

ENVR 112: Environmental Science Fall 2014

<u>Instructor</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>E-mail</u>	<u>Office</u>	
Dr. Husic	610-625-7100	medwh03@moravian.edu	Collier Science – Room 311	
Office Hours:	Mondays Thursdays	10:30 - 11:30 am 2:00 - 3:00 pm	Wednesdays Fridays	10:30 - 11:30 am 11:00 am - noon

I can also meet with you at other times, but please make an appointment ahead of time.

Class Meeting Times:

Tues/Thurs 10:20 AM-11:30 AM
117 PPHAC

Lab: Tuesdays, 12:45 – 3:45 PM
301 Collier Hall of Science

Scheduled Final Period:

Friday, December 12th, 8:30 AM

Required books:

- Wright, R.T. and Boorse, D.F. *Environmental Science: Toward a Sustainable Future*, 12th ed. Boston: Benjamin Cummings, 2014.
- Laboratory notebook for laboratory portion of the course. The notebook should be bound with numbered pages and the pages should contain grids (i.e. look like graph paper).

Additional Required Reading:

You will have other readings from various sources throughout the semester. These reading assignments will be described in weekly or biweekly course outlines.

Course description:

I realize that those of you who are enrolled in this class have a variety of interests and that different students signed up for this course for different reasons. The main focus of this course is to introduce you to the broad topic of environmental science. Environmental issues are quite complex and typically, environmental problems are best studied and addressed through multidisciplinary approaches. Environmental issues are also often controversial ~ usually because of conflicting values of those involved in the decision-making processes that will solve problems or lead to policy related to the environment. My job will be to provide you with a scientific framework related to environmental topics and help you to explore the various perspectives involved in addressing environmental problems on the personal, local, state, national, and global levels. Besides analyzing the scientific aspects of contemporary environmental issues, we will also consider risk, the concept of an environmental ethic, the role of the media in influencing public opinion, economic and social issues, politics, and public policy related to science and the environment.

We will examine the various components of the world in which we live: the biosphere, atmosphere, geosphere and hydrosphere; and we will discuss the natural cycles that interconnect these spheres to

understand how they function and what services they provide. More than any other living organism, humans have the ability to impact the environment and disrupt these natural cycles through population growth, industry, policy decisions, and applications of technology which can sometimes have unforeseen consequences. Individuals can profoundly affect change through public sentiment and voting, and, in turn, impact public funding and policy decisions. Thus, you have the power to affect the direction of science research, the applications and regulation of technology, and the status of our environment. Because of this, I strongly believe that every individual should be a responsible, informed, and active participant in the governing processes.

I provide lecture outlines typically on a weekly or biweekly basis to help keep us all organized. These outlines will be posted on the Blackboard site for the course and will highlight key topics covered in lecture and our discussions, list the assigned readings, and include suggested study problems and assignments. I expect each of you to complete these assigned readings and assignments, and be ready and willing to participate in class discussions. You should get in the habit of checking this site a couple times each week as I routinely post announcements, reminders, schedule changes, etc. In addition, you should routinely skim news reports to learn about current events related to the environment.

Course objectives – lecture portion of the course: By the end of the semester, students should:

- Have an understanding both of some fundamental scientific concepts that underlie key environmental topics and of the environmental challenges facing us today;
- Have an appreciation for the complexity and value of ecosystems, biodiversity, and the relationship between humans and their environment;
- Realize the wide range of values, risk assessment, and social, economic, historical, and political factors that influence the development of public policy – especially as it pertains to environmental regulations, conservation, and stewardship;
- To be able to identify the critical environmental issues facing humanity today and consider the type of writing or communication forms needed to inform the public of these issues in the 21st century;
- Understand the global nature of many environmental issues and appreciate the wide range of world views on the value and priority of the environment;
- Be able to assess scientific and other forms of data, along with other information found in the literature for validity and relevance to environmental issues being considered; and
- Gain further experience in critical thinking, oral and written communication skills, and using technology to access important information.

Course policies, procedures, and expectations:

Exams: Exams will cover material from lectures, lab, class discussions, and the assigned readings and sample problems from the text or other assignments. A review sheet will be distributed approximately one week prior to each exam. You should expect at least a portion of these exams to be essay format. **No make-up exams** will be administered without an official medical or university excuse.

<u>Grading:</u>	<u>% of Total Grade</u>
• <i>Assignments and participation</i> ¹ in class discussions and activities and attendance at co-curricular activities	20
• <i>Exams:</i>	
Exam #1 (<i>Thursday, September 25th</i>)	15
Exam #2 (<i>Thursday, October 30th</i>)	15
Final Exam (<i>Friday, December 12th, 8:30 AM</i>)	20
• <i>Journal and summary</i> (Due <i>Tuesday, November 25th</i> at the beginning of class – see details below)	10
• <i>Laboratory activities and assignments</i>	20

I do look at trends in grades over the semester; improvement in test grades over the duration of the course will be favorably noticed! Participation in class discussions, review periods, etc. is expected and will be a factor in the determination of final grades. Please note that it is within the instructor's purview to apply qualitative judgment in determining grades for an assignment or for a course.

The grading system is as follows: (+/- will be administered as professor deems appropriate)

A = 90 - 100 %

B = 80 - 89 %

C = 70 - 79 %

D = 60 - 69 %

Please note: it is within the instructor's purview to apply qualitative judgment in determining grades for assignments or the entire course.

Journal:

Throughout the course, it is a good idea to be aware of stories in the media that relate to scientific and environmental topics. The internet can be a valuable resource, but you have to critically evaluate the content and *source* of the information that you find there. Often, timely stories break in the news that warrant our consideration in class, and your familiarity with media coverage of science and environmental issues can (and will) provide the basis for class discussions. Active participation in these discussions will be noted and will have a positive effect on your final grade for the course. For certain class assignments, I will also ask you to find an article or internet site on a specific topic. ***To this end, I would like each of you to keep a journal throughout the semester.***

I allow students to determine the specific format and style of their journals. Ideally, these will be in electronic format. What I do require is that you date your entries and include the source of your information (e.g. which newspaper and what date, what magazine, edition and page number, the URL of a website, etc.). Keeping a regular record of stories that catch your attention or that relate to topics we are discussing in class, will allow you to reflect on what you are learning and how it applies to the "real world",

¹ Overall ***class participation*** in discussions, engagement, & attendance. Excessive absences will negatively impact your grade. Simply showing up at the scheduled class time does not represent engagement. For example: Are you making routine and significant contributions to discussions about the required readings and assignments and fully participating in group activities? Are you finding examples of "Environmental Issues of the Week" and sharing these with the class?

and allows you to follow trends throughout the semester. I expect that you should have at least 2 entries (news items) per week, plus some of your own comments, summaries or reactions to the news and topics from class. Don't simply cut out articles from a paper or magazine and stick it into a journal. It is your reaction and commentary that I most interested in. Occasionally in class, ***we will have a discussion of timely news stories related to the environment and other topics being discussed in class.*** Having your journal up-to-date will allow you to make significant contributions to these discussions. You may also decide to include entries on your personal reactions/reflections on ideas discussed in class and the readings.

Prior to your submission of the completed journal at the end of the semester, I will ask you to summarize what you have learned from keeping such a journal and what trends or major issues you noticed.

Up to 6 points will be given for each entry - up to 120 total.

- Citation: 1 point
- Summary of the entry: up to 2 points
- Your personal reaction to or reflection about the entry and how it relates to class or your interests: up to 3 points

Optional Extra Credit Project:

I routinely get asked if there is any possibility of an extra credit project. For this semester, I have decided to provide such an option to students in which you can choose to read a book related to the environment. A few examples are provided below. You are free to choose other books, but please run your choice by me ahead of time. There are **many** contemporary and classic books to choose from; some samples include the following:

The Sixth Extinction - Elizabeth Kolbert
An Inconvenient Truth - Al Gore
Silent Spring - Rachel Carson
A Sand County Almanac - Aldo Leopold
Wildbranch: An Anthology of Nature, Environmental, and Place-based Writing - Caplow and Cohen, eds.
A Voice for Earth - Corcoran and Wohlpart, eds.
Last Child in the Woods - Richard Louv
Confessions of an EcoSinner - Fred Pearce
The Future of Life - E. O. Wilson
Rewilding the World - Caroline Fraser
Anything by Scott Weidensaul (an author from PA)
Raising Elijah - Sandra Steingraber

After reading the book, summarize what you learned from the book and what you thought of it (a book review, of sorts). In addition, consider how the book related to this course. This will be due at the end of the semester - please submit electronically (December 2nd).

Other Expectations:

- a) Attendance: Regular class attendance is expected. Make-up work will not be permitted unless you have an acceptable reason (family emergency, illness, etc) - with documentation. If an emergency should arise, please try to notify me ahead of time if possible. Notification from the Moravian College Health Center, Learning Services or the Moravian College Dean of Students' Office will be necessary if you miss more than two seminar classes. I will recognize legitimate excused absences such as when students

are representing the university in an official capacity (e.g. for presentation at scientific meetings, intercollegiate athletic competition, but not practice, off-campus music performances, etc.). Such activities are scheduled ahead of time; thus, I expect you to make arrangements with me ahead of time as well. Please note: Students who arrive late to class disrupt the flow of the session and distract their peers. Please be prompt!

- b) Blackboard and email: These resources and tools are an extension of the course syllabus. I use Blackboard to post the weekly class outlines, a range of resources and readings, assignments, and other notices. I will often send announcements and answers to questions via email. You must get in the habit of checking Blackboard regularly (at least twice per week) and your email.
- c) Academic Honesty: Students are responsible for adhering to the College's policy on academic honesty; Moravian College expects its students to perform their academic work honestly and fairly. A Moravian student, moreover, should neither hinder nor unfairly assist the efforts of other students to complete their work successfully. This policy of academic integrity is the foundation on which learning at Moravian is built. Students will be held to the highest standards as specified by the Moravian College Honor Code. Violations of this code will be handled in the most severe manner allowed by college policy. Please read the Academic Honesty Policy that is included in the student handbook **and** the Guidelines for Honesty included in this syllabus. If you have any questions about plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty, please ask.
- All work that you submit or present as part of course assignments or requirements must be your original work. This includes any work presented, be it in written, oral, or electronic form or in any other technical or artistic medium. When you use the specific thoughts, ideas, writings, or expressions of another person, you must accompany each instance of use with some form of attribution to the source. Direct quotes from any source (including the Internet) must be placed in quotation marks (or otherwise marked appropriately) and accompanied by proper citation, following the preferred bibliographic conventions of your department or instructor. Student ignorance of bibliographic convention and citation procedures is not a valid excuse for having committed plagiarism.
 - You may not use writing or research that is obtained from a "paper service" or that is purchased from any person or entity, unless you fully disclose such activity to the instructor and are given express permission.
 - You may not use writing or research obtained from any other student previously or currently enrolled at Moravian or elsewhere or from the files of any student organization, such as fraternity or sorority files, unless you are expressly permitted to do so by the instructor.
 - You may not collaborate during an in-class examination and you may not work with others on out-of-class assignments or projects unless expressly allowed or instructed to do so by the course instructor. If you have any reservations about your role in working on any out-of-class assignments, you must consult with your course instructor.
 - Cheating or plagiarism will not be tolerated and may result in failure of the course. A major form of academic dishonesty is plagiarism, which we define as the use, whether deliberate or not, of any outside source without proper acknowledgment; an "outside source" is defined as any work (published or unpublished), composed, written, or created by any person other than the student who submitted the work (adapted from Napolitano vs. Princeton). Instructors often encourage—

and in the case of research essays, require—students to include the ideas of others in their writing. In such cases, students must take care to cite the sources of these ideas correctly (in other words, to give credit where credit is due). Several assignments in this class will involve the use of internet resources, and it is my experience that students often do not realize that copyright violations and plagiarism policies still apply when using materials from these resources.

- At Moravian, if an instructor suspects that plagiarism has occurred, the student will be asked to show the notes and drafts contributing to the final version of a paper or assignment. The instructor also has the right to review any books or periodicals that were used. The grade for the paper will be suspended until these materials have been reviewed. An instructor who suspects a student of violating the policy on academic honesty with regard to an assignment, requirement, examination, test, or quiz will consult with another faculty member in the department using a blind copy of the work in question, to verify the violation. If the charge is verified, the instructor will, in almost all cases, assign either a grade of zero to the academic work in question or a failing grade in the course in which the violation occurred. The student must be informed in writing of the alleged violation and penalty; a copy of this memo must be sent to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs.
- A student may appeal either a charge of academic dishonesty or a penalty as follows:
 - First, to the First Year Seminar course instructor.
 - Next, in the case of a First Year Seminar, to the Chair, First Year Seminar
 - Next, to the Academic Standards Committee, chaired by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.
- d) Appropriate Literature Sources: Students are required to understand the differences between primary and secondary literature sources. The college subscribes to many databases relevant to disciplines associated with environmental studies that you should be familiar with as they will be invaluable sources of information for your research project. Public-domain internet sources can be helpful but you must critically evaluate the information obtained from such sources – especially if they are not primary sources. **You should not typically use “Wikipedia” as a reference for assignments and material from this source is NOT acceptable for the formal research paper.**
- e) Reading Assignments: should be completed prior to each class session in which the reading(s) will be discussed.
- f) Extra Help: If any difficulties arise during this course in any area, including selecting a research topic to designing your presentation, please see me. *I will be happy to help!* The reference librarians in Reeves Library are also willing to assist you with reference materials. You may also contact the Moravian College Writing Center for further assistance in writing and revising your abstracts and research papers.
- g) Learning Services Office: Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability must contact Ms. Elaine Mara, assistant director of academic support services for academic and disability support, at the lower level of Monocacy Hall, or by calling [610-861-1401](tel:610-861-1401). Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the Academic Support Center.

h) Technology and Downside of Multitasking, from Dr. Cecilia Fox, Department of Biological Sciences, Moravian College:

In recent years, the saturation of cell phones, iPads, laptops and other devices has produced something known as the problem of divided attention. Relatively recent articles in the New York Times and Harvard Mental Health Letter summarized several studies of productivity in business and medical settings. Researchers found that after responding to email or text messages, it took people more than 15 minutes to re-focus on the “serious mental tasks” they had been performing before the interruption and in some cases, this initial mental task was completely forgotten. Other research has shown that when people attempt to perform two tasks at once (e.g., following what’s happening in class while checking text messages), the brain literally cannot perform these tasks equally. The brain must abandon one of the tasks to effectively accomplish the other. So, multi-tasking is not an efficient or productive way to learn or retain information.

Overall, the human brain works best when focusing on a single thread of related thoughts. By being fully engaged with the pursuit, you may experience a number of positive effects, such as more pleasure, faster learning or greater productivity. Perhaps even all three!

For this reason alone you should avoid the problem of divided attention when you are in this class. However, there is another, equally important reason to only use technology in an appropriate manner during our academic time together. Technology-users often lose their senses when it comes to customs of polite behavior, and the result is that perfectly charming people may become incredibly rude. So, for both these reasons, please turn off your cellphones or set them on silent mode when you come to class. It is disrespectful for our activities to be interrupted by a ringing cellphone. Similarly, text messaging will not be tolerated in class. Any student found to be sending or checking text messages during class will be invited to make a choice either to cease the texting or leave the classroom.

Of course, you are welcome to bring your laptop and iPad to class and use them to take notes, access readings and slideshows, etc. You are not welcome to do social networking, check email, or otherwise perform non-class-related activities during our academic time together.

So this is my best advice: If you are not using it to perform a task specifically related to what we are doing in class at that very moment, please put it away.

Thanks to Dr. C.A Finnegan, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and Dr. M.C. Miller, Harvard Medical School

Best wishes for a great semester!

- D. Husic

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Academic Integrity: Absolute academic integrity and honesty is expected in all of my courses. Penalties for copying, plagiarism, data fabrication, or other types of cheating will not be tolerated and students caught violating the attached policy provisions will be dealt with severely. This can include failure for a test or assignment or a failing grade for the entire course. I have the right to report any and all violations of academic integrity to the appropriate campus administrators.

Each student enrolled in my classes is required to read and sign off on the Academic Honesty Policy information contained within the syllabus. Please read the policy and return the signed form (below) before the end of the week. I will keep these signed forms on file in my office.

I have read the “Academic Honesty Policy” included in the syllabus for Professor Husic’s Environmental Studies course (fall semester, 2014). I understand the policy and the consequences of engaging in academic dishonesty.

Name: _____

Date: _____