

Introduction to Environmental Studies

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Location:	TBD
Instructor:	TBD
Email:	TBD
Office hours:	TBD
Course web page:	http://sakai.rutgers.edu

Course Overview

The ebola virus outbreak in western Africa, hurricane Sandy in New Jersey, and droughts and fires in California are a few examples of recent, high-profile events that demonstrate fundamental connections and interdependencies between human and natural systems. Human choices and actions fundamentally transform, and are transformed by, environmental processes, with critical implications for ecosystem and human health, prospects for maintaining secure livelihoods, the equitable distribution of resources, and long-term sustainability. In this introductory environmental studies course, students will gain a foundation in the constitutive fields of environmental studies through a review of biophysical, social science, and humanities-based understandings of the environment.

Through lectures and class discussions, we will examine different framings of human-environment interactions, environmental history, physical environmental processes, natural resource-based livelihood systems, environmental justice and identity-based rights claims, and systems of global governance. The course will demonstrate the value of taking an integrated, interdisciplinary approach to a wide range of contemporary environmental challenges such as climate change, deforestation, urban development, and loss of biodiversity.

Course Format

Course contents will be explored through lectures (including guest presentations by Environmental Studies faculty members), readings, short video clips, and in-class exercises and discussions. There are two primary lectures each week. They will explore themes covered in assigned readings, and present a series of in-depth case studies. Students are expected to attend all lectures, should be familiar with the material covered in assigned readings and be prepared to participate during in-class discussions. Copies of lecture presentations and readings will be available on sakai.rutgers.edu under the Resources menu.

Grading Criteria

In order to succeed in this course you will need to complete all readings and assignments in a timely fashion, attend and participate in class, and successfully complete two mid-terms and a final exam. The exams consist of multiple-choice questions, short answer items and essays pertaining to the readings assigned and discussed in class. Combined, the exams will make up 80% of your grade. Attendance will be recorded via check-in sheets that will be circulated on every class session. Students are expected to attend all classes and participate actively in discussion.

There will be maximum total of 100 points available throughout the semester:

Total	100 points
Attendance and participation	10 points
Quizzes and in-class exercises	10 points
First mid-term	20 points
Second mid-term	25 points
Final exam	35 points

Final course grades will be calculated as follows:

A (90-100), B+ (85-89), B (80-84), C+ (75-79), C (70-75) and D (60-70), F (less than 60).

Required text and Additional Readings

The required text for the course is: *Humans in the Landscape: An Introduction to Environmental Studies* by Kai Lee, William Freudenburg, and Richard Howarth. WW. Norton (2013). Additional readings for the course will be available at sakai.rutgers.edu

Schedule

Week	Week Topics	Readings (textbook)
1. Introduction to the Course	Introduction to the course	
2. Humans in the landscape	What is the environment? How we know how the environment is changing?	Chapter 1 and 2
3. Environmental History	Humanistic approaches to the construction of nature	Chapter 3
4. Environmental justice	Ethics, equity and vulnerability	Chapter 4
5. Climate and Biomes	Earth biophysical patterns and process	Chapter 5
6. Human domination of ecosystems	Agriculture and Ecosystem Services	Chapter 6. <i>First Mid- Term</i>
7. Climate Change	Energy resources and green house emissions	Chapter 7
8. Humans and their habitats	Urbanization and population growth	Chapter 8
9. Biodiversity	Resilience and Ecosystem Function	Chapter 9

10.	Sustainability	Inequality, Economic Growth, and Consumption	Chapter 10
11.	Environmentalism	Conservation and Environmental Ethics	Chapter 11. <i>Second Mid Term</i>
12.	Environment and Governance	Commons and resource management	Chapter 12.
13.	Environment and Markets	Market-based approaches	Chapter 13.
14.	Environment and Technology	Technological innovation and future directions	Chapter 14.
15.			<i>Final Exam</i>