

San José State University
Department of Environmental Studies
Introduction to Environmental Issues, Fall 2021

ENVS 001-Section 1 and Section 80

Course and Contact Information

Instructor: Padmaja (PJ) Iyer

Telephone: 408-777-0939

Email: Padmaja.iyer@sjsu.edu

Class Location/Day/Time:

Section 1: Dudley Moorhead Hall (DMH) 149A (Monday and Wednesday 9:00am-10:15am)

Section 80: ONLINE (no class meetings)

Office Hours:

Drop in Monday and Wednesday 2:30-3:30pm

[SJSU Zoom Link](#)

GE SJSU Studies Category: Area D1: Human Behavior

Course Description

The relationship between humans and the environments around them are constantly changing. The field of environmental studies is engaged in understanding the causes, dynamics, and solutions to environmental problems. In this course, students will learn about a wide array of environmental topics, engage with critical readings and discussions on these issues as well as the scientific research, activism, and policy action that communities in the U.S. and around the world are engaging in to promote environmental justice and sustainability.

Course Format

Whether you are learning synchronously or asynchronously, we will be using the online Canvas modules extensively to engage in discussions, submit assignments, take assessments, and gain access to readings and additional videos.

Contacting the Instructor

Course materials such as syllabus, handouts, notes, assignment instructions, etc. can be found on the Canvas website for this course. Students are responsible for regularly checking with the messaging and announcement system through Canvas to learn about any updates.

The best way to contact the instructor is through email or by dropping in during the Zoom office hours. If students cannot drop in during office hours, please email the instructor to schedule an appointment.

Learning Outcomes and Course Goals

This course has four main learning objectives, which include, 1) learning about important environmental problems, 2) the relationships between humans and their surrounding environments, 3) the research around these problems and relationships, and 4) ways in which individual and collective actions can help solve environmental problems and create more sustainable futures.

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

1. Understand and explain key environmental issues.
2. Analyze the interrelationships between resource use, economics, politics, social justice, and environmental degradation.
3. Identify social, political, and technical solutions that will guide change towards more sustainable communities today, and in the years to come.

This course fulfills the following General Education Learning Outcomes (GELO):

1. Place contemporary developments in cultural, historical, environmental, and spatial context.
2. Identify the dynamics of ethnic, cultural, gender/sexual, age-based, class, regional, national, transnational, and global identities and the similarities, differences, linkages, and interactions between them.
3. Evaluate social science information, draw on different points of view, and formulate applications appropriate to contemporary social situations.
4. Apply multidisciplinary material to a topic relevant to policy and social action at the local, national, and/or international levels.

Required Texts/Readings Textbook

Miller, G. Spoolman, S. Living in the Environment. 20th edition. Print ISBN: 9780357142202, 0357142209, eText ISBN: 9780357142332, 0357142330

This book is available at the Spartan Bookstore. The book is available for rent at Amazon.com for about \$34.00. You can also purchase a hardcover or loose- leaf text on Amazon.

Additional assigned readings are available on Canvas.

Course Requirements and Assignments

To be successful in this course it is expected that students will spend time reading, listening to the lectures, watching videos, and participating in course activities, discussion, and writing. Each week will focus on a single module with one or more of the following elements - Module Objectives, readings, lectures, assignment or discussion, and any other assessments like position papers, midterms, or finals. Students will be evaluated based on the following:

1. Assignment

Associated with each module will be an activity that will either be interactive, sometimes physical, and informative.

2. Discussion

Each student will be asked to respond to questions in each discussion that will involve peer responses. Each student will be expected to use appropriate grammar and writing in these discussions. A kind, helpful, and respectful tone will be expected in all posts.

3. Midterm

The Midterm will be a multiple choice exam covering the topics in the first half of the course. The objective of the Midterm is to assess students' knowledge of fundamental environmental concepts key to environmental issues discussed in class.

4. Position Paper

There will be one position paper. Students will be offered a separate due date and points for an outline, draft and final paper. Students will be provided with materials on how to organize the essay and the rubric for grading. Position papers will be based on insights from the readings, videos, lectures, and discussions. The objective of this paper is to provide an opportunity for students to discuss perspectives on a given environmental issue. Students will be required to select one issue from the prompts surrounding a theme. The paper will use valid science and social science data in the analysis of the issue and characterize the environmental issue and how it has occurred. The paper will also offer feasible and necessary solutions to move toward sustainability on the issue. Students will be expected to provide clear, contextual, and concise

positions on the issue. Student's will be expected to include a personal connection to their topic of interest. The final paper will be a deeply edited and revised version of the draft paper.

5. Module Quizzes

Each module concludes with a short quiz to help prepare for the midterm and to help synthesize the week's lesson and topics.

6. Final

The Final will be a project, details of which are described in the Start Here Module in Canvas.

Grading Information

Assessment Area	Number of Points	Number of Items	Total Number of Points
Assignments	5	10	50
Discussion	5	5	25
Module Quizzes	5	13	65
Midterm Exam	20	1	20
Position Paper Outline	5	1	5
Position Paper Draft	10	1	10
Position Paper Final	20	1	20
Final Project	30	1	30
Total			225

Grade Scale

A+=100%	A= 99- 95%	A-= 94- 90%
B+= 89- 87%	B= 86- 83%	B-= 82- 80%
C+= 79- 77%	C= 76- 73%	C-= 72- 70%
D+= 69- 67%	D= 66- 63%	D-= 62- 60%
F= 59- 0% Unsatisfactory		

Modules and Topics

The schedule is subject to change with fair notice available in advance.

Module	Date	Topics and Textbook Reading	Assessments
Module 1	8/23, 8/25	The Environment and Sustainability - Chapter 1, 2.1, and 2.2	Discussion 1: Environmental Issue Assignment 1 Quiz 1
Module 2	8/30, 9/1	Ecosystems: What are They and How do They Work? - Chapter 3	Outline of Position Paper 1 due 9/5 Quiz 2
Module 3	9/8	Urbanization and Sustainability and Environmental Economics - Chapter 22 and 23	Discussion 2: Free Public Transportation Quiz 3
Module 4	9/13, 9/15	Politics, Environment, and Sustainability - Chapter 24 and Environmental World views, Ethics, and Sustainability - Chapter 25	Assignment 2 Quiz 4
Module 5	9/20, 9/22	Biodiversity and Natural Selection - Chapter 4, 5.1, 5.2, Core Case Study and Science Focus 5.1 and 5.2	Assignment 3 Quiz 5
Module 6	9/27, 9/29	Climate and Terrestrial Biodiversity - Chapter 7 Sustaining Biodiversity: Saving Species and Ecosystems - Chapter 9	Assignment 4 Discussion 3: Surroundings Quiz 6
Module 7	10/4, 10/6	Sustaining Biodiversity: Saving Ecosystems and Ecosystem Services - Chapter 10	Position Paper Draft Due: 10/10 Assignment 5

			Quiz 7
Module 8	10/11, 10/13	Aquatic Biodiversity - Chapter 8 Sustaining Aquatic Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services - Chapter 11	Assignment 6 Quiz 8
Module 9	10/18, 10/20	Midterm Review and Exam	
Module 10	10/25, 10/27	Water Resources - Chapter 13 Water Pollution - Chapter 20	Assignment 7 Quiz 9
Module 11	11/1, 11/3	Food Production and the Environment - Chapter 12 Solid and Hazardous Waste - Chapter 21	Assignment 8 Discussion 4: GMOs Quiz 10
Module 12	11/8, 11/10	Air Pollution and Ozone Depletion - Chapter 18	Position Paper Final Due: 11/10 Assignment 9 Quiz 11
Module 13	11/15, 11/17	Nonrenewable Energy - Chapter 15 Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy - Chapter 16 Mineral Resources - 14.1, 14.2, and 14.3	Discussion 5: Nuclear Power Quiz 12
Module 14	11/29, 12/1	Climate Change - Chapter 19	Assignment 10 Quiz 13
Last Day of Class	12/6	Share Final Project	

University Policies

Per [University Policy S16-9](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), relevant information to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. is available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' [Syllabus Information Web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>".

Make sure to visit this page, review and be familiar with these university policies and resources.

Student Resources

University Writing Center

The San José State University Writing Center offers a variety of resources to help students become better writers, and all of our services are free for SJSU students. The mission is to enhance the writing skills of SJSU students so students can communicate clearly in any setting (informal, academic, or professional). They accomplish this goal through creating original writing resources, offering workshops, and conducting one-on-one and small-group tutoring sessions.

The SJSU Writing Center has two locations: They conduct drop-in tutoring sessions in Clark Hall, Suite 126; and conduct scheduled appointments on the second floor of the MLK Library. They also offer online tutoring sessions using the Zoom web conferencing platform. All appointments can be made online at sjsu.mywconline.com.

To make an appointment, register for a workshop, or to refer to the numerous online resources offered through the Writing Center, visit the [Writing Center website](http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter>

Student Technology Resources

Computer labs for student use are available at:

- [Associated Students Print & Technology Center](http://as.sjsu.edu/asptc/index.jsp) at as.sjsu.edu/asptc/index.jsp on the Student Union (East Wing 2nd floor Suite 2600)
- [The Spartan Floor](http://library.sjsu.edu/services/services) at the MLK Library at library.sjsu.edu/services/services (Fourth floor)
- [Student Computing Services](http://library.sjsu.edu/student-computing-services/student-computing-services-center) at library.sjsu.edu/student-computing-services/student-computing-services-center
- [Computers at the Martin Luther King Library](http://www.sjpl.org/wireless) for public at large at www.sjpl.org/wireless

Online Citation Resources

For this class, you will be able to use whichever citation style you prefer, as long as you are consistent. Here are some links to useful citation guides for three different citation styles.

MLA: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

APA: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

Chicago: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/717/01/>

For more detailed information on academic integrity, the University of Indiana has very helpful writing hints for students, including some on how to cite sources. Please visit <http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets.shtml> for more information.

University Health and Healing Resources

Being a full-time student, working, participating in extracurricular activities, providing support to our loved ones, can all take a pricey toll on our mental and physical health. Please take advantage of the many health and healing resources available at San Jose State University to foster your wellness.

- **SJSU Student Health Center: (408) 924-6122 or online through the [SHCPatient Portal](https://shcpatient.sjsu.edu/login_directory.aspx) at https://shcpatient.sjsu.edu/login_directory.aspx.**

*SJSU Counseling and Psychological Services: (408) 924-5910 or at counseling.services@sjsu.edu. If you are experiencing a crisis, reach out to *The County Suicide & Crisis Line* at (855) 278-4204 or the *National Suicide Prevention Lifeline* at (800) 273-8255, both are available toll-free, 24*

SJSU Cares

Students experiencing challenges meeting their basic needs including, but not limited to, access to food, shelter, and a safe space are encouraged to contact [SJSU Cares](#). If you feel like your class performance may be affected by these challenges, please contact your instructor, if you are comfortable doing so.