Portland State University

ESM 356   Understanding Environmental Sustainability   Spring 2016

Instructor:
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PhD Candidate, ESM at PSU
Email – arouhe@pdx.edu, and D2L mail
Office hours: 9am – 12pm M-Th via email and D2L mail
Role: Answer general course questions, read and score the module posts, and grade the final write-up.

Teaching assistants:
David Farmer: dfarm2@pdx.edu
Sabra Comet: sabr@pdx.edu
Both Masters Students in ESM at PSU
Office hours: Daily via email address above
Role: Provide feedback on QLP assignments and answer questions about QLP assignments.

Materials for this Course:
There is no textbook required for this course
All the resources for this course will be available as documents on the course D2L site or links to the resources will be provided on the D2L site. Resources will include:
- Links to PDF's and online sources for studying weekly topics
- Links to videos for studying weekly topics
- PDF's of journal articles and Case Studies

Course Description
The goal of this course is for students to understand environmental sustainability by focusing on the activities of humans that affect environmental process and sustainable solutions to these human activities that affect environmental processes. Topics will include human population growth, human food systems, human water use and conservation, human energy uses and sources, global climate change, environmental justice and ethics, human health and the environment, and sustainability in cities. This course is not intended for science majors so there is no science prerequisite and little expectation of previous scientific knowledge.

General Course Overview and Expectations
This course is designed to help you understand environmental sustainability by studying how human activities affect the environment and how changes to those activities could lower the impact of those activities on the environment. To reach the goal of understanding sustainability, you will read and/or watch resources form of articles, presentations, videos, and textbook chapters then complete a quiz on each resource (sometimes a quiz will be over two or three resources at a time, but mostly you will take a quiz for each resource you read/watch). The resources with a common theme are grouped into modules. In all, you will complete 9 modules which containing 6-12 resources each. Paired with each resource (or group of resources) will be a 5-10 question quiz that covers the content of that resource. The quizzes are very specific for each resource, so you will need to read, study, and take notes on each resource before you take each quiz. There will also be 5 question concept quiz for each module that you will take after you complete all the resources and quizzes in each module. The concept quiz questions will cover the major concepts covered in the resources for each module. The resources and quizzes will be provided as links within each module under the Content tab on the D2L page for this course. In addition to the resources and quizzes, you will choose an environmental problem study (from a provided list of problems), research that problem, and research solutions to that problem throughout the term. At the end of the term you will submit a poster that presents the problems and solutions you researched. The environmental problem project is referred to as the quarter long project (QLP). You will start on this project right away and complete 6 assignments throughout the quarter that you will use to create your final poster, which is due during the last week of the term. The final part of this course will be mandatory participation in student discussion groups. For each module you will be provided with questions about which you will need to post answers/responses. You will be grouped with 5-10 other students for this activity.

Assignments and Grading

Assignment type	Percent of total grade
Module content and quizzes	50
Quarter long project (QLP)	40
Student discussion groups	10
Total percent	**100**

Grades will be assigned based on fixed cutoffs (60-70-80-90: D-C-B-A). Plus and minus for each grade will be based upon 2% above and 2% below each cut off.

Assignment Point Values

The specific point values of each assignment are not equal to points of assignments in other categories. Each category is based upon a percentage of points earned in that category. For example, each quiz is worth 5-10 points, and the total quiz points in this class will total ~400 points. However, quizzes are worth 50% of your grade, so ~400 quiz points = 50% of your grade. As a point of comparison, the quarter long project will be worth 300 total points and is worth 40% of your grade. That means each of the 300 QLP points do not carry the same weight as each of the ~400 quiz points. The Grades tab on D2L will not complete this calculation for you, so it is up to you to track your grade based upon your percent scores in each category and not as a total point value.

Due dates and late policy

All assignments have a due time and date. Quizzes must be submitted by the date and time deadline or you will receive a score of zero for that quiz. When you submit the write-ups for each QLP assignment and the QLP final poster through D2L, the submission will receive a time and date stamp. Quizzes will not be accepted late for any amount of credit. QLP assignments can be submitted up to 24hrs late, but if it is submitted late (even 5 minutes) your assignment score will automatically be reduced by 25% of the credit you earn. After 24hrs, your assignment will not be graded and it will receive a score of zero. Due to the large number of students in this course, this late policy is necessary in order for the instructor and the TA to grade and return feedback in a timely manner.

Module Content and Quizzes

For each module, you will be provided with links to readings and videos with a common theme. You will need to read, study, and take notes on the readings and videos. Paired with each reading/video will be a 5-10 question quiz that covers the content of that reading/video. After studying and taking notes on each resource, you should then take the quiz that covers that resource. The questions for each quiz will be written from information covered in each resource. However, the resource documents and videos are sometimes extensive and the quiz questions will be specific. You can use your notes and the resources themselves to help you answer the questions, but there is often too much information to simply scan the resources and expect to do well on the quizzes without studying ahead of time. Each resource quiz has a time limit and can only be taken one time, so you need to study and document the contents of each resource so that if you need to look something up during the quiz you know where to look. Often you won't have time to look too extensively for each answer and finish the quiz on time.

Along with the resource quizzes, there will also be a 5-question concept quiz for each module. The concept quizzes have questions written about the major concepts covered in the module links. These quizzes will cover concepts that are prevalent in most or all of the resources, so you should read/watch all the links for each week before you take the concept quiz. Concept quizzes also have a time limit, but you can take each concept quiz three times and receive your highest attempted score. After you complete your first attempt of each concept quiz, your score will be shown and the questions you missed will be indicated. If you missed any questions, you can retake the quiz up to two more times in order to answer all 5 questions correctly.

Important quiz details

- Every quiz in this class will be multiple-choice
- Quizzes and content will be available starting at 8:00 am on the day they begin
- Quizzes will be available for many days for each module (11 days for module 1, 9 days for 2-9)
- All quizzes for a module will be due at 5pm on the due date for that module (includes concept quiz)
- D2L does not allow you to stop or pause a quiz once you begin
- For all quiz attempts, total allowed time will be set based upon 6 minutes per question (ie 30 minutes for a 5 question quiz, 60 minutes for a 10 question quiz)
- Dates of availability, due dates and times, and time allowed can be seen by clicking the quiz link.
- You cannot retake resource quizzes, you can only retake concept quizzes
- You can start the quizzes at any time once you are ready, you don't have to wait until end of the availability period in which they are available
- There will be NO DROP QUIZZES

All quizzes must be submitted by the due dates and times listed on the course schedule (shown below) in order to receive credit. These dates and times are also shown on the D2L site for each quiz and will show up in the calendar for this course on D2L. If your quiz is submitted after the deadline, you will receive a score for zero for that quiz. If you leave your quizzes until the last possible minute or take quizzes during an odd time of the day/week and you have a problem, the instructor and the TAs may not be available or able to help you, so plan accordingly.

Module Number	Module Topic	Module Start Date	Quiz Due Date/Time
1	Human Population Growth	Monday March 28 8am	All quizzes due by 5pm on Thursday Apr 07
2	Food Systems	Sunday April 3 8am	All quizzes due by 5pm on Monday Apr 11
3	Water use and conservation	Sunday April 10 8am	All quizzes due by 5pm on Monday Apr 18
4	Energy sources and uses	Sunday April 17 8am	All quizzes due by 5pm on Monday Apr 25
5	Global Climate Change	Sunday April 24 8am	All quizzes due by 5pm on Monday May 02
6	Environmental Justice and Ethics	Sunday May 1 8am	All quizzes due by 5pm on Monday May 09
7	Environmental Law and Policy	Sunday May 8 8am	All quizzes due by 5pm on Monday May 16
8	Human Health and the Environment	Sunday May 15 8am	All quizzes due by 5pm on Monday May 23
9	Sustainability in Cities	Sunday May 22 8am	All quizzes due by 5pm on Wednesday Jun 1

Quarter Long Project (QLP)

The quarter long project consists of seventh assignments. The seventh (and final) assignment will be an extensive poster about an environmental problem caused by humans and some possible solutions that eliminate or diminish the problem. The first two assignments are designed to help you pick your topic and research your topic. The next 4 assignments (called QLP 1-4) are designed to help you develop crucial sections of your final poster (these are not full rough drafts but will help you develop each section of your poster). After you turn in each of the assignments, the TA will read your work and provide detailed feedback on what you have written. You should use the feedback you get from QLP 1-4 to make crucial edits and additions in order to assure that you earn a good/great final grade on your poster. To begin the quarter long project, click on the quarter long project tab, read the overview description and then complete the topic choice assignment. The other assignment descriptions will be released as the term advances. Note: there are no drops for this assignment category.

Assignment	Points	Topic	Due by
Topic Choice	20	Pick and explain your QLP topic choice	Mon Apr 4 @ 11:59pm
Research	25	Find quality sources for your QLP topic	Thurs Apr 7 @ 11:59pm
QLP 1	30	A description of the environmental problem	Thurs Apr14 @ 11:59pm
QLP 2	25	Overview of a paper that describes a solution	Thurs Apr28 @ 11:59pm
QLP 3	25	Overview of a paper that describes a solution	Thurs May12@ 11:59pm
QLP 4	25	Overview of a paper that describes a solution	Thurs May26@ 11:59pm
Final Poster	150	Complete system assessment and valuation	Mon June 6 @ 11:59pm

Student Discussion Groups

For each module, you will be provided with two questions for discussion. These questions will be provided to you through the discussion board on D2L (under the Activities tab). Each student will be placed in a discussion group with 5-10 other students. For this portion of the course, you will be required to provide a detailed answer to one of the posted questions. Then, you will read the responses of the other students to the questions and make two comments on their responses. For each module, discussion posts will be worth 10 points. Five points for posting your answer to one of the questions and five points for commenting on two other student posted answers.

When writing comments to other student answers/posts, you need to consider three things. First, the discussion activity for this course is meant to be an exercise that helps all students to better understand the material in this course. This means that your posts need to be constructive and detailed, with full explanations. Short answers or comments like "I agree" or "That sounds good" will not earn you full points. Make sure your comments are thoughtful and useful. Second, this is a discussion activity so you can either agree with the other student posts or disagree. Sometimes good feedback is used to point out alternative viewpoints or mistakes. However, it's important to be constructive with your comments even if you disagree. Finally, your comments need to be appropriate. Even if you feel a post or answer is terrible, a comment or suggestions is not useful if it's offensive or rude. There are always tactful ways of saying that you don't think something is done well. Make sure that all of your comments are worded and phrased appropriately and are not offensive in any way. If the instructor reads an offensive comment or another student notifies the instructor of rude or offensive comments, you may lose points for the discussion that week.

If you provide thoughtful, useful, and appropriate comments, you will receive full points for the discussion for each module. Loss of points for any part of this assignment will be based upon lack of comments, lack of appropriateness of the comments, and/or a late submission. Starting in the second week of the term, answers to discussion questions for Modules 2-9 will be due on Thursdays at 11:59pm and responses

comments to other students answers for Modules 2-9 will be due by Mondays at 5:00 pm. Note that Mondays at 11:59pm are the due dates for all the quizzes for each module as well. Since you have a little more time for the module 1 content in order to go over all the course description assignments the module 1 due dates will be shifted. See the schedule below for due dates and times for the module 1 answers and responses.

Module	Module Topic	Answer to question due	Response comments due
1	Human population growth	Mon Apr 14, 11:59pm	Thurs Apr 7, 11:59pm
2	Food systems	Thurs Apr 7, 11:59pm	Mon Apr 11, 11:59pm
3	Water use and conservation	Thurs Apr 14, 11:59pm	Mon Apr 18, 11:59pm
4	Energy sources and uses	Thurs Apr 21, 11:59pm	Mon Apr 25, 11:59pm
5	Global Climate Change	Thurs Apr 28, 11:59pm	Mon May 2, 11:59pm
6	Environmental Justice and Ethics	Thurs May 5, 11:59pm	Mon May 9, 11:59pm
7	Environmental Law and Policy	Thurs May 12, 11:59pm	Mon May16, 11:59pm
8	Human Health and the Environment	Thurs May 19, 11:59pm	Mon May23, 11:59pm
9	Sustainability in Cities	Thurs May 26, 11:59pm	Wed Jun 1, 11:59pm

Student Conduct Code

Portland State has a well-defined conduct code. During this class we will discuss how you can both share work and ideas and still meet the requirement that all assignments represent your personal work. For further questions on this, please read the PSU code of conduct guidelines: http://www.pdx.edu/dos/codeofconduct

Academic Honesty

The issue of academic dishonesty has become a growing issue with which most universities have had to contend. There are various reasons why students 'cheat' in their classes such as lack of time, unwillingness to put forth own effort, lack of understanding of course material or assignments, and a different interpretation of what constitutes academic dishonesty. In this class, academic dishonesty is broadly defined as the use of someone else's work as yours. This includes some obvious actions such as:

- Having someone take a class for you
- Having someone take or complete part of your test or an assignment for you
- Having someone else write a paper, or a section of a paper for you
- Using a quote or direct passage from some secondary source (e.g., book, article) in a paper without citing it (this does not include your responses provided on tests that are taken directly from the professor's lecture or other class material]
- Working collaboratively on projects/assignments that are expected to be completed individually.
- There also other actions that are considered academically dishonest that are not as obvious, such as:
  -Submitting a paper that utilizes another person or source's theories, thoughts, ideas, concepts without proper citation
  -Using a paper or assignment, or a segment of a previous paper or assignment created by another group in which you participated.
  -Taking material off of the Internet and using it without full and proper citation.

The above list of actions is not intended to be exhaustive. If you have any question about what is an appropriate way to cite particular information, please contact your instructor or teaching assistant.

ADA STATEMENT

Accommodations are collaborative efforts between students, faculty and the Disability Resource Center (DRC). Students with accommodations approved through the DRC are responsible for contacting the faculty member in charge of the course prior to or during the first week of the term to discuss accommodations. Students who believe they are eligible for accommodations but who have not yet obtained approval through the DRC should contact the DRC immediately at 503-725-4150.