Introduction to Environmental Science
Syllabus for Spring 2022
3 credit hours

A Breadth Life Sciences (BLS) & Community-Engaged Learning Course (CEL)
MEETING TIME AND PLACE: T, TH 1:30-2:45, Fine Art-Visual (FAV) 150

Please take the time to read the ENVS 1350 syllabus carefully! Questions concerning the content of this syllabus may appear on the first quiz at the end of WEEK 1.

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Office Hours: W 3:00-4:00; TH 4:00-5:00
Further information on Dr. Rogers’ background may be found at his faculty web page: https://qcnr.usu.edu/envs/people/adjunct

GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANT (GTA): Jake Richards (he/him/his).
Email: jakerichards@aggieemail.usu.edu
Office Hours: T 3:00-4:00; W 10:00-11:00

UNDERGRADUATE TEACHING FELLOW (UTF): Grace Christensen (she/her/hers).
Email: a02298716@aggies.usu.edu

COVID SAFETY: As of January 2022, the COVID-19 (and variants) situation is rapidly changing. The predicted January spike is here! Thus, we may have to make class logistical adjustments on short notice. For this reason, please check ENVS 1350 announcements regularly.

Class safety— including students, instructors, and their associates—is of paramount concern. In class, we cannot require you to wear a face covering, but we strongly request that you do so for the safety of those around you, as well as their relations who may be especially vulnerable. Our one exception to face coverings is that when instructors are speaking they may remove their masks to be clearly heard. Speakers will remain in front of the room to further ensure distancing and we will require that the first two rows remain empty. Additionally, all students will leave one empty seat between them and adhere to consistent seat locations and register those seats in the class Canvas seating chart the second week of class.

Despite the ~86 students enrolled for this course, we urge you to communicate with us! If you have questions or comments, know we are here to help. We want you to succeed, but your initiative is required. Our email addresses are posted here, so don’t be shy about using them. Instructor, GTA, and UTF function as a team to facilitate learning and responsiveness to student needs. You may be surprised to know that most problems arise, not due to scholastic ability, but from mis- or non- communication. If you feel comfortable emailing the instructor, that is fine. He may refer your message to the GTA or UTF, depending on work load and content. If you’d rather contact the GTA or UTF first, that works, too! If the GTA or UTF feel that the instructor should be involved in the issue raised, they will include him.
COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course takes a global-to-local perspective concerning Environmental Science and related fields. The course is a Breadth Life Science (BLS) offering, so connections will be made between Environmental Science and life sciences generally. As a Community-Engaged Learning (CEL) course, we will develop themes and a focused writing assignment around environmental sciences and citizenship. Major section headings for the course include: (1) Basic physical components of our planet; (2) atmospheric science and human-caused climate change; (3) people and environment feedbacks (+/-); and (4) contemporary sustainability issues and positive responses to them. We urge you to familiarize yourself with ENVS Course Schedule in Canvas early in the semester as an overview of course progression.

In some cases, the vital roles of economics, politics, and culture in environmental issues will also be explored because they help us better understand what is going on in the world and why. This course includes occasional guest speakers with expertise in a variety of environmental science fields; they will be given the utmost respect as we engage with them. Your instructor regards this course content as vital for all students at Utah State University to understand their planet home (BLS) and civic responsibility (CEL). Congratulations to you for choosing such an important course, regardless of your academic major. Our intent is to provide you with knowledge and skills for use throughout your life.

At this time, this course is schedule to meet in-person (a.k.a., traditional or face-to-face mode). Still, we strive to present readings and assignments in a flexible format, meaning you can complete them at times convenient to you. With flexibility comes greater student responsibility to be both diligent and ethical. Case in point: we have firm due dates! However, if glitches arise (e.g., technical difficulties or sudden Covid-related format switches), don't panic, we will work through them via the instructor, GTA, and UTF. The Thirteen-fifty Teaching Team® will work hard to make this course as interesting and user-friendly as possible. Again, we encourage you to contact us as needed.

KEY LEARNING OBJECTIVES: All courses at Utah State University are required to select some priority learning objectives that fit the goals and delivery style of the class. This is related to a computerized course evaluation system called IDEA that will be requesting input from students near the end of the semester. The five key learning objectives for this course include:

1. Gaining factual knowledge about the physical global environment;
2. Learning to apply knowledge to improve understanding about our world;
3. Learning to critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view.
4. Learning how to find, evaluate, and use resources to explore topics in depth.
5. Becoming an engaged citizen through effective dialogue on environmental issues.

REQUIRED TECHNOLOGY: ENVS 1350 requires no specialized equipment or technology. You may use USU computing services or your personal laptop/device. We ask that you not use laptops, phones, or tablets in the lecture hall except for taking notes or otherwise participating in immediate class activities. Use of these devices for other purposes is distracting to users and those around them. Please turn off phones while in class.

TEXTBOOK: Auto Access eBook: Environmental Science (15th edition, eBook), by Cunningham & Cunningham. These materials are paid for through an “Auto Access Digital Materials” charge placed on your student account when you registered for the course. To access the materials, visit the Canvas course site. For more details, including dates, deadlines, and opt-out info, visit your student Auto Access Portal: https://portal.verba.io/usu/login
SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS: Reference materials will include selected news articles, scientific papers, reports, videos, and web pages. These resources are listed by Modules and linked in Canvas. The good news is that we are saving resources and expenses by using an ebook text; however, you will have to pay close attention to Canvas to access the full required reading suite from a variety of sources and formats. These materials are paid for through an “Auto Access Digital Materials” charge placed on your student account when you registered for the course. For more details, including dates, deadlines, and opt-out info, visit your student Auto Access Portal: https://portal.verba.io/usu/login

CANVAS: All course-related information will be posted on our Canvas website. Students are expected to be able to access Canvas without exception. If a student’s hardware device, browsing software, or wireless network do not allow reliable access to Canvas, then other hardware, software, or networks must be used. Not being able to access Canvas is not an excuse to submit assignments late, as described below.

If students have questions about how to access and use Canvas, please see the instructor or the teaching assistants. There are also options for Canvas support that students can use if they need advice on how to work with Canvas. The website is at: https://www.usu.edu/academic-support/technology/index-canvas. However, if a phone call works best for you, call the IT Service Desk at 435-797-HELP (4357). All Canvas support services are already included in your student fees.

See the Canvas website for ENVS 1350 (Spring 2022). This is an essential portal for how you, as students, access the course. Of greatest importance for day-to-day student life in this course is the “Modules” tab. This is where the course content resides. The Modules page is organized using two levels or types of place-holders shown as banners. Many of the tabs to the left of the main page will not be used for this course. The “Home” tab is only a gateway to the course, for example. The “Announcements” tab will be regularly used by the instructor to send out emails to students concerning various items or updates of interest. The “Discussions” tab can be used to for students to introduce themselves early on or discuss course topics informally through the semester. Voluntary open discussions are encouraged to add depth to course material and/or learn from others; however, dialogue should only concern class topics and remain respectful at all times. The GTA will monitor and contribute to the course Discussion, as needed.

The “Assignments” tab takes you to the list of homework items as they accumulate over the term. The “Quizzes” tab similarly tracks quizzes and exams. Pay close attention to due dates! Students may follow their scores using the “Grades” tab. The “Pages” tab can be used occasionally by students to access information. For example, videos to be viewed for certain course modules may also be posted under the Pages tab.

The full semester schedule is grouped by "Parts" and "Modules" (a.k.a., “Weeks”):

- The four major Parts of ENVS 1350 consist of several Modules and mostly correspond with testing units. Part I will take us to the first Mid-Term. Part II comprises the second Mid-Term’s materials, but Parts III & IV will be folded into the comprehensive Final Exam.
- Each week contains a single Module or theme that consists of two 1 hour 15-minute class meeting times on Tuesdays and Thursdays, plus readings and media. Modules are simply topic groupings to be covered within a given week of the semester.

Importantly, access to the course material as Modules will only be allowed for one week at a time. This helps students stay focused on each week with respect to readings, homework, and scheduled quizzes or exams. Once that a week is opened, however, it will remain open for the rest of the semester.
The working window for each week begins at 8:00 AM on the Monday and closes at 11:59 PM (midnight) the following Sunday.

Students are free to decide how and when they will get the work done for that week during the working window. If a student wants to get everything done in a few hours on Monday, no problem. If another student wants to wait until Sunday afternoon to get things done, that's cool too. If yet another student wants to space everything evenly out all week because of an off-campus job schedule, go for it. But the bottom line is that any homework, quizzes, or exams must be completed and submitted before midnight the Sunday of any given week to receive credit for those efforts.

Because we are facilitating maximum student freedom in terms of materials access, no late submissions will be accepted after the Sunday midnight deadline. So, developing a schedule that works for you MUST actually work for you. From the instructor's perspective, there are a lot of students to track and we can’t be listening to myriad excuses each week about missing deadlines. That is the deal, and you’ll note that future employers will be even less forgiving. If you are a risk-taker and prefer to wait to do the work on Sunday afternoon and evening, that is up to you. If you get anxiety, however, about working in this manner, then start early and allow for a nice weekend. This also helps avoid situations when something totally unexpected arises on Sunday, and your plans to get your homework done on time are ruined. Starting early on weekly assignments also allows ample time for instructor response, should such feedback be critical to completing assigned work.

Overall, weekly Modules vary considerably in work load. Reviewing Modules at the start of each week is a good idea so students are not caught off-guard. It is not a good idea to wait until Sunday evening before you assess assignments. Attention to these precepts will lessen your grief and ours.

This course will follow the textbook rather closely, but we will not read every chapter. Note that some Modules will deviate considerably from the text, employing outside resources and readings, in particular, to bring global issues to local settings. Our text was chosen for a reason; it specifically taps our Critical Thinking skills while covering big/complex topics from a geographical perspective. Summary pages at the end of each chapter with the headings, "Connecting the Dots," Reviewing Key Terms," and "Critical Thinking and Discussion Questions" will be invaluable to your success in ENVS 1350 (hint, hint). Even though readings/assignments have been meticulously planned, sometimes things change…

Please carefully follow class announcements that will be sent out as broadcast emails via Canvas. Especially take note of those sent in the run up to quizzes or exams

COURSE SCHEDULE: The course schedule (PDF, Syllabus tab) matches Modules in Canvas. Please rely on the posted course schedule as you plan your semester. Because the Modules in Canvas will only be opened as we enter each new week, the posted schedule is the best tool you have to chart important dates or topics of interest coming up.

KEY DATES: Broadly, ENVS 1350 is purposefully designed to “front end load”; meaning it will seem like a lot of work in the first half (because it is!), but the second half will lighten up and your major project will be done by April 1. This frees up time for other classes, activities, and finals preparation.

- Feb. 17—First Midterm Exam, WEEK 6
- March 21— CEL Letter (draft, 50 pts.)
- March 22—Second Midterm, WEEK 10
- March 31— CEL Letter (final, 100 pts.)
- April 28 - May 4 (TBD)—Final Exam, WEEK 15-16
GRADING: The total possible points for this course will be about 830; this number is a guideline. Final letter grades will be roughly based on the traditional point scale as a percentage of total possible points achieved. Our grading scale ranges will be: A (93 – 100%); A minus (90 – 92%); B plus (87 – 89%); B (83 – 86%); B minus (80 – 82%); C plus (77 – 79%); C (73 – 76%); C minus (70 – 72%); D (60 – 69%); F (Below 60%). Final course grades, however, may be adjusted depending on overall student performance. The final curve may be down or it may be up. If a high number of students do very well, for example, the curve could creep upwards. If a high number of students do poorly, the curve could inch downwards. Thus, two indicators matter in assigning final grades: 1) a student’s raw score based on total points, and 2) where a student’s raw score falls as compared to those for other students.

Overall points will be approximately distributed as:

1. Weekly quizzes and assignments (180 points, 22% of total);
2. Community-Engaged Learning, Letter to Elected Official (150 points, 18% of total);
3. Two mid-term exams (150 points each, combined 36% of total); and
4. A cumulative final exam (200 points, 24% of total).

A separate directive and detailed instructions will be given during Week 2 regarding the CEL Letter Assignment.

Students are encouraged to monitor their scores in the Canvas gradebook and inform the GTA, UTF, or instructor quickly if there is a recording error. Students should be vigilant and make this process a habit; don’t let it wait until the end of the semester. Graded materials will be available on Canvas for students to view. At this point, there is no plan for offering extra credit points. If such opportunities arise, they will be offered to all students. Take home message: stay up on grades, progress, due dates; communicate early if issues arise. Do NOT approach the 1350 Teaching Team with last-minute pleas for improving your grade. We will politely deny such requests.

ATTENDANCE & DEADLINES: There is no regular assessment of attendance or class participation. Quizzes, homework, and exams, however, are all administered with respect to a weekly (Module) schedule. This helps students keep "tuned-in" rather than drift off for extended periods.

Unforeseen personal circumstances may prevent a student from submitting materials on time. We will try to avoid these instances. However, should such conditions arise, contact the instructor immediately and a decision will be made about appropriate make-up work.

The flexibility of the seven-day, working window system means that students should be able to plan accordingly for personal or university-related obligations (family gatherings, club activities, sports, student government, academic field trips, etc.) that may complicate any given week. As stated earlier, review weekly Modules early and plan accordingly to complete all assignments on time.

Requests for excused absences, where permissible, should have formal documentation (e.g., doctor, lawyer, USU official, etc.) The instructor will accept/reject based on this documentation. And if a student knows that they will have to miss class for extended periods—this sometimes happens—the instructor needs to be informed. Don’t just disappear; please communicate! There are options to obtain partial tuition refunds, incomplete letter grades (I), or other considerations should a student have a justified need to drop out of school during the mid- or late- stages of a semester.

Your instructor can point you to resource people on campus that can help students overcome difficult personal circumstances. Check with the USU Registrar’s Office (435-797-1116) for details.
Really, this university has seen just about every circumstance you can imagine. We’ll find a way to work things out using any/all university resources.

TESTING, ASSIGNMENTS, AND STUDENT ETHICS: Weekly quizzes, homework assignments, mid-term exams, and a cumulative final are tools to assist the learning and student evaluation processes. They are imperfect tools, but so it goes. It is the expectation of the instructor and teaching assistants for ENVS 1350 that all such graded materials are prepared and submitted by students on an individualized basis with the utmost attention to PERSONAL HONOR, HONESTY, and INTEGRITY. Students will refrain from cheating, collusion, or plagiarism (https://studentconduct.usu.edu/studentcode/article6). In particular, plagiarism is a serious infraction of the student code; students may not copy, in any form, the work of others. Period. A key component of this class, and university education at-large, is to do original work through individual scholarship. Moreover, students will not consult on any materials or gain input from others that in any way undermines the test-taking or homework-preparation process. We want to know what you are learning yourself, not through collusion with others. Enforcement of such standards is difficult and/or awkward, but it can and will be done. Quizzes and exams will be taken by students in class, minus wandering eyes and extraneous devices, such as phones, tablets, mirrors, flying paper wads, etc.

There will be ~15 quizzes/assignments (12 pt. each), averaging one per week. These will normally take less than 10 minutes each to complete (except the student survey). They complement lectures and are intended to be important learning tools. These exercises will be submitted via Canvas. Quizzes are to be completed individually. Results of quizzes/assignments will be provided to students as regular feedback, as well as to assist in preparing for exams. Time limits will be assigned for each quiz based on no more than 60 seconds per question (that’s longer than you may think!). For instance, a quiz with 12 questions will have a time limit of 10 minutes to complete. (Past data suggests most students were done in ~6 minutes.) Once a quiz is opened, the clock is ticking and no excuses are accepted for failure to submit on time. You may not stop and restart the quiz. The quiz for the week can be taken any time after the Thursday class period, but prior to the Sunday midnight deadline. Quizzes will randomly generate different, but similar, questions so that late takers of a quiz have no advantages over those who take the quiz early.

The mid-term exams and the final exam will include multiple-choice and short-answer questions; mid-terms will align with PARTS I and II of the course while the final will align with PARTS III and IV in addition to being cumulative. Study guidance will be provided to students in the run-up to exams to help the test-preparation process. Time limits will also be assigned for each exam consistent with the exam length and complexity; details will be provided once the semester gets underway.

In summary, please feel free to contact the Thirteen-fifty Teaching Team® for more information about taking quizzes, tests, and assignments. We hope to have a practice quiz during the first week of class that students can take to get familiar with the overall process as well as the Proctorio monitoring system. We strongly urge you to take advantage of this opportunity.

USU has an honor system intended to establish a code of conduct for students, faculty, and staff. Upon admission each USU student agrees to the following Honor Pledge:

"I pledge, on my honor, to conduct myself with the foremost level of academic integrity."

Specifics of USU’s policy regarding academic conduct can be found at Section VI of the USU Student Code: https://studentconduct.usu.edu/studentcode/article6).
Further, all students deserve to be in a safe atmosphere free of discrimination, sexual misconduct, or other ill-advised behaviors. Students are expected to be respectful towards their peers and instructors because this encourages an open and positive learning experience for all. Differing opinions on important issues are welcomed in this course, but diverging opinions must be expressed in a respectful fashion. Contact the instructor soon if any problems emerge.

**CORRECT PERSONAL IDENTIFICATION:** When a student submits any assignment online, whether it is an assignment, a quiz, an exam, or even an extra-credit opportunity, it is very important to correctly enter your USU A-number in the Canvas system. You may be surprised to learn that mistakes in entering A-numbers often occur. This then creates problems in determining who submitted what and by when. Please take good care when submitting an accurate, personal USU A-number with your assignments!

**IMPORTANT STUDENT RESOURCES:**

**Disability Resource Center (DRC):** USU is required by law to help disabled students participate fully in all programs, activities, and services. If you have a disability, documented by the DRC, that requires note-takers, interpreters for the deaf, extended testing time, etc., let the instructor know as soon as possible. The DRC may also help provide course material in alternative formats like large print, Braille, auditory, and electronic formats. See the DRC web site: [http://www.usu.edu/drc/](http://www.usu.edu/drc/)

**Counseling:** USU offers an excellent counseling center (TSC 306) on campus for individuals, groups, and couples. Services include consultations, crisis appointments, and therapy animals are on site. All services are confidential and most are free of charge. See the USU web site [http://counseling.usu.edu/](http://counseling.usu.edu/)

**Student Rights:** You can learn more about your student rights by reading the Code of Policies and Procedures for Students at Utah State University. This can be found at: [http://www.usu.edu/studentservices/studentcode/](http://www.usu.edu/studentservices/studentcode/)

**Emergency Protocols:** In the event of a campus emergency (i.e., fire, earthquake, chemical spill, threatening weather, active shooter, etc.) we will follow safety instructions from the university. GTA and UTF will monitor phones for such purposes, so you won’t be needing to check phones during class until after any such notice has been announced. Prime emergency alert systems at USU include the Code Blue and Safety Alert systems, found under the banner of [USU Emergency Management](http://www.usu.edu/ems/). Your up-to-date registration with [myid.usu.edu](http://myid.usu.edu) is key to making these systems work for all. It goes without saying, but we’re saying it anyway, that your personal learning environment should be made safe from human and natural hazards….otherwise, you are not only risking injury, but jeopardizing successful learning!

*Thanks for Your Attention to this Important Information*

*We Wish You Great Success this Semester!*