Syllabus: Geography 100: Environmental Conservation

Course description:

Human activity has changed every place on planet Earth. This course explores how and where these changes take place, and what people can do to interact with the environment in a more sustainable manner. Themes to be explored include: biodiversity, global climate change, human population growth, and sustainability of food, soil, and water resources. Through lectures, discussion, and field trips students will investigate and map patterns integral to understanding environmental conservation issues. $10 lab fee. Prerequisites: None.

Course Objectives:

1. Identify complex environmental issues at the global, national and regional scales.
2. Understand local examples of environmental conservation.
3. Develop spatial reasoning and analytical skills.

Text: Miller, G.T. 2005. Living in the Environment: Principles, Connections, and Solutions. 14th Edition. Thomson Brooks/Cole.

Teaching Methods:
While this course meets in a lecture hall, plan to participate in small group activities and whole-group discussions, learning from other students in the class in addition to listening to the instructor. Course content and teaching methods will emphasize analytical thinking skills and communication skills. Discussion sections will feature exploration of spatial data sets through GeoDa, an intuitive, hands-on software package that allows the visualization of spatial and quantitative relationships.

Assessment:
Exams will consist of multiple choice and short answer questions based on the text and lecture. The group project will be assessed using a rubric, which states the standard of performance for the grade received. These rubrics will be available before the group project begins. Exercises are short written assignments based on fieldtrips or computer lab exploration.

Assignment	Points Possible
Midterm	250
Final	250
Group Project	150
Exercises (5 X 7%)	350
Total	1000

Points Earned	Final Course Grade
900-1000	A
800-899	B
700-799	C
600-699	D
Below 600	F

Course Schedule:

This course relies upon active student participation. Consistent attendance and engaged participation are critical to success in this class.

Week	Topic	Chapters
1	Geographical approaches to environmental issues	1
2	Earth Systems	3
3	Ecosystems	4
4	Population Ecology	8
5	Human Population	10
6	Biodiversity	6
7	Sustaining biodiversity	11, 12
8	Food and soil resources	14
9	Water resources: quality	15, 22
10	Water resources: quantity	15
11	Nonrenewable energy resources	16, 17
12	Renewable energy resources	18
13	Climate change	21
14	Air pollution	20
15	Politics and sustainability	27
16	Environmental Ethics	28

Topical Outline with percent of time devoted to each topic:

Introduction to geography and Earth systems	10%
Ecological systems	20%
Natural resources	35%
Social systems and the environment	35%