



Senior Seminar in Environmental Studies (37-490)

Spring Semester 2001

Environmental Studies Program

The University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh

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Course Description and Objectives

At this point you should understand why Environmental Studies is an interdisciplinary endeavor: the relationships between humans and nature are complex, and to understand them, one must understand their ecological, socio-cultural, and moral dimensions. You have learned how to evaluate scientific data (both natural and social scientific) and you are acquainted with many perspectives that have been advanced to explain environmental deterioration and prescribe remedies to it. In short, you have received a good overview of the critical perspectives that make up Environmental Studies.

In this seminar you will apply and extend your knowledge in each of these areas as you conceive of, conduct, and write up your own, original research exploring a given environmental dilemma. You shall illuminate your chosen issue by deploying the lenses environmental science, the social sciences, and ethics. The goal of your research paper will be to arrive at conclusions about what can and should be done in response to your dilemma.

Required and Recommended Readings

No texts are required for this seminar. Students will develop their own readings in close consultation with seminar participants.

Format

Weekly research meetings in which students will summarize their readings, describe their research progress and problems, and refine their research plans.

Requirements and Evaluation

1. **Weekly Activity Reports (written and oral). [100 points, total]**
 - a. To ensure that consistent progress is being made and that appropriate activities are undertaken for each research project, students will prepare a one to two page, word-processed summary, of the week's research activities. These reviews may discuss the conundrums and problems you are facing in your research, what disputes or unclear evidence there may be in the various perspectives you have encountered, and which ones you find compelling (thus far). A list of all articles you have read that week shall be included, and you should be prepared to discuss them. The final paragraph of this report shall signal the research activities (including readings) you plan to conduct in the coming week. Each week you must bring to copies of your weekly reports to distribute to all seminar participants.

- b. Seminar participants shall read and respond to each other's reports, asking questions and making suggestions about how the research might best proceed.
 - c. Up to ten points can be earned each week for your written and oral report on your research.
 - d. These reports must be turned in on time; late reports will not be accepted.
- 2. Rough draft of Research -- due Monday, April 9, 2001, [50 points]**
- a. Students shall turn in a rough draft of their research paper at *at the outset of this class*. If the entire paper is not completed in narrative form, the structure of the unwritten parts must be signaled via an outline, allowing evaluation of the direction and thrust of the research.
- 3. Research Paper - due Friday, at High Noon, May 11, 2000 [150 points]**
- a. Research papers must integrate the natural and social sciences with the humanities in analyzing and recommending concrete strategies and solutions to a specific environmental dilemma. The paper will be evaluated based on the student's success at integrating these three areas into the paper.
 - b. Although each of these areas must be woven into the paper, students need not devote equal attention to each area. They may, therefore, when turning in their papers, request that the three areas be differentially evaluated. Students may choose from these options, indicating their preference when they turn in their papers:
 - i. Equal weighting: Each of the three areas is worth 50 points [one third of the paper's possible, 150 points]. Students who believe they have devoted equal weight to each of the three areas should elect this option.
 - ii. Unequal weighting . . .
 - 1. Option one: two areas are worth 25% [37.5 points each], one area is worth 50% [75 points].
 - 2. Option two: two areas are worth 37.5% each [56.25 points, each]; the third area would be worth 25% [37.5 points].

Calculating Grades

At the end of the semester grades will be calculated as a percentage of the total, possible points: as follows: 95% = A; 90%=AB; 85% =B; 80%=BC; 70%=C; 65%=CD; 60%=D, below 60%=F.

Academic Standards and Returned Assignments. Students are expected to know what constitutes plagiarism and academic dishonesty; anyone found to have engaged in either will receive an F and may face University discipline. Course papers will be available for pickup in the sociology department office on the third floor of Swart Hall until October 1, 2001. After this date they will be recycled.