



**NORTH CAROLINA AGRICULTURAL AND TECHNICAL STATE UNIVERSITY  
DIVISION OF UNIVERSITY STUDIES  
UNST 211: CONTEMPORARY ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES**

**SPRING 2009**

**OVERVIEW:** Environmental Science is an interdisciplinary course that utilizes subject matter from a variety of academic disciplines, to introduce students to environmental issues of modern age including critical analysis of sustainability, addressing root causes, political, pollution, and social issues using scientific reasoning. In CONTEMPORARY ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES, students learn to critically look at the host of issues related to environment during our time. They can employ the learned skills to solve both discipline specific problems as well as interdisciplinary problems.

**OBJECTIVES:**

**CONTEMPORARY ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES** has the following five objectives:

- Students will develop critical, logical, and analytical thinking skills in order to evaluate ENVIRONMENTAL data and formulate reasonable conclusions.
- Students will use scientific, and technological tools to analyze information and make informed decisions.
- Students will learn the key principles, sustainability, addressing root causes, systems reform, critical thinking, action, Recognition of political, social and economical impacts and understand their importance in modern world.
- Students will use the scientific method and formulate questions that will enable one to logically define, test, and ultimately solve a variety of environment related problems.
- Finally, students will utilize the above tools to analyze and evaluate news reports and statistical studies on environmental issues.

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

Daniel D. Chiras. Environmental Science, Seventh Edition, Jones and Bartlett Publishers, 2006.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION:**

- **LEARNING GOALS:** Performance goals are listed below for each chapter. These goals represent what you are expected to learn in each chapter.
- **HOMEWORK** will be assigned weekly. Homework questions are listed at the end of each chapter in the book. Students are to write each question, answer the question and bring the homework to the class on the due time and place it on the professor's desk for grading. Unless specified otherwise, all homework are due the first time that class meets following the day that assignment was made. All homework is to be submitted at the beginning of the class.
- **Quizzes, tests and exams** will be given in the class and graded using Scantron. Some or all quizzes may be administered and graded using the interactive software TurningPoint. Questions asked during the lecture will also be graded. For this reason, students are required to read the chapter to be covered beforehand and come prepared. These grades will count toward your final grade.
- Each student is required to complete a **project** on one of the topics listed in the book chapters or a relevant topic of student's choosing (In some cases, a project may be assigned to the student). A minimum of 45 days is assigned for the completion of the project. However, progress of the projects will be monitored by requesting that the students present their works at least two times for observation during this period. About one half of the work should be complete by the first deadline and all of it by the second deadline. Projects will be placed in the digital box of Blackboard for submission.

- **ONE-HOUR EXAMINATIONS:** There will be **three (3)** examinations given during the semester. Examination dates are given in the exam schedule below.
- **FINAL EXAMINATION:** A **final examination** will be given during the final examination period. The **final exam will be COMPREHENSIVE;** therefore, you will be responsible for the mastery of all materials covered during the semester.

**CALCULATORS:** CALCULATORS ARE REQUIRED FOR EXAMS.

- **MAKE UP REQUESTS:** Permissible reasons for requesting make up of required work are described in the *Student Handbook*. NOTE: Other reasons for requesting make up of required course work are not acceptable.
  - **DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED FOR MAKE UP:** Please refer to the *Student Handbook* for acceptable verification documents.
  - **MAKE-UP POLICY FOR EXAMINATIONS:** *The make-up examination will be COMPREHENSIVE and the instructor may use one-half of your score on the final exam as your make-up exam score.* To be eligible for a make-up exam, an OFFICIAL EXCUSE for a missed exam must be presented to the instructor no later than one week after the missed exam. Permissible reasons for requesting make up of required work are described in the *Student Handbook*. NOTE: Other reasons for requesting make up are not acceptable.
- **EXAMINATION SCHEDULE:**

**Tentative Examination Schedule:**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>
Exam 1 – once chapters 1-4 are completed	Class period
Exam 2 - once chapters 5-8 are completed	Class period
Exam 3 - once chapters 9-12 are completed	Class period
Final Exam - (per university schedule)	

*\*Point discrepancies on the homework, quizzes, and exams must be presented to the instructor within one week after grading is completed.*

- **STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES:** If you have a documented disability for which to discuss academic accommodations, please contact the Office of Veteran and Disability Support Services at Room 005 Murphy Hall.

**Prerequisites:** There are no prerequisites for this class, other than an inquisitive mind. Students should be warned that **CONTEMPORARY ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES** does require minor use of mathematical and statistical tools. We will present all the mathematics required to comprehend all of the topics addressed in the course.

**GRADING:** The summative evaluation will consist of: quizzes [10%]; homework [10%]; First examination [10%]; mid-term examination [20%]; third examination [10%], and a final examination [30%] and project [10%]. All grades are determined by your earned point totals. No other factors will be considered when determining your final grade. Anyone asking for special grading consideration will be referred to this policy. The final grading breakdown will be as follows:

Percentage	Letter Grade
100-93	A
92-90	A-
89-87	B+
86-83	B
82-80	B-
79-77	C+

Percentage	Letter Grade
76-73	C
72-70	C-
69-67	D+
66-63	D
62-60	D-
59 and below	F

### Grades will be posted in the Gradebook in the Blackboard

#### **DEADLINE & STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY POLICY:**

Students are responsible for meeting all course deadlines. A deadline is the last day something is due, not the day you should wait to do it. All deadlines can be found on the course calendar. If you are unable to meet a deadline you may make arrangements in advance of a deadline for an extension. Any student who misses a deadline and did not make prior arrangements will not receive an extension (i.e. receives a zero for missed work). The only exception is if you can provide documentation demonstrating why a deadline could not be met given that you knew all deadlines in advance. Remember, responsible students plan ahead, complete work early, and contact us right away when a deadline cannot be met. All students are held to this policy, including those who ask for special exceptions.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** Academic honesty is absolutely essential. Cheating, plagiarism, sharing of clickers or other academic misconduct will not be tolerated. If you are caught cheating, you will not pass this course and will be subject to any and all penalties specified in the student honor code.

**ATTENDANCE:** University Studies strives to professionalize its students; therefore, regular attendance and punctuality are mandatory in all UNST courses.

- Student athletes must submit a schedule of days they will be absent *within the first week of classes*.

#### **COURSE MATERIALS:**

- **Books:** Serious scholarship requires procurement of essential course materials. Students will purchase all books and materials required for UNST courses within the first two weeks of the semester. Sharing of books thereafter is prohibited.
- **Calculator:** Students should have a scientific calculator to use for calculations. We recommend a simple model such as the Hewlett Packard 9s Scientific Calculator (111115), or the Texas Instruments TI-30X IIS both of which retail for about 15 dollars.

**EDUCATIONAL ETIQUETTE:** Students will demonstrate their respect for their professors and colleagues. Any behavior that distracts or is disrespectful (inattention, personal attacks, etc.) is unacceptable. Differences of opinion should be met with intellectual curiosity and rigor rather than insult, contumely, or discord.

- Student success in this course depends upon the development of scholarly and collegial habits. Active participation in class discussion and group work is mandatory. Collegial responsibility and respect are also compulsory.

**EMAIL POLICY:** Official correspondence from faculty, instructors and graduate assistants will use the North Carolina A & T email address. Students are responsible for the information received and are required to monitor their email accounts on a regular basis.

- All faculty, instructors and graduate assistants will reply to legitimate email inquiries from students within 48 hours with the exception of weekends or university holidays. If you do not receive a reply within this period, please resubmit your question(s) or phone your instructor. Leave a message if necessary.
- In accordance with the Aggie Pride Compact, students should consistently communicate and behave in a manner that displays integrity, honesty, sound character, and virtuous ethics when using email to communicate with faculty, instructors, or graduate teaching assistants.
- Each email message **must include the course name and number, section number, and a concise and clear statement of purpose in the subject line.** You must also type your name as it appears on the course roster at the end of your message. [e.g., UNST211: Death in Family]; otherwise it is likely to be deleted, along with spam messages and messages potentially containing viruses.

- Please make sure you consult the course outline/syllabus, other handouts, and the course website **BEFORE** submitting inquiries by email.
- When a question cannot be easily or briefly answered by email, your instructor will simply indicate that the student should see him, her, or the appropriate TA during office hours.
- Email should **NOT** be seen as an alternative to meeting with your instructor or the TA during office hours. Nor should email be used as a mechanism to receive private tutorials (especially prior to tests) or to explain material that was covered in the course material.

**TIMELY SUBMISSION OF WORK:** All assignments are due on the dates indicated in your syllabus.

- **No late work will be accepted in any UNST courses.**
- Exceptions will be made only in cases of documented medical or family emergency or religious observance.
- Please notify your professor by email before the assignment is due should an acceptable absence occur.
- Employment, child care or other academic pressures do not constitute a valid excuse for late work.
- There is no provision for additional papers or extra credit to substitute for missed course requirements.

**OPEN DOOR POLICY:** Each of your instructors maintains an open door policy. You are free to visit us during the posted office hours or, if you prefer a different time, arrange an appointment. If you are having a problem with the course, please contact your instructor immediately; problems, unlike fine wines, don't improve with age.

**DISABILITIES AND DIFFERENCES:** Students with documented learning disabilities or differences should identify themselves to their professor and present appropriate documentation during the first week of classes.

- No accommodations will be made later in the semester for students who do not identify themselves at the beginning of the course.
- Students who need developmental support should ask their professors for extra help or referral.
- All students should seek the support services of the Writing Center (A-309 GCB; 334-7764) and the Center for Student Success (312 Hodgins Hall; 334-7855).

### UNST 211 COURSE SCHEDULE

**NOTE:** This syllabus is subject to revision as necessary at any time during the semester.

<i>Part:</i>	<i>Dates:</i>	<i>Outline of Topics to be Covered:</i>	<i>Readings</i>
ONE	<i><u>PART I- BASICS OF ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES</u></i>		
	January 8-9:	<b>Environmental Science and Critical Thinking</b>	Chapter 1 Homework Assignments: Read chapter 1 and answer questions of chapter 1 homework.
	<i>January 12 – 16</i>	<b>Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development</b>	Chapter 2 Homework Assignments: Read chapter 2 and answer homework questions for chapter 2
TWO:	<i>January 19-23</i>	<b>Understanding the Root Causes of the Environmental Crisis</b>	Chapter 3 Homework Assignments: Read chapter 3 and answer homework questions for chapter 3
	<i><u>PART II-NATURAL SYSTEMS</u></i>		
	<i>January 26-30</i>	<b>Principles of Ecology: How</b>	Chapter 4 Homework Assignments:

<i>Part:</i>	<i>Dates:</i>	<i>Outline of Topics to be Covered:</i>	<i>Readings</i>
		<b>Ecosystems Work</b>	Read chapter 4 and answer homework questions for chapter 4
TWO	<i>February 2</i>	<i>Exam 1</i>	Ch 1,2,3,4
	February 3-6	<b>Principles of Ecology: Biomes and Aquatic Life Zones</b>	Chapter 5 Homework Assignments: Read chapter 5 and answer homework questions for chapter 5
	February 9-13	<b>Principles of Ecology: Self-Sustaining Mechanisms in Ecosystems</b>	Chapter 6 Homework Assignments: Read chapter 6 and answer homework questions for chapter 6
TWO	<u>PART II-HUMAN SYSTEMS</u>		
	February 16-20	<b>Human Ecology: Our Changing Relationship with the Environment</b>	Chapter 7 Homework Assignments: Read chapter 7 and answer homework questions for chapter 7
THREE	February 23	<u>Midterm Examination</u>	Ch 5,6,7-part 1
	<u>PART III-THE POPULATION CHALLENGE</u>		
	February 24-27	<b>Population: Measuring Growth and Its Impact</b>	Chapter 8 Homework Assignments: Read chapter 7 and answer homework questions for chapter 7
Four	March 2-6	<b>Stabilizing the Human Population: Strategies for Sustainability</b>	Chapter 9 Read chapter 9 and answer homework questions for chapter 9
	<u>PART IV-RESOURCE ISSUE</u>		
	March 9-13	<b>Creating a Sustainable System of Agriculture to Feed the World's People</b>	Chapter 10 Homework Assignments: Read chapter 10 and answer homework questions for chapter 10
	<i>March 16</i>	<u>Exam 3</u>	<i>Chapters 7 (part 2) ,8,9</i>
	March 17-20	<b>Preserving Biological Diversity</b>	Chapter 11 Homework Assignments: Read chapter 11 and answer homework questions for chapter 11
	March 23-27	<b>Grasslands, Forests, and Wilderness: Sustainable Management Strategies</b>	<u>Chapter 12</u> Homework Assignments: Read chapter 12 and answer homework questions for chapter 12

<i>Part:</i>	<i>Dates:</i>	<i>Outline of Topics to be Covered:</i>	<i>Readings</i>	
Five:	March 30-31	<b>Water Resources: Preserving Our Liquid Assets and Protecting Aquatic Ecosystems</b>	<u>Chapter13</u> Homework Assignments Read chapter 13 and answer homework questions for chapter 13	
	April 1-3	<b>Nonrenewable Energy Sources</b>	Chapter 14 Homework Assignments: Read chapter 14 and answer homework questions for chapter 14	
	April 6-10	<b>Foundations of a Sustainable Energy System: Conservation and Renewable Energy</b>	<u>Chapter15</u> Read chapter 15 and answer homework questions for chapter 15	
	<i><u>PART IV: LEARNING TO LIVE WITH EARTH'S CARRYING CAPACITY</u></i>			
	April 13-17	<b>Principles of Toxicology and Risk Assessment</b>	Chapter 18 Read chapter 15 and answer homework questions for chapter 15	
	April 20-30	<i><u>Student presentation</u></i>	Exam review	
May 4-8	<i><u>Final Examination</u></i>			

Wishing you a wonderful semester at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University,

Dr. J. Emrani,  
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**Office Hours:**  
**Monday, Wednesday, Friday 4:30 PM-5:50 PM**  
**Tuesday-Thursday 6:00-6:30 PM**

**Note:** If you need to talk to Dr. Emrani at any time during the semester, he will be available to meet with you at the times stated above. If you cannot see him at any of these times, please make an appointment. You may call him at the telephone number above. If you call him and he is not in, please leave your name, a brief message, and your telephone number and he will return your call. Alternatively, you may send us an email message at the above address.