

Life on a Changing Planet Section 01

ENVS 10

Fall 2024 3 Unit(s) 08/21/2024 to 12/09/2024 Modified 08/25/2024

Contact Information

Instructor: Sabina Giri

Email: sabina.giri@sjsu.edu or via Canvas messenger

Office: On Campus & zoom meetings by appointments only

Phone: ENVS main office: (408) 924-2772 (please leave message)

Course Information

The purpose of this course is to give you the basic skills and knowledge necessary to critically examine biological and environmental issues. Living systems are in a constant state of change, both as a result of natural processes and human activities. The course materials emphasize the understanding and use of the scientific method and the analysis of conflicting data and viewpoints. Students will use life science information to analyze environmental issues and debates by considering scientific consensus and the weight of scientific evidence.

This course is, at its heart, a biology course. What makes it different is the application of the material to environmental issues. These two subject areas are intricately linked, though rarely taught together. By presenting this information together, it is my hope that at the end of the course you will have gained both the basic understanding of living systems, and the environmental issues that such systems currently face. It is also my hope that those of you who will go on in the field of Environmental Studies will have gained the basic scientific tools to support your arguments.

This is a GE/SJSU Studies category B2 course. Life Science B2 courses focus on: a) structures and functions of living organisms; b) levels of organization of living systems - from atom to planet; c) strategies for survival and reproduction; d) patterns of evolution; e) principles of genetics, including basis for variation; and f) interaction of organisms with the natural environment.

Lecture

Monday, Wednesday, 10:30 AM to 11:45 AM, HGH 124

Course Description and Requisites

An introduction to basic knowledge and theory in the life sciences, focusing on the theme of environmental change. Examines challenging issues in biology and methods for evaluating conflicting data and claims. Develops students' analytical and writing skills. GE Area: B2

Prerequisite: As required for Core GE courses in B2.

Letter Graded

Classroom Protocols

Classroom as Community

It is my goal to ensure that students from diverse backgrounds and perspectives are well-served by this course. I will address students' learning needs both in and out of class, and I consider the diversity that students bring to this class as a valuable resource, strength, and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are antiracist and respectful of diversity: gender identity, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, nationality, religion, culture. I am committed to the principle of universal learning. This means that our classroom, other virtual spaces, our practices, and our interactions be antiracist and inclusive. Mutual respect, civility, and the ability to listen and observe others carefully are crucial to universal learning. Active, thoughtful, and respectful participation in all aspects of the course will make our time together this semester as productive and engaging as possible.

Throughout the semester we will address and discuss a variety of issues which may bring out strong and opposing views. A richer discussion will occur when a variety of perspectives are presented in class for discussion. Our conversations may not always be easy. As a community of learners and colleagues, it is critical that we respect one another's thoughts and address comments to the IDEAS and not the person. Our classroom is not a forum for demeaning or threatening language/comments.

Harassment of any kind (sexual, racial, class, sexual preference, gender, gender identity, etc.) between students or towards/from the instructor will not be tolerated. As a community member of this classroom, I expect everyone to act in a respectful and mature manner. Should any problems arise we as a class will promptly take action.

Here are some **guidelines for "Netiquette", or the etiquette of cyberspace:**

Be respectful in communications: Being polite in an email can help you with this class and in your professional career. Reread emails you plan send to your group, the class instructor, project mentors, and subject matter experts before pushing the send button to make sure you convey the appropriate cooperative tone.

Remember the human: When you communicate electronically, all you see is a computer screen. You don't have the opportunity to use facial expressions, gestures, and tone of voice to communicate your meaning; words – lonely written words – are all you've got. That goes for your correspondence as well. Remember

the Prime Directive of Netiquette: Those are real people out there. Ask yourself, “would I say this to the person’s face?” If the answer is no, rewrite and reread. Repeat the process until you are sure that you’d feel as comfortable saying these words in person as you would sending them through cyberspace.

Adhere to the same standards of behavior online that you follow in real life:

Be ethical: if you encounter an ethical dilemma in cyberspace consult the code you follow in your life. Chances are good you’ll find the answer.

Don’t break the law: If you’re tempted to do something that’s illegal in cyberspace, chances are it’s also bad Netiquette.

Know where you are in cyberspace: When you enter a domain of cyberspace that’s new to you, take a look around. Spend a while listening to the chat or reading the archives. Get a sense of how the people who are already there act. Then go ahead and participate. In this case, you are in an online classroom, and you should behave the same as you would behave in a live classroom.

Respect other people’s time and bandwidth: When you send email or post to a discussion group, you’re taking up other people’s time (or hoping to). It’s your responsibility to ensure that the time they spend reading your posting isn’t wasted. Use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation and make sure your posting is well organized and coherent.

Make yourself look good online: You won’t be judged by the color of your skin, eyes, or hair, your weight, your age, or your clothing. You will, however, be judged by the quality of your writing. For most people who choose to communicate online, this is an advantage; if they didn’t enjoy using the written word, they wouldn’t be there. So, spelling and grammar do count.

Share your expert knowledge: The strength of cyberspace is in its numbers. The reason asking questions online works is that a lot of knowledgeable people are reading the questions. And, if even a few of them offer intelligent answers, the sum total of world knowledge increases. The internet itself was founded and grew because scientists wanted to share information. Ask questions when you need an answer, and always share what you learn with your classmates or help answer their questions.

Help keep flame wars under control: ‘Flaming’ is what people do when they express a strongly held opinion without holding back emotion. It’s the kind of message that makes people respond, “Oh come on, tell us how you really feel.” Tact is not its objective. People are welcome to their opinions and strong emotions. Flame wars result when contrary opinions are argued back and forth in a flaming manner. Agree or disagree professionally, and if you can, support your opinions with facts. Respect the opinions and emotions of your classmates.

Respect other people’s privacy: Do not share your classmate’s personal information in any open communication in an online classroom. This includes discussions, or group emails. And do not share a classmate’s personal information with your instructor unless the classmate has given you permission.

Failure to meet classroom protocol expectations will result in a loss of up to 10% from your final course grade.

Class Access Statement

It is my goal that this class be an accessible and welcoming experience for all students, including those with disabilities that may impact learning in this class. If anyone believes the design of this course poses barriers to effectively participating and/or demonstrating learning in this course, please meet with me (with or without an Accessible Education Center accommodation letter) to discuss reasonable options or adjustments. During our discussion, I may suggest the possibility/necessity of your contacting the [Accessible Education Center \(https://www.sjsu.edu/aec/\)](https://www.sjsu.edu/aec/) (408-924-6000; aec-info@sjsu.edu (<mailto:aecinfo@sjsu.edu>)) to talk about academic accommodations. You are welcome to talk to me at any point in the semester about course design concerns, but it is always best if we can talk at least one week prior to the need for any modifications or accommodations.

Program Information

Welcome to this General Education course.

SJSU's General Education Program establishes a strong foundation of versatile skills, fosters curiosity about the world, promotes ethical judgment, and prepares students to engage and contribute responsibly and cooperatively in a multicultural, information-rich society. General education classes integrate areas of study and encourage progressively more complex and creative analysis, expression, and problem solving.

The General Education Program has three goals:

Goal 1: To develop students' core competencies for academic, personal, creative, and professional pursuits.

Goal 2: To enact the university's commitment to diversity, inclusion, and justice by ensuring that students have the knowledge and skills to serve and contribute to the well-being of local and global communities and the environment.

Goal 3: To offer students integrated, multidisciplinary, and innovative study in which they pose challenging questions, address complex issues, and develop cooperative and creative responses.

More information about the General Education Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) can be found on the [GE website \(https://sjsu.edu/general-education/ge-requirements/overview/learning-outcomes.php\)](https://sjsu.edu/general-education/ge-requirements/overview/learning-outcomes.php).

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

GE Area B2: Life Science

In Area B2 courses students develop an understanding of scientific principles and the scientific method, as well as the potential limits of scientific endeavors and the value systems and ethics associated with scientific inquiry. Life science courses develop students' understanding of the scientific method as a continuous and adaptive process of discovery and communication about the physical universe and its life forms.

GE Area B2 Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of an Area B2 course, students should be able to:

1. demonstrate knowledge of scientific theories, concepts, and data used in the life sciences;
2. apply scientific principles and communicate in ways appropriate to the discipline about the process and results of scientific discovery;
3. access, critically evaluate, and represent scientific information in various forms and draw appropriate conclusions;
4. use methods derived from current scientific inquiry to form evidence-based opinions about science-related matters of personal, public, and ethical concern.

Writing Practice: Students will write a minimum of 1500 words in a language and style appropriate to the discipline.

Course Materials

Access to a computer and the Internet are required to research, analyze, write, complete, and submit assignments for this course. Smartphones are used for some assignments, but not required. All readings other than the textbook will be provided electronically.

Textbook

Concepts of Biology

"Access for free at openstax.org."

<https://openstax.org/details/books/concepts-biology>
(<https://openstax.org/details/books/concepts-biology>)

Other Readings and Materials

Additional readings, videos, and other course materials will be available on Canvas.

Other technology requirements / equipment / material

You will need access to a computer with an internet connection, Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Canvas, YouTube and Zoom for both in-person and online classes. Canvas will be used extensively for all aspects of class: assignment submission, discussions, testing and communication. Lectures for online classes will typically be synchronous, however may be recorded asynchronously and posted on Canvas as needed. During in-person class time, always bring paper, a pencil and/or pens to class.

WiFi hotspots are available to check out locally through the San Jose Public Library System, which has 25 branches throughout San Jose. For more information on Wi-Fi hotspots check <https://www.sjpl.org/hotspot/> *If you have challenges with computer equipment or internet service, please let me know as a variety of help is available.*

Computer equipment and other electronic devices are available on loan through the library: <https://library.sjsu.edu/student-computing-services> or through the Information Technology (IRC): <https://sjsuequipment.getconnect2.com/>

Course Requirements and Assignments

Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (about 9 hours per week per 3 unit class) for instruction, preparation/studying, assignments or other course related activities, including but not limited to internships, labs, and clinical practice. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.

Class Attendance and Communication

You must attend class to achieve a good grade in the class. It is your responsibility to check Canvas and your email daily for announcements about class activities and assignments. Quiz and exam questions will be based on the information covered during the lecture, and important class information about tests and assignments will be given during the lecture. *If you miss class and you do not have a university sanctioned absence excuse, you will not be able to make up any quizzes, exams, participation points, or assignments on that day.* If you are absent, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed by checking Canvas for any announcements and class assignments and then asking another student what you missed in class that day. Do not email me asking what you missed or what you need to do until you have first followed both these steps.

Canvas Instructions

For this class, all assignments are to be completed by the individual student unless otherwise specified. All written take home assignments are to be submitted in electronic form through Canvas unless otherwise noted. If you have trouble with Canvas submissions, please discuss with me *before* the due date and time. **All assignments are due on the due date and time listed in the course calendar.**

Lecture Materials

PowerPoint slides and other materials provided during lectures will not always be posted on Canvas. You are expected to attend class, take notes during lectures and work outside of class.

Quizzes and Exams

Two exams and several quizzes will be given to test your understanding of the material presented in the lectures, readings, and in-class activities. For in-person classes all exams and quizzes will be given in class. For online classes exams and quizzes will be on Canvas. Please do not miss an exam as you will not have the opportunity to make it up. **Make-up exams may be considered for university sanctioned legitimate and documented circumstances only (i.e., medical emergency, death in the family).**

Exams and quizzes are individual activities and are not to be taken with other classmates. **During Canvas quizzes and exams, do not use search features on your computer or ANY other electronic devices (cell phones, tablets, other computers) to look up question answers. This is considered cheating and will result in a**

failing grade. No make-up quizzes will be given.

Assignments

There will be varying types of assignments throughout the semester. These assignments are designed to aid in your understanding of the course material, as well as develop skills in evaluating, analyzing, and communicating information about environmental issues. All assignments are expected to be typed and submitted through Canvas unless otherwise noted. Cumulatively, the assignments will make up a major portion of your grade for this course.

Field Trips

This course requires a field trip, which is self-directed and in-person. This will be done outside of class time, but you will have most of the semester to visit and learn about one of the field trip locations and complete a write-up. Details will be given in class.

Class Participation

This is a lecture course with a strong participation component. Students are expected to review all assigned lecture slides and videos, complete the assigned readings before class, take good notes, attend question and discussion sessions, turn assignments in on time, read book chapter assignments and class handouts, and participate in class discussions and group activities. You will receive participation points for contributing to discussions and participating in activities. A thoughtful solid question shows that you not only understand the material but are thinking about it on a deeper level; as such, credit will be given for thoughtful questions. **You must be present and prepared to receive participation points; there are no make-up points for a missed class.**

Formatting and Citation

Please note that all assignments need to be formatted as follows:

12-point font, 1-inch margins, doubled spaced, include a header with name and date. Check out the video links below for more help.

Links to an external site:

Video: [APA formatting guide for google doc \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HPIrA13EL7w&feature=youtu.be&ab_channel=SJSUWritingCenter\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HPIrA13EL7w&feature=youtu.be&ab_channel=SJSUWritingCenter)

Video: [APA formatting guide for Microsoft \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hZLi7Z5lJBU&feature=youtu.be&ab_channel=SJSUWritingCenter\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hZLi7Z5lJBU&feature=youtu.be&ab_channel=SJSUWritingCenter)

For this class, you will use APA 7th Edition citation style where applicable. All documents must be submitted in Word, PPT or PDF format. A 10% deduction will occur for not following these guidelines. Put your name and section number on every document you submit. Cover pages are not necessary.

Links to an external site:

[APA 7th Edition Citation Style and Examples](#)

(https://drive.google.com/file/d/1JTYpFj8_th_FnH8yx5tSUzhdn_hSRNu/view)

[Official APA Site \(https://sjsu.campusconcourse.com/\(https%3A/www.apa.org/pubs/books/publication-manual-7th-edition-paperback\)\)](https://sjsu.campusconcourse.com/(https%3A/www.apa.org/pubs/books/publication-manual-7th-edition-paperback)))

Classroom Protocol

In person/On Campus class: Turn off and put away cell phones when you enter the classroom. The use of laptops during class time will be restricted to in-class activities and note taking. Students who use their computers for other activities or who abuse the equipment in any way, at a minimum, will be asked to leave the class and will lose participation points for the day. Any use of electronic devices while taking online (Canvas) or in-class quizzes and exams is considered cheating and will result in a failing grade.

✓ Grading Information

Grading Information

Your grade will be based on your quizzes, exams, assignments, and class participation. Total points possible may change based on progress of the semester.

Penalty for Late or Missed Work

Assignments are due on the date given on your course schedule and in Canvas. Assignments turned in later than the due date/time will have 10% subtracted from the score per day for each day late. *Exceptions may be considered for legitimate and documented circumstances only (i.e. medical emergency, death in the family). There will be no make-up quizzes or exams. Please plan accordingly and consider submitting extra credit activities to make-up for missing a quiz (see extra credit policy).*

Extra Credit

Life happens (illness, family emergencies, car issues, etc) and missing a class or deadline may happen too. To help students make up points from a missed quiz or assignment, extra credit is offered periodically. Students are responsible for recording the details of any offered extra credit assignments that may be offered.

Breakdown

Grading Overview and Assessment of Learning Objectives

| <i>Assignment</i> | <i>Points</i> | <i>Learning Objectives</i> |
|-------------------|---------------|----------------------------|
| Quizzes (5) | 50 | GELO #1, 2, 3; PLO #2 |

| | | |
|---|------------|---|
| Final | 100 | GELO #1, 2; PLO #2 |
| Env. Science Topics (2) | 50 | GELO # 1, 2, 3, 4; PLO #1, 2; ILLO #1, 2, 3 |
| Ecology Assignment | 30 | GELO #3, 4; PLO #2; ILLO #2 |
| Evolution Assignment | 30 | GELO #3, 4 |
| Sustainability Assignment | 30 | GELO #3, 4 |
| Field Trip Write-Up | 50 | GELO #1, 3, 4 |
| Participation/Class Activities/Discussion | 110 | GELO #1, 2, 3, 4; PLO #2; ILLO #2, 3 |
| TOTAL | 450 | |

Grade Scale

| | | |
|----------------|-------------------|----------------|
| 100% = A+ | 93% - 99% = A | 90% - 92% = A- |
| 87% - 89% = B+ | 83% - 86% = B | 80% - 82% = B- |
| 77% - 79% = C+ | 73% - 76% = C | 70% - 72% = C- |
| 60% - 69% = D | less than 60% = F | |

University Policies

Per [University Policy S16-9 \(PDF\)](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on the [Syllabus Information](https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php) (<https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php>) web page. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.