ESCI 1101 Course Information – Spring 2021

ESCI 1101: Environmental Science Lab  
CRN #section:  
Biology Room B326

Instructor:  
Office Hours:  
Location: BIOL 326; online

Email:

Instructor:  
Office Hours:  
Location: BIOL 326; online

Email:

Required Text:  Each student is required to have a lab manual


Technology Requirements:

Course content is delivered via the Internet through the Blackboard learning management system. Ensure your UTEP e-mail account is working and that you have access to the Web and a stable web browser. Google Chrome and Mozilla Firefox are the best browsers for Blackboard; other browsers may cause complications. When having technical difficulties, update your browser, clear your cache, or try switching to another browser.

You will need to have access to a computer/laptop, scanner, a webcam, and a microphone. You will need to download or update the following software: Microsoft Office, Adobe Acrobat Reader, Windows Media Player, QuickTime, and Java. Check that your computer hardware and software are up-to-date and able to access all parts of the course.

If you do not have a word-processing software, you can download Word and other Microsoft Office programs (including Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook and more) for free via UTEP’s Microsoft Office Portal. Click the following link for more information about Microsoft Office 365 and follow the instructions.

IMPORTANT: If you encounter technical difficulties beyond your scope of troubleshooting, please contact the UTEP Help Desk as they are trained specifically in assisting with technological needs of students. Please do not contact me for this type of assistance. The Help Desk is much better equipped than I am to assist you!

Course objectives:

There are two main purposes to the labs:

1) To show students how different parts of the environment interact, how we measure properties of these features and detect environmental disturbances such as pollution
2) Teach practical skills for use in the lab and field.

Some labs illustrate observing the environment and collecting samples, while others teach specific skills.

**Students are expected to:**

1) **Learn concepts and vocabulary.** Students will explore several important concepts that are of concern to us as citizens, educators, and scientists.
2) **Learn how scientists think.** Scientists observe, question, and analyze, and you will be expected to do the same.
3) **Investigate real world examples.** Students will be investigating soil, water, biota and associated issues from the El Paso area.
4) **Practice independent thinking.** Students will critically evaluate the information they receive regarding environmental issues so they can make informed and independent decisions.
5) **Enjoy.** This should be a class where you learn a lot and also have a good time. Participation is a key to enjoyment.

**Process:**

**Before each class:**
* Read the assigned materials
* Complete the pre-lab quiz (must be turned in at the beginning of class)
* Identify concepts that are central to understanding the environmental issue to be discussed
* Prepare a list of questions from the reading for which you need further clarification (you usually will get an opportunity to ask those questions in class).

**In class:**
* Most classes will begin with a quiz over concepts learned in the previous class. These will last about 10 minutes. There are no make ups for missed quizzes (see below).
* Take careful notes
* Ask questions if you are not sure how to do something
* Be an active participant!!

**Evaluation of work:**

There are a total of 500 points possible for this lab. There is a form at the end of the syllabus for you to keep track of your grades. We will post grades on Blackboard at least once a month.

**Quizzes:** There will be quizzes most weeks. These will usually be split between a pre-lab quiz that will be collected at the beginning of the lab and an in-lab quiz. The pre-lab quiz will be posted on Blackboard and will cover material for the lab that we will conduct that day. The goal of the pre-lab quiz is for you to become familiar with the concepts and activities for that
day’s lab BEFORE coming to class. That will help you understand what we will be doing and why we will be doing it. The answers will usually be found in the PowerPoint lecture slides and the lab instructions.

There will also be an in-lab quiz that will cover material from the previous week’s lab. This part of the quiz will be given promptly at the beginning of lab, and it will not be given to latecomers. Each quiz is worth 10 points (usually split 5 points for the pre-lab and 5 points for the in-lab), and there will be 10 quizzes during the semester. The last two pre-lab quizzes (numbers 11a and 12a) will be extra credit.

Lab assignments: All labs will have questions associated with them. You are allowed to complete lab activities in groups, and can discuss the answers to the questions in groups, but you must write your own answers to the questions unless otherwise instructed. Each lab assignment is worth 20 points, and there will be a total of 12 lab assignments during the semester, plus a final lab assignment for extra credit (number 13).

Energy white paper: We are going to do a mock El Paso Electric company hearing about potential energy sources for generating electricity to meet El Paso’s future needs. Each group will be assigned a different energy source (solar, wind, natural gas, coal, or nuclear). During the lab the week of 22 Feb each group will make a short presentation about why their source is the best option, followed by a discussion about the strengths and weaknesses of each energy source. To prepare, each group will complete a short (2–3 page) white paper about their energy source. More details will be provided early in the semester. The white paper is worth 25 points, and the presentations and discussion will be graded as the lab assignment for that week (worth 20 points).

UTEP Green Fund proposal and peer review: The project for the lab is a simplified version of a proposal to the UTEP Green Fund. The Green Fund is a $3 per student per semester fee that yields up to $200,000 per year for campus sustainability projects (https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/greenfund/). This semester you and a partner will present your ideas of how to use Green funds to improve the sustainability of some aspect of the campus footprint, and 3) write a 2–3 page proposal of your ideas (both a rough draft for peer review and a final draft). Details will be provided in lab. You are required to go to the writing center at the library before turning in the proposal. The first draft will be due the week of 1 March, the peer reviews will be due the week of 29 Mar, and the final draft will be due the week of 19 April. The peer review of the written proposals is worth 20 points, and the final proposal is worth 50 points.

Attending office hours: This will count as your participation grade. You must attend 80% of them to obtain the full 5 points.

Final exam: The lab final exam is comprehensive and will come from the quizzes and lab assignments, typically about 3–5 questions per lab. Save your work as it is returned to you; you will need it to study with. The final exam is worth 60 points, and will be given the final week of class (the week before finals).

Extra credit: There will be several opportunities for extra credit throughout the semester. There will be a variety of different activities that you may attend, such as meetings of environmental organizations, work days at local parks, and seminars on campus. We will post
details as we learn about the events on Blackboard. You can only attend approved events for extra credit, but we encourage you to let your TA know about possible events.

For each event, you must submit a written description of three new things you learned about the environment/environmental science. You may submit two extra credit write ups, and you can earn up to 10 points on each. To earn the full amount of points, you must explain what you learned, not just list three facts. The write ups must be turned in within two weeks of the event.

**Missed Assignments and Late Work:** There will be no makeups on any of the assignments, quizzes, or the Green Fund Proposal. Late work is not accepted and will count as a 0.

**Grading:**
There are no exceptions to the grading scale presented below.

- **A** = 450 – 500 points (100 – 90%)
- **B** = 400 – 449 points (90 – 80%)
- **C** = 350 – 399 points (80 – 70%)
- **D** = 300 – 349 points (70% - 60%)
- **F** = ≤ 299 points (below 60%)

**Course Communication:**
Because this is, at least initially, an online class, we won’t see each other in the ways you may be accustomed to: during class time, small group meetings, and office hours. However, there are a number of ways we can keep the communication channels open:

- **Office Hours:** We will not be able to meet on campus, but I will still have office hours for your questions and comments about the course. My office hours will be held on Blackboard Collaborate using this link: [insert link] and during the following times:
- **Email:** UTEP e-mail is the best way to contact me. I will make every attempt to respond to your e-mail within 24-48 hours of receipt. When e-mailing me, be sure to email from your UTEP student account and please put the course number in the subject line. In the body of your e-mail, clearly state your question. At the end of your e-mail, be sure to put your first and last name, and your university identification number.
- **Discussion Board:** If you have a question that you believe other students may also have, please post it in the Help Board of the discussion boards inside of Blackboard. Please respond to other students’ questions if you have a helpful response.
- **Announcements:** Check the Blackboard announcements frequently for any updates, deadlines, or other important messages.

**COURSE POLICIES:**

**NETIQUETTE**
As we know, sometimes communication online can be challenging. It’s possible to miscommunicate what we mean or to misunderstand what our classmates mean given the lack
of body language and immediate feedback. Therefore, please keep these netiquette (network etiquette) guidelines in mind. Failure to observe them may result in disciplinary action.

- Always consider audience. This is a college-level course; therefore, all communication should reflect polite consideration of other’s ideas.
- Respect and courtesy must be provided to classmates and to the instructor at all times. No harassment or inappropriate postings will be tolerated.
- When reacting to someone else’s message, address the ideas, not the person. Post only what anyone would comfortably state in a face-to-face situation.
- Blackboard is not a public internet venue; all postings to it should be considered private and confidential. Whatever is posted on in these online spaces is intended for classmates and professor only. Please do not copy documents and paste them to a publicly accessible website, blog, or other space.

**ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION**

Attendance in the course is determined by participation in the learning activities of the course. Your participation in the course is important not only for your learning and success but also to create a community of learners. You are expected to come to class prepared to answer questions about the assigned lab. Always bring a pen and paper. Participation is determined by completion of the following activities:

- Reading/Viewing all course materials to ensure understanding of assignment requirements
- Participating in engaging discussion with your peers on the discussion boards (grading rubric provided in the “grading information” area of each forum)
- Participating in scheduled Blackboard Collaborate sessions
- Other activities as indicated in the weekly modules
- Pop quizzes may be given at any time during the lab period

Because these activities are designed to contribute to your learning each week, they cannot be made up after their due date has passed. The instructor will post grades electronically, but students are responsible for knowing their grades at all times.

**DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR**

Any student who disrupts the class will be asked to leave and will be referred to the Dean of Students.

**ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY**

The University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations and auxiliary services to students, staff, faculty, job applicants, applicants for admissions, and other beneficiaries of University programs, services and activities with documented disabilities in order to provide them with equal opportunities to participate in programs, services, and activities in compliance with sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008. Reasonable accommodations will be made unless it is determined that doing so would cause undue hardship on the University. Students requesting an accommodation based on a disability must register with the UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS). Contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services at 915-747-5148, or email them at cass@utep.edu, or apply for accommodations online via the
CASS portal. CASS’ Staff are the only individuals who can validate and if need be, authorize accommodations for students with disabilities.

COVID-19 Accommodations
Students are not permitted on campus when they have a positive COVID-19 test, exposure or symptoms. If you are not permitted on campus, you should contact me as soon as possible so we can arrange necessary and appropriate accommodations.

(classes with on-campus meetings) Students who are considered high risk according to CDC guidelines and/or those who live with individuals who are considered high risk may contact Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) to discuss temporary accommodations for on-campus courses and activities.

COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS
You must STAY AT HOME and REPORT if you (1) have been diagnosed with COVID-19, (2) are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, or (3) have had recent contact with a person who has received a positive coronavirus test. Reports should be made at screening.utep.edu. If you know of anyone who should report any of these three criteria, you should encourage them to report. If the individual cannot report, you can report on their behalf by sending an email to COVIDaction@utep.edu.

For each day that you attend campus—for any reason—you must complete the questions on the UTEP screening website (screening.utep.edu) prior to arriving on campus. The website will verify if you are permitted to come to campus. Under no circumstances should anyone come to class when feeling ill or exhibiting any of the known COVID-19 symptoms. If you are feeling unwell, please let me know as soon as possible, and alternative instruction will be provided. Students are advised to minimize the number of encounters with others to avoid infection.

Wear face coverings when in common areas of campus or when others are present. You must wear a face covering over your nose and mouth at all times in this class. If you choose not to wear a face covering, you may not enter the classroom. If you remove your face covering, you will be asked to put it on or leave the classroom. Students who refuse to wear a face covering and follow preventive COVID-19 guidelines will be dismissed from the class and will be subject to disciplinary action according to Section 1.2.3 Health and Safety and Section 1.2.2.5 Disruptions in the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures.

(classes with on-campus meetings). Please note that if COVID-19 conditions deteriorate in the City of El Paso, all course and lab activities may be transitioned to remote delivery.

DEADLINES, LATE WORK, AND ABSENCE POLICY
Lab Assignments
1. Lab assignments will be due at midnight (11:59 PM) the day before your lab. No late work will be accepted if the reason is not considered excusable.

Quiz and Blog/Discussion Assignments
2. All quiz, blog, and discussion board assignments will be done in class. No late work will be accepted if the reason is not considered excusable.

EXCUSED ABSENCES AND/OR COURSE DROP POLICY
According to UTEP Curriculum and Classroom Policies, “When, in the judgment of the instructor, a student has been absent to such a degree as to impair his or her status relative to credit for the course, the instructor may drop the student from the class with a grade of “W” before the course drop deadline and with a grade of “F” after the course drop deadline.” See academic regulations in the UTEP Undergraduate Catalog for a list of excuse absences. If you feel that you are unable to complete the course successfully, please let me know and then contact the Registrar's Office to initiate the drop process. If you do not, you are at risk of receiving an “F” for the course.

BLACKBOARD COLLABORATE SESSIONS
This class requires that you participate in scheduled Blackboard Collaborate sessions. The purpose of these sessions are for you to view live demonstrations of the course material and/or to participate in small discussion groups with your classmates. These sessions will be held at your scheduled lab times.

Students are expected to participate in these sessions with a webcam and microphone. The sessions will be recorded and provided so that they can be reviewed by classmates at a later time. Students should not record the sessions and post them to any sites outside of Blackboard.

If you are unable to attend a Collaborate session, please let me know as soon as possible so that accommodations can be made when appropriate.

CLASS RECORDINGS
The use of recordings will enable you to have access to class lectures, group discussions, and so on in the event you miss a synchronous or in-person class meeting due to illness or other extenuating circumstance. Our use of such technology is governed by the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and UTEP’s acceptable-use policy. A recording of class sessions will be kept and stored by UTEP, in accordance with FERPA and UTEP policies. Your instructor will not share the recordings of your class activities outside of course participants, which include your fellow students, teaching assistants, or graduate assistants, and any guest faculty or community-based learning partners with whom we may engage during a class session. You may not share recordings outside of this course. Doing so may result in disciplinary action.

PLAGIARISM DETECTING SOFTWARE
Some of your course work and assessments may submitted to SafeAssign, a plagiarism detecting software. SafeAssign is used review assignment submissions for originality and will help you learn how to properly attribute sources rather than paraphrase.

COPYRIGHT STATEMENT FOR COURSE MATERIALS
All materials used in this course are protected by copyright law. The course materials are only for the use of students currently enrolled in this course and only for the purpose of this course. They may not be further disseminated.

MAKE-UP WORK
Make-up work will be given only in the case of a documented emergency. Note that make-up work may be in a different format than the original work, may require more intensive preparation, and may be graded with penalty points. If you miss an assignment and the reason is not considered excusable, you will receive a zero. It is therefore important to reach out to me—in advance if at all possible—and explain with proper documentation why you missed a given course requirement. Make-ups must be scheduled within a week of when the quiz or test was given.

ALTERNATIVE MEANS OF SUBMITTING WORK IN CASE OF TECHNICAL ISSUES
I strongly suggest that you submit your work with plenty of time to spare in the event that you have a technical issue with the course website, network, and/or your computer. I also suggest you save all your work (answers to lab assignment and reports) in a separate Word document as a back-up. This way, you will have evidence that you completed the work and will not lose credit. If you are experiencing difficulties submitting your work through the course website, please contact the UTEP Help Desk. You can email me your back-up document as a last resort.

INCOMPLETE GRADE POLICY
Incomplete grades may be requested only in exceptional circumstances after you have completed at least half of the course requirements. Talk to me immediately if you believe an incomplete is warranted. If granted, we will establish a contract of work to be completed with deadlines.

SCHOLASTIC INTEGRITY
Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures. It includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and collusion. Cheating may involve copying from or providing information to another student, possessing unauthorized materials during a test, or falsifying research data on laboratory reports. Plagiarism occurs when someone intentionally or knowingly represents the words or ideas of another as ones’ own. Collusion involves collaborating with another person to commit any academically dishonest act. Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. All suspected violations of academic integrity at The University of Texas at El Paso must be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution (OSCCR) for possible disciplinary action. To learn more, please visit HOOP: Student Conduct and Discipline.

While you will be working in lab teams, the work you submit for assessment must be evaluated on its own merit. Therefore, team members’ reports and work should reflect the individual’s thoughts. Do NOT turn in 3 near-duplicate reports with different names or everyone involved will be sent to the Dean of Students, Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution for possible disciplinary action. Students may be suspended or expelled from UTEP for such actions. Yes, we have had to deal with this problem in the past and we are not lenient. You can calculate the consequences. All university guidelines will be strictly followed. Please read these guidelines carefully. The guidelines can be found on line at: https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/osccr/

MILITARY STATEMENT: If you are a military student with the potential of being called into military service and/or training during the course of the semester you are encouraged to
contact the instructor regarding these matters. You must let us know during the first two weeks of the semester.

**DROP POLICY (College of Science):** All grades of Incomplete must be accompanied by an Incomplete Contract that has been signed by the instructor of record, student, departmental chair, and the dean. Although UTEP will allow a maximum of one year to complete this contract, the College of Science requests it be limited to month based upon completion data. A grade of Incomplete is only used in extraordinary circumstances confined to a limited event such as a missed exam, project, or lab. If the student has missed a significant amount of work (e.g. multiple assignments or tasks), a grade of Incomplete is not appropriate or warranted. The drop deadline is **Apr 1, 2021**.

**IN-PERSON COURSE POLICIES:**

**CELL PHONES:** Do **NOT** have them on or out in class…this includes texting! **Cell phones can be confiscated** for the class period if used in lab.

**ALL OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES:** You **cannot** surf the internet, watch movies, listen to music, etc. in lab. You will be asked to leave if this happens.

**DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR:** Any student who disrupts the class will be asked to leave and will be referred to the Dean of Students.

**ON CAMPUS CARRY:** Persons holding a Concealed Handgun License can lawfully carry their handgun into a UTEP classroom as long as the gun remains concealed. Open carry remains prohibited on campus. In other words, none of us should see (or be able to tell that there is) a gun at UTEP. Call the University Police at 747-5611 or dial 911 if you see any individual on campus with a handgun or other type of weapon. For more information on campus carry, see [http://sa.utep.edu/campuscarry/](http://sa.utep.edu/campuscarry/); for more information on overall campus safety, see [http://admin.utep.edu/emergency](http://admin.utep.edu/emergency). However, the laboratory is a designated Exclusion Area, and no concealed handguns are permitted.

**COURSE RESOURCES:**

UTEP provides a variety of student services and support:

Technology Resources
- **Help Desk:** Students experiencing technological challenges (email, Blackboard, software, etc.) can submit a ticket to the UTEP Helpdesk for assistance. Contact the Helpdesk via phone, email, chat, website, or in person if on campus.

Academic Resources
- **UTEP Library:** Access a wide range of resources including online, full-text access to thousands of journals and eBooks plus reference service and librarian assistance for enrolled students.
- **University Writing Center (UWC):** Submit papers here for assistance with writing style and formatting, ask a tutor for help and explore other writing resources.
• **Math Tutoring Center (MaRCS):** Ask a tutor for help and explore other available math resources.

• **History Tutoring Center (HTC):** Receive assistance with writing history papers, get help from a tutor and explore other history resources.

• **RefWorks:** A bibliographic citation tool; check out the RefWorks tutorial and Fact Sheet and Quick-Start Guide.

**Individual Resources**

• **Military Student Success Center:** Assists personnel in any branch of service to reach their educational goals.

• **Center for Accommodations and Support Services:** Assists students with ADA-related accommodations for coursework, housing, and internships.

• **Counseling and Psychological Services:** Provides a variety of counseling services including individual, couples, and group sessions as well as career and disability assessments.

### Tentative Lab Calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week of:</th>
<th>Lab</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Pre-lab quiz</th>
<th>Pre-lab quiz topic</th>
<th>In-lab quiz</th>
<th>In-lab quiz topic</th>
<th>Assignment Due</th>
<th>Assignment for Today</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-Jan</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>L1A1</td>
<td>Individual Ecological Footprint</td>
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<tr>
<td>25-Jan</td>
<td>L1</td>
<td>L1: Intro/Ecological footprint</td>
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<tr>
<td>1-Feb</td>
<td>L2</td>
<td>L2: Home ecological footprint</td>
<td>Q1a</td>
<td>L2: Home Ecological Footprint</td>
<td>Q1b</td>
<td>L1: Ecological Footprint</td>
<td>L1A1</td>
<td>L2A1: Home Ecological Footprint</td>
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<tr>
<td>8-Feb</td>
<td>L3</td>
<td>L3: Google Earth – green space, water resources, urban growth</td>
<td>Q2a</td>
<td>L3: Google Earth</td>
<td>Q2b</td>
<td>L2: Home Ecological Footprint</td>
<td>L2A1</td>
<td>L3A1: Google Earth - Various</td>
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*No labs this week*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>15-Mar</th>
<th>Spring Break – No labs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-Apr</td>
<td>Drop deadline (April 1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>12-Apr</td>
<td>L11</td>
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<td>3-May</td>
<td>L14</td>
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## Grade tracking form

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<tr>
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Assignments denoted with * are extra credit

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Green Fund proposal:
- Peer review 20
- Final Draft 50

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Points possible</th>
<th>Points earned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lab final</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Extra credit 1*** 10
**Extra credit 2*** 10

**Total points** 500

**Assignments**

- A 450 - 500
- B 400 - 449
- C 350 - 399
- D 300 - 349
- F ≤ 299

**Points**

- **Grades**
  - A 450 - 500
  - B 400 - 449
  - C 350 - 399
  - D 300 - 349
  - F ≤ 299

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