

# Course Syllabus for ESCI 1301: Introduction to Environmental Science

Instructor Name, Email, Office number

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Teaching Assistant Name, Email

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Scheduled Class Time and Location

Tuesday and Thursday 9:00 – 10:20, Physical Science Building Room 115

Teaching Materials:

**Required** e-textbook and Learning Tools – *Environmental Science & Sustainability*, Sherman & Montgomery 2nd edition AND InQuizitive Subscription (\$74.95)

These can be purchased by accessing any of the linked eBook chapters or InQuizitive assignments through Blackboard.

Course Communication

**Emails.** I read class emails during business hours on Monday - Friday during the academic semester and will do my best to respond on the next business day. Emails received on weekends, holidays, or University breaks will be responded to on the next University business day. Please include ESCI 1301 in the header, and send me a reminder if you don't hear within 2 business days.

**Office Hours.** Tuesday 2.00-3.00 pm and Thursday 10:30-11:30 am in Biology Room 415  
You can also approach me before/after class for a brief conversation.

**Appointments.** Email me to set up. Please plan accordingly before deadlines – students must plan at least two business days ahead when requesting appointments.

**Announcements.** Students will receive information via in-class announcements and Blackboard. If I have a concern that applies to an individual or small group, you'll receive a message through Blackboard or an email. Per UTEP policy, I will only email with students through their official UTEP email.

## Course Objectives

The goals of this class are to understand the interactions between ecosystems and humans. We will ask questions like: how do ecosystems on earth form and function, how does life on earth shape society, and how do human decisions and values impact ecosystems? We will learn as scientists do, via the scientific method and evidence-based reasoning, and examine how values shape decision making.

### Learning Outcomes: Concepts

- Sustainability
- Formation and function of ecosystems
- Conservation, protection, restoration
- Human dependence on environmental resources
- Anthropogenic impacts on life on earth.

### Learning Outcomes: Skills

- Develop science-based inquiry through evidence-based reasoning and the scientific method.
- Improve proficiency in reading graphs, interpreting data, and interpreting scientific diagrams.
- Explain and critique complex interactions between humans and environment from biological and social perspectives.
- Master the “language” (terminology) and explain basic principles of environmental science and sustainability.

## Course Materials: WW Norton Illumine EBook and InQuizitive Platform

Students can purchase e-book and InQuizitive access online through our course links on Blackboard. Students will login into WW Norton through our Blackboard shell to complete assignments. Once logged in for the first time, a Payment Gateway Process screen will appear, and students can either start a 21 day trial or immediately purchase the courseware. You will then have access to the material for the trial period or 180 days.

Access to the E-book and online learning tools contains all the reading for completing quizzes and to supplement lectures and in-class activities.

**FOR ALL chapter reading and InQuizitive ASSIGNMENTS – Log into by clicking on a book chapter or assignment in our Blackboard shell. Your assignment grade will only transfer to Blackboard if you access via Blackboard links. If you have trouble, contact UTEP IT or the Norton support first. If you still cannot resolve the issues, let me know.**

## Course Approach:

This course takes a blended learning approach where students are introduced to content at home and practice working through it in class. The eBook reading, check your understanding and InQuizitive assignments introduce you to the material and build your foundation of concepts. During in-class activities we will reinforce concepts and build critical thinking skills by working through problems, peer discussions, data analysis, and thought exercises.

The eBook chapters, Check your Understanding, and InQuizitive assignments are due at the week that we cover the concepts in class. You can choose to complete the chapter assignments before or after the class session. However, I expect you to have some familiarity with the concepts prior to our class sessions. The Check your Understanding questions embedded in the chapters are due mid-week to encourage you to review concepts before class. Come to class prepared to apply the material from the chapters. I will not walk you through all the concepts in class.

## Course Tools

All the course tools are located on the course content page of our Blackboard shell.

## Course Structure

Each week we will cover a different major topic which corresponds to one book chapter per week. The eBook chapters contain Check your Understanding exercises which will guide you through core concepts, and the InQuizitive activities let you test your knowledge and will adapt to your confidence and mastery of topics. In class I will provide supplemental materials to dive deeper into various concepts.

## Technology and Software Requirements:

You will need to have access to a laptop with Blackboard for in-class participation and exams. You will need to access Blackboard and the eBook and Learning Tools to complete course assignments. Check that your computer hardware and software are up-to-date and able to access all parts of the course. Although the class periods are intended to be delivered in person, course content submission is delivered via the Internet through the Blackboard learning management system. Ensure that your UTEP e-mail account is working and that you have access to the Web and a stable web browser. When having technical difficulties, update your browser, clear your cache, or try switching to another browser.

**IMPORTANT:** If you encounter technical difficulties beyond your scope of troubleshooting, please contact the Norton or UTEP IT Help Desk as they are trained specifically in assisting with technological needs of students. Please do not contact me for this type of assistance.

## Assessments and Grading

### **Check Your Understanding – 5%**

This will guide you through the EBook reading and build your knowledge foundation to participate during in-class activities. Completing these check-ins will help you get more out of the in-class and InQuizitive activities. These will be graded as Complete/Incomplete. *Late submissions will NOT be accepted. The lowest two grades will be dropped so there is no makeup.*

### **InQuizitive Assignments – 30%**

Each week, you will have an InQuizitive module to complete. These will be available at 5:00pm each Friday that we complete one chapter and due by 5:00 pm each Friday at the end of the week. InQuizitive Assignments will be posted on Blackboard within the associated Chapter and directly linked to your purchase of the Norton Learning Tool. You can complete the ‘How to Use InQuizitive’ to learn how it works. The assignments are designed to increase your familiarity with new material and will cover only the material relevant to each week. InQuizitive asks questions to determine if you feel comfortable with the topics. The software will provide feedback and make recommendations for where to go to for review if you are not comfortable with the material. You must complete a minimum number of questions to receive a grade and can then continue answering questions to improve your grade and build your confidence with topics. InQuizitive will save your progress so you can start and stop throughout the week to make progress incrementally or complete it all at once. InQuizitive assignments are not graded on a performance scale; you earn credit for working on the assignment and it will be marked as either Complete if you answer the minimum number of questions or Incomplete at the time of the deadline. Once the deadline passes you can continue to practice concepts with InQuizitive but it will no longer change your grade. *Late submissions will NOT be accepted. The lowest two grades will be dropped so there is no makeup.*

**FOR ALL Check Your Understanding and InQuizitive ASSIGNMENTS** – Log in specifically through our Blackboard shell; do NOT save the link as a “favorite”. Otherwise, you will not earn a score for your assignment - your attempt is ONLY graded if you access the eBook chapter and InQuizitive through Blackboard.

### **In-class participation – 25%**

The main way to earn participation points is through in-class participation activities and discussions. The activities are instructional and will allow us to deepen our understanding, exchange ideas, and engage critically. There is no penalty for incorrect answers and activities will be graded as Complete/Incomplete if your responses are relevant and professional. In-class activities will either be due in-class or by the end of the week, I will announce details on the day of the activity. *You can miss up to four classes with no penalty on participation days and the lowest four grades will be dropped so there is no makeup.*

### **Two Semester Exams: Mid-Term and Final– 40% (20% each)**

These two exams will test your mastery of material for each half of the semester (ie the Final is not cumulative). The exams can contain material from both the book chapters and in-class activities, and will engage concept, analytical, and critical thinking skills. The Mid-Term will be taken through Blackboard during class and the Final will only be available online during the time frame designated for our Final. *Late submissions will NOT be accepted and there is no makeup for either exam.*

### **Final grade**

At the end of the semester all your assignments will be weighted according to their percent contribution to the final grade. Final grades will be assigned on the following scale:

A = 90 – 100 %

B = 80 - 89 %

C = 70 – 79 %

D = 60 – 69 %

F = < 59 %

I do round off – so, an 89.6% is an “A” – but an 89.2% is a “B”. I do not “push” grades to the next level just because a student is missing a few points. Keep up with requirements and you should not need a “push”.

Grades are not based on a curve. Everyone will receive a grade that is reflective of the effort put into the course, the knowledge learned during the course, and the skills acquired during the course.

### Course Policies

**Attendance and make-up work policy** Attendance is not a part of your grade. However, 25% your grade is based on being in the classroom. Thus, it is your choice whether to attend. I will allow you to miss up to 4 lectures (2 weeks). To standardize grading across students, independently of whether you use the absences or not, I will drop the lowest four lectures of participation, and two Check Your Understanding/InQuizitive assignments. I therefore expect you will have enough flexibility to work around any illness or other absences you may experience. Due to this generous absence policy, I do not do make-up assignments. The only exceptions for excused absences are individuals that have documentation from CASS for approved accommodations or for official UTEP travel (i.e. sports team). In special circumstances such as student hospitalization, the Office of the Dean of Students may provide a letter as proof of undue hardship. Please provide documentation in one of these three formats when requesting an excused absence and make-up assignment.

**Extra credit** is NOT provided in this course. I expect you to keep up with the “required credit” components of the course. If you keep up, you should not need “extra”.

**Late work** will not be accepted, even for technical difficulties, and a zero will be given for any late assignments. I strongly suggest that you complete assignments 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 suggest you save all your work (answers to discussion points, quizzes, exams, and essays) in a separate Word document as a backup. 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 Blackboard, please contact the UTEP Help Desk. You can email me your backup document as a last resort.

### **Course Drop Policy.**

I will not drop you from the course. However, if you feel that you are unable to complete the course successfully, please let me know and then contact the [Registration and Records Office](#) to initiate the drop process. You must drop by the UTEP drop deadline for the semester. The College of Science does not approve any drop requests after this date; therefore, it is your responsibility to drop the course by this deadline. If you do not, you will be assigned the grade earned for the course.

**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.

### Accommodations Policy

The University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. Students who become pregnant may also request reasonable accommodations, in accordance with state and federal laws and regulations and University policy. Accommodations that constitute undue hardship are not reasonable. To make a request, please register with the UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS). Contact CASS at 915-747-5148, email them at [cass@utep.edu](mailto:cass@utep.edu), or apply for accommodations online via the CASS portal.

### 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. In this course, working with another student on an exam or quiz is cheating. 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.

**Artificial Intelligence** tools may only be used with prior permission from instructor. Claiming content generated by artificial intelligence as your own work is not allowed. Students must write their own answers for this course, unless specifically instructed to use AI on an assignment. AI can be a useful study tool to summarize concepts learned in the class, but I expect you to think creatively and critically and you must always answer in your own words. The use of AI is strictly prohibited on midterm or final exams (i.e. you cannot use ChatGPT/DALL-E, etc.).

If given permission to use any of these tools, students must properly cite and give full credit to the program used upon submission of every relevant assignment. For example, text generated using ChatGPT must be cited and a short paragraph describing how the tool(s) was/were used for the assignment must be included.

Example citation format: Chat-GPT(version). Date of query (year/month/day). "Text of your query." Generated using OpenAI. <https://chat.openai.com/>

**Group Work** is allowed and encouraged for in-class activities and you may submit work that is based on your group discussions. You will benefit most if you complete Check Your Understanding and InQuizitive assignments on your own. I encourage you to study together for exams but during exams your answers must be strictly your own. Cheating is a form of academic dishonesty.

## 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.

## Course 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.
- **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.
- **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.



## Schedule of Topics

*Note that this is subject to revisions. Changes will be announced.*

<b>Date</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Lecture Topic</b>	<b>InQuizitive</b>
	<b>Test your understanding due Wednesday 10pm</b>	<b>T/Th</b>	<b>Due: Friday 5pm</b>
27-Aug	Ch. 1	Environmental Science & Sustainability	
29-Aug	Ch. 1	Environmental Science & Sustainability	InQuizitive 1 due
3-Sep	Ch. 2	Ethics, Economics & Policy	
5-Sep	Ch. 2	Ethics, Economics & Policy	InQuizitive 2 due
10-Sep	Ch. 3	Matter & Energy	
12-Sep	Ch. 3	Matter & Energy	InQuizitive 3 due
17-Sep	Ch. 4	Life	
19-Sep	Ch. 4	Life	InQuizitive 4 due
24-Sep	Ch. 5	Conservation	
26-Sep	Ch. 5	Conservation	InQuizitive 5 due
1-Oct	Ch. 7	Water	
3-Oct	Ch. 7	Water	InQuizitive 7 due
8-Oct	Ch. 8	Air	
10-Oct	Ch. 8	Air	InQuizitive 8 due // Submit Review Questions
15-Oct		<b>Review</b>	
17-Oct		<b>Mid-Term Exam</b>	
22-Oct	Ch. 11	Climate	
24-Oct	Ch. 11	Climate	InQuizitive 11 due
29-Oct	Ch. 12	Food	

31-Oct	Ch. 12	Food	InQuizitive 12 due
5-Nov	Ch. 13	Fossil Fuels	
7-Nov	Ch. 13	Fossil Fuels	InQuizitive 13 due
12-Nov	Ch. 14	Energy Alternatives	
14-Nov	Ch. 14	Energy Alternatives	InQuizitive 14 due
19-Nov	Ch. 16	Urbanization	
21-Nov	Ch. 16	Urbanization	InQuizitive 15 due // Submit Review Questions
26-Nov	Ch. 15	Waste	Class Activity, No Quiz, Not on Final
28-Nov	THANKSGIVING: NO CLASS		
3-Dec		TBD	
5-Dec		Review	
TBA		Final Exam	