

Syllabus ES 703

Environmental Resource Sustainability
Winter 2009

[Library Resource Guide for ES 703](#)
[Class wiki](#)

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Location and times

Diggs Laboratory 240 (conference room), 11:00 am - 12:15 pm MWF
Time is subject to review. I.e. we can talk about it during the first meeting.

Overview

The goal of this class is to cover the current issues in environmental resource sustainability that humanity is facing, their causes and potential solutions.

This is a graduate level class and the emphasis will be on in class discussions and student projects and not on memorization or exams. Lectures, discussions and projects will convey a solid overview and some in-depth details on environmental resource issues, but communication skills, creative problem solution and a scientific approach to researching and documenting an issue take at least the same level of importance in this class.

Format

Typically, we will meet three times per week. One meeting will be a lecture, one will be a discussion of a relevant paper, and one will be an open discussion of students' projects and any topics that arose during previous classes. There may be deviations from this format for guest lectures, films or student presentations.

Topics

In week 1, 2 and 3 we will cover the basics:

- What are resources?
- What is sustainability (narrow vs. more comprehensive definition)?
- Overview of management of natural resources (some history and comparison to traditional cultures)
- Private property and the tragedy of the commons.
- Development and economic growth
- Externalities – values and services that don't make it into the calculations of economists

Week 4-8 will be dedicated to water, forests, agriculture, energy and minerals, and oceans – one topic per week not necessarily in this sequence.

In week 9 we will cover the evaluation of resource sustainability.

Week 10 and 11 will wrap up the course with management and policy solutions to resource sustainability and a general outlook for the future.

Library resource guide

The librarians for Biology and Environmental Sciences, Jeff Wehmeyer and Mary Lou Baker Jones have put together a tremendously useful [resource guide](#) for this class. I strongly encourage you to familiarize yourself with it early on and to use it for your assignments. It would also be nice to thank Jeff and Mary Lou as they have put much effort into this guide.

Evaluation

Class participation; this includes discussion in the classroom, preparation for literature discussions, comments on other people's wiki pages and evaluating each other: 35%

Presentations of your topic in the appropriate class in week 4-8: 10%

Presentation of one paper for discussion: 5%

The wiki assignment in stages

- First outline/draft with sources: 5%
- Fleshing out: text, multimedia – sources: 5%
- Case study: 5%
- Global evaluation and outlook/policy/management: 5%
- Final submission: 30%

There will be deadlines for the submission of the individual parts and consequences to missing those deadlines in the form of deduction in points (typically 1 point per day).

You will evaluate each other's participation in the classroom, presentations and final submission of projects. In each case, the average of the students' evaluations will make 50% of the final grade, while I will assign the other half. I reserve the right to scale a student's evaluations if they are consistently very low or very high.

The general grading scale will be:

90 to 100%	=	A
80 to 89%	=	B
70 to 79%	=	C
60 to 69%	=	D
Below 60%	=	F

Again, I reserve the right to scale the final percentages if the resulting grades would be unreasonable otherwise.

Academic Integrity

I will not tolerate any form of cheating or plagiarism. Do cite your sources, even if they are online sources and put word for word citations in quotation marks. The university gives students and faculty guidelines on how to deal with violations of academic integrity, which I expect you to follow and I will follow myself (you can read them [here](#)). This policy exists to level the playing field for all students and not give the few cheaters an unfair advantage over the vast majority of students, who are hard-working and honest.

Special needs and circumstances

If you need any special accommodations please let me know at the beginning of the class and/or register with the [office of disability services](#). Also, if you run into personal problems beyond your control, please let me know before missing a deadline etc. I will try to be accommodating and understanding. Letting me know about problems after you missed a deadline or failed an assignment usually suggests that you are making an excuse.