

ENVS 310: Environmental Problems

Information

Class Meetings: Tu/Th 1:50-3:20 PM
 Location: Howard 244
 Credits: 4 credits graded
 Instructor: Prof. Jim Proctor (jproctor@lclark.edu, 503.768.7707)
 Office Hours: Wed 10:30 - 1:00, Howard 348

Objectives

The ENVS Program at LC seeks to provide resources and cultivate an atmosphere whereby students

1. Appreciate the intellectual and practical complexities of environmental problems and solutions,
2. Master key concepts and methods of environmental analysis drawn from, and integrating, a broad range of disciplines, and
3. Fuse this background knowledge and analytical ability with leadership and communication skills to successfully devise and implement creative, academically grounded solutions to environmental problems.

ENVS 310 is the first of a two-course upper-division sequence in the ENVS major. ENVS 310 and 320, Environmental Problems and Environmental Solutions, address all three objectives, though ENVS 310 focuses primarily on #1 and #2 (building on ENVS 160 and 220) and ENVS 320 focuses primarily on #3. In addition to these broad objectives, ENVS 310 and 320 are designed so that students gain experience in applying key concepts and skills drawn from their particular ENVS concentration, so that you are ready to do a stellar thesis in ENVS 400.

Please take a moment to consult our [Core Course Philosophy page](#) for a rationale of the content and pedagogy included in our core ENVS courses.

Schedule

ENVS 310 meets two times per week. We will occasionally meet at the Mac or PC Dubach Lab in Templeton in order to work on a computer activity. The semester schedule includes the following primary topics:

1. Defining environmental problems
2. Environmental problems and solutions: Searching for theory
3. Environmental change overview
4. Case studies

A detailed schedule is available on our Moodle page. The schedule will be frequently updated. It is your responsibility to check this schedule online to keep abreast of assignments, readings, and other course activities.

Readings

You will be assigned a number of electronic readings for ENVS 310, all available on our Moodle course page. In addition, there are three texts for the course:

- *The Human Impact on the Natural Environment* (Andrew Goudie, 6th ed. 2006)
- *The Control of Nature* (John McPhee, 1990)
- *Social Nature: Theory, Practice, and Politics* (Noel Castree and Bruce Braun, eds., 2001)

The Goudie text provides a systematic overview of anthropogenic environmental change, whereas *The Control of Nature* explores three cases of intentional environmental change and *Social Nature* provides a wide range of theoretical perspectives on environmental problems and solutions. The first two will be read during section 3, and the third during section 2. Our coverage of the readings will typically involve a division of labor whereby students share summary analyses, and/or discuss the readings online with fellow students.

Assignments

Team and individual assignments for ENVS 310 will be as follows:

1. Individual assignments
 - Synthesis projects for section 2, Searching for Theory, and section 3, Environmental Change Overview
 - Course synthesis project applying sections 1, 2, and section 3 (and possibly section 4 as applicable) to anticipated senior thesis topic
 - Technical assignments (e.g., concept mapping, GPS/GIS) connected to section 4 case studies
 - Other occasional assignments, including forum discussions
2. Team assignments
 - Research project for section 1, Defining Environmental Problems
 - Reading summaries for section 2, Searching for Theory, and section 3, Environmental Change Overview

More details on each assignment will be presented in class and online.

Field Trips

ENVS 310 capitalizes on our local ENVS research sites, so we can get outside and analyze environmental problems in the field! We'll also be collecting GIS data and doing other fieldwork. There are two one-afternoon trips planned for Tryon Creek and Columbia Slough watersheds, and a culminating, two-day trip to the Alder-Jordan watershed in Douglas County. All field trips are required.

Exams

In lieu of a midterm and final, there will be three quizzes in ENVS 310, following sections 2, 3, and 4. The quizzes will be administered via Moodle, and generally available for two or three days. You may retake the quiz once during the availability period if you wish to improve your score. Though you cannot use notes or other text or recorded material during the quizzes, you may consult this material prior to the retake. It is a fact of American life that academic advancement to graduate school, law school, and other opportunities demands stellar performance on standardized multiple-choice exams like the GRE, and these exams are increasingly administered via computer, so these are good skills to master.

Participation

Steady participation is crucial to doing well in ENVS 310, and class attendance is required. We are fortunate that the class is relatively small, so each of you should get plenty of time to contribute both in class and in our discussion forums. We do not expect you to share perfectly-formed thoughts! We all hone our ideas by trying them out on others. In addition, it's always best to ask if you have a question, because in many cases you will find

that several of your fellow classmates have the same question.

Your Responsibilities and Grading

Everyone wants to get a good grade. Here are some requirements and recommendations:

1. *Check your email regularly.* In addition to announcements made in class, we will communicate important information to you via our Moodle news forum, which you will also receive via email. It is your responsibility to keep up to date on these postings!
2. *Check the ENVS 310 Moodle page regularly.* You will find all links to readings, lectures, assignments, and other course resources and activities on our ENVS 310 Moodle page. This page is frequently updated.
3. *Be on time.* Whether attending class or submitting assignments, please be punctual. If you have not provided prior notification that you will be late to class, please do not disrupt us by arriving late. I will allow up to two absences before deducting from your participation score, then will deduct ten percent from the attendance portion of this score for each additional absence. For all assignments, you will be deducted ten percent of the score for every day or portion of a day late, with no grace period.
4. *Ask your instructor for help.* Sometimes students are afraid to talk to their professors when they need help. Yes, it's important to try to figure things out on your own, but we are here to support you in ENVS 310 and the ENVS major in general, so please feel free to drop by my office, call me, or send me email when you have an important question.

Your ENVS 310 grade will be calculated as follows:

- 15%: Synthesis projects (2), sections 2/3
- 25%: Course synthesis project
- 15%: Technical assignments
- 10%: Section 1 team project
- 10%: Section 2/3 team reading summaries (2)
- 15%: Quizzes (3)
- 10%: Course participation, including forum discussions

As a check on course difficulty, the curve for grades will be determined by the performance of the top five percent of students in ENVS 310. Raw scores will be privately posted on Moodle, as well as in-progress grades; students scoring below a B- by week 6 will participate in a mandatory consultation with the instructor.

Extra credit opportunities will be announced occasionally or may be proposed to the instructor.

As a final note, it is worth reminding you that plagiarism in any form is a serious offense at Lewis & Clark College. Your work should be your own, and if you borrow from someone else's work, you should properly cite that resource. Failure to do so may result in serious grade implications, or dismissal from the course. For details, please consult the [LC Academic Integrity Policy](#).

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