to measure your success in acquiring these knowledge and skill sets are listed below each learning outcome below.

**Goal A: Building a Knowledge Base**

- Students in this course will identify and define key terms and concepts central to understanding the impact of humans on the natural environment.
- Students will be able to define and explain key terms such as: sustainability, stewardship, matter, energy, biomes, population dynamics, succession, social modernization, biodiversity, etc.

Assessment/Evaluation tool: Exam questions, written and map assignments

- Students will be able to identify on a map important local and worldwide physical and biological features associated with this course, such as mountains, rivers, rainforests, deserts, the distribution of humans and other living species, etc.

Assessment/Evaluation tool: Exam questions, map assignments

- Students will be able to recognize, list and describe key ideas, facts and spatial conditions in the following categories: biodiversity, water resources, population growth, pollution, urban blight, etc.

Assessment/Evaluation tool: Exam questions, map assignments

**Goal B: Acquiring Knowledge**

- Students will develop skills for acquiring new knowledge.
- Students will recall information presented to them textually, cartographically and through numeric or graphic communication.

Assessment/Evaluation tool: Exam questions, map assignments, and written assignments

- Students will demonstrate their ability to interpret non-textual information visible on the physical and biotic landscape.

Assessment/Evaluation tool: Exam Questions, written assignments, final project

**Goal C: Problem Solving Skills**

- Students will demonstrate their problem solving skills.
- Students will analyze non-textual messages in the landscape and from maps, graphics, etc.

Assessment/Evaluation tool: Written assignments, final project, and exam questions

- Students will apply universalizing processes, such as, biodiversity, population growth, and water resources to local conditions.

Assessment/Evaluation tool: Exam questions, map assignments, written assignments, and final project

- Students will compare the similarities and differences between and among various physical and biotic locations, the processes that produce them, and the impacts of humans on those processes.

Assessment/Evaluation tool: Exam questions, written assignments, and final project

- Students will explain human impact on the Earth by using spatially informed logic.
- Students will explain selected interactions between humans and physical/biotic processes such as pollution, urban blight, sustainability, pest control, and conservation.

Assessment/Evaluation tool:. Exam questions, written assignments, and final project

**Goal D: Communicating Knowledge**

- Students in this course will be able to communicate ideas by using words, numbers, maps and other graphic devices.

Assessment/Evaluation tool: Map assignments, exam questions, and final project

- Students will construct one or more legible maps.

Assessment/Evaluation tool: Map assignment, final project

- Students will effectively communicate facts, ideas and statistics using maps and graphic devices.

Assessment/Evaluation tool: Map assignment, exam questions, final project