

SAS 9 – Crisis in the Environment

General Syllabus, details may vary year by year

GENERAL COURSE INFORMATION

Lecture: two 80-minute lectures per week (Tuesdays and Thursdays)

Discussion: one 50-min discussion per week (Fridays)

Credits: 4; General Education: Science & Engineering, Social Sciences; Writing Experience Literacy

INSTRUCTIONAL TEAM

Lead instructor: Professor Erwan Monier

Department of Land, Air and Water Resources

Office: Hoagland Hall 247

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SCOPE OF COURSE

- Explores the question: What is the state of the global environment?
- Explores contemporary environmental issues: Causes → Effects → Solutions
- Independent research of environmental issues
- Integrated discussion of political, societal and economic impacts of environmental problems

COURSE FORMAT

The course consists of two 80-minute lectures and one 50-minute discussion per week. During the lectures, we will cover a range of environmental issues, discussing their causes, effects and potential solutions. We will further integrate discussions of political, societal and economic impacts of these environmental problems. The weekly discussion section will support the lectures by providing an opportunity to engage with the course material in smaller groups and receive individual feedback on course assignments. You will 1) participate in discussions and short writing practice assignments focused on improving your writing skills for the course assignments; 2) have opportunities to receive one-on-one feedback from your TA and peer students; and 3) discuss course materials and readings, including the previous week's quizzes, in a smaller group setting through active learning activities.

COURSE MATERIALS

Lecture and discussion slides, reading materials, writing resources and assignment descriptions will be provided/administered via the Canvas course web page: canvas.ucdavis.edu.

WRITING EXPERIENCE LITERACY

This course provides writing experience by promoting students' ability to think clearly and communicate effectively about the course material through guided writing assignments completed in stages. Writing experience literacy requires a minimum of 10 pages (3000 words) for a course with 2 or more units. In this course, writing guidance will take the form of class discussions, peer feedback, and written feedback from the instructional team. You will be provided model texts relating to each environmental issues covered in this course to read and discuss. Your writing will be evaluated for content, clarity, organization, and logic. The grading criteria for the term paper is provided at the end of the syllabus as a guide for writing expectation and evaluation. Writing is a central component of the course and the writing assignments will allow you to demonstrate your understanding of contemporary environmental issues, their causes, effects and solutions.

COURSE GRADING

Reading quizzes – 10%: There will be a short quiz (true/false and/or multiple-choice) administered on Canvas for each reading assignment. The reading quizzes are due each week on Monday at 11:59pm. They will be made available one week prior to the due date, and you will have 60 minutes to complete them. The lowest score will be dropped.

Lecture quizzes – 20%: There will be a short quiz (true/false and/or multiple-choice) administered on Canvas due each week on Thursdays at 11:59pm and covering the course materials from that week. They will be made available at the end of the Thursday lecture, and you will have 60 minutes to complete them. The lowest score will be dropped.

Discussion assignments – 20%: During each discussion, you will be given a short writing practice assignment focused on improving your writing skills.

Short writing assignments – 15%: You will research and write one short paper (900-1000 words, roughly 3 double-spaced pages) assignment. Details are provided on Canvas.

Term paper outline assignment – 10%: You will write a detailed outline of your term paper (see below). This assignment will help you prepare your term paper and will allow the instructional team to give you feedback early in that process. Details are provided on Canvas.

Term paper –25%: You will research and write a term paper (1800-2000 words, roughly 6 double-spaced pages) on an environmental issue of your choice (topic must be approved by instructor/TAs). The paper should ideally address the causes → effects → solutions of the issue, as well as incorporating the political, societal and economic ramifications. We are open to innovative ideas! Details are provided on Canvas.

There is not final exam!

The letter grade for the course is determined at the end of the year, approximately following standard guidelines (91-100% A, 81-90% B etc.) but may be “curved” if the class median grade falls below C+/B-.

COURSE FORMAT

Lecture (L) & Discussion (D) topics			Assignments
Week 1			
Tuesday	L1	Course introduction & administration	
Thursday	L2	Humans and the environment	- Lecture quiz
Friday	D1	General writing tips & the research process	
Week 2			
Monday			- Reading quiz
Tuesday	L3	The climate crisis – the science	
Thursday	L4	The climate crisis – the impacts	- Lecture quiz
Friday	D2	The peer review process & essay structure/outline	
Week 3			
Monday			- Reading quiz
Tuesday	L5	The climate crisis – the solutions	- Short paper: draft
Thursday	L6	The climate crisis – the politics	- Lecture quiz
			- Short paper: peer reviews
Friday	D3	Short paper #1 peer reviews & background & thesis statement	
Week 4			
Monday			- Reading quiz
Tuesday	L7	Forest fires	- Short paper: final version
Thursday	L8	Forest management	- Lecture quiz
Friday	D4	Topic sentences & transition sentences	
Week 5			
Monday			- Reading quiz
Tuesday	L9	Acid rain	
Thursday	L10	Mercury pollution	- Lecture quiz
Friday	D5	Feedback on short paper & term paper topics	
Week 6			
Monday			- Reading quiz
Tuesday	L11	Ozone pollution	- Term paper outline: draft
Thursday	L12	Particle pollution	- Lecture quiz
			- Term paper outline: peer reviews
Friday	D6	Term paper outline peer reviews & citations and plagiarism	
Week 7			
Monday			- Reading quiz
Tuesday	L13	The global water crisis	- Term paper outline: final version
Thursday	L14	California water issues	- Lecture quiz
Friday	D7	Conclusions & additional writing practice	
Week 8			
Monday			- Reading quiz
Tuesday	L15	Ocean exploitation	
Thursday	L16	Ocean pollution	- Lecture quiz
Friday	D8	Feedback on term paper outline & additional writing practice	
Week 9			
Monday			- Reading quiz
Tuesday	L17	Food security	- Term paper: draft
Thursday	L18	Environmental justice	- Lecture quiz
			- Term paper: peer reviews
Friday	D9	Final paper peer reviews	
Week 10			
Monday			- Reading quiz
Tuesday	L19	Mass extinctions	
Thursday	L20	Biodiversity loss	- Lecture quiz
Friday	D10	Final paper last minute Q&A	- Term paper: final version

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

It is important to acknowledge the land on which the UC Davis campus is located. For thousands of years, this land has been the home of Patwin people. Today, there are three federally recognized Patwin tribes: Cachil DeHe Band of Wintun Indians of the Colusa Indian Community, Kletsel Dehe Wintun Nation, and Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation. The Patwin people have remained committed to the stewardship of this land over many centuries. It has been cherished and protected, as elders have instructed the young through generations. We are honored and grateful to be here today on their traditional lands.

To honor this legacy and ensure people remain aware of the land they are on, UC Davis has designed several installations in consultation with Patwin Elder Bill Wright and his family, in addition to faculty and students from Native American Studies, staff of American Indian Descent (SAID), as well as representatives from Student Affairs, the office of Finance, Operations and Administration and the UC Davis Arboretum and Public Garden. The [Native American Contemplative Garden](#) is part of this effort.

COLLABORATION POLICY

In this course, we permit students to discuss the concepts and ideas of the assignments with each other but, unless specified otherwise, we require that students then do the assignments independently (i.e. by themselves – alone). Working together when not allowed, or beyond what *is* allowed, is called "unauthorized collaboration" and is a violation of the [Code of Academic Conduct](#). If your assignments are identical or highly similar to those of another student, we will know that you worked together beyond what we allow and we will report you to the [Office of Student Support & Judicial Affairs](#) (OSSJA).

PLAGIARISM POLICY

Any time you use the research, ideas, images, analysis, language, etc. of another, you *must* cite that individual (give them credit). In this course, when you use someone else's work, you are required to paraphrase their words or ideas in your own words and cite your source. In addition, all work submitted in this course is expected to be new work and you are not allowed to reuse work submitted in other course assignments. Submitting work that contains work "borrowed" from others and not properly cited, or representing your previous work as if it is new work, is called "plagiarism" and is a violation of the Code of Academic Conduct. Please read the [Avoiding Plagiarism](#) resources put together by OSSJA for more details on what is plagiarism and how to avoid it.

AI COMPOSITON SOFTWARE POLICY

Intellectual honesty is vital to an academic community and for the fair evaluation of your work. All work submitted in this course must be your own. You may not make use of ChatGPT or other AI composition software.

COPYRIGHTS/INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY POLICY

All course materials, including any PowerPoint presentations, recordings, quizzes, assignment descriptions and similar materials, are protected by U.S. copyright law and by University policy. Professor Monier is the exclusive owner of the copyright in those materials he creates. You may take notes and make copies of course materials for your own use. You may also share those materials with other students who are enrolled in or auditing this course. However, you are not allowed to reproduce, distribute or display (post/upload) any course materials in any other way – whether or not a fee is charged – without the express prior written consent of Professor Monier. You are not allowed to post any of the course materials to any website – period, and you may not allow others to do so. Misuse of course materials is a violation of the Code of Academic Conduct. Similarly, you own the copyright in your original writing assignments. If the course instructional staff is interested in posting your writing assignments on the course website, they will ask for your written permission.

ACADEMIC CONDUCT

Academic misconduct on assignments, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, misuse of course materials and other anti-intellectual behavior cannot be tolerated in any academic environment that prides itself on individual accomplishment. If you have any questions about academic conduct in this course, or if you feel that you may have violated any policy, please talk to the course instructional staff. Although the course instructional staff is obligated to deal with academic misconduct by reporting students who violate Code of Academic Conduct to OSSJA, we are more understanding and lenient if we find out from the transgressor themselves rather than from a third party.

STUDENT DISABILITY CENTER (SDC)/CLASSROOM ACCOMODATIONS

UC Davis is committed to educational equity in the academic setting, and in serving a diverse student body. I encourage all students who are interested in learning more about the Student Disability Center (SDC) to contact them directly at sdc.ucdavis.edu, sdc@ucdavis.edu or 530-752-3184. If you are a student who currently receives academic accommodation(s), please submit your SDC Letter of Accommodation to me as soon as possible, ideally within the first two weeks of this course.

TITLE IX

Title IX prohibits gender discrimination, including sexual harassment, domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. If you have experienced sexual harassment or sexual violence, you can receive confidential support and advocacy from the Center for Advocacy, Resources, and Education (CARE) at ucdcare@ucdavis.edu or 530.752.3299. In addition, Student Health and Counseling Services (SHCS) provides confidential counseling to all students and can be reached 24/7 at 530.752.2349. You can also report sexual violence or sexual harassment directly to the University's Title IX Coordinator at wjdelmendo@ucdavis.edu or 530.752.9466. Reports to law enforcement can be made to the UCD Police Department at 530.752.2677. More information on UC Davis sexual violence prevention and response resources can be found at <http://sexualviolence.ucdavis.edu/>.

MANDATORY REPORTING

Faculty and TAs are required under the UC Policy on Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment to inform the Title IX Coordinator should they become aware that you or any other student has experienced sexual violence or sexual harassment. There are other confidential and anonymous resources for you if you do not want your experience to be mandatorily reported. You can find additional resources on the Harassment & Discrimination Assistance and Prevention Program (HDAPP) anonymous reporting webpage (<https://hdapp.ucdavis.edu/anonymous-reporting>).

WELLNESS STATEMENT

Academic life can be overwhelming at times, but know that you are not alone if you're feeling stressed. For many of us, systems of oppression such as racism, sexism, heterosexism or cissexism, document status, may cause additional stress. Please remember to practice self-care and reach out for support if and when you need it. You can also visit Virtual UC Davis (<https://studentaffairs.ucdavis.edu/virtual-ucdavis>) to find resources related to health and well-being, academics, basic needs (food and housing) and more.

Grading Criteria for Term Paper

This assignment will be graded according to the following criteria, so please pay special attention:

"A" papers will address most of the criteria successfully (✓), with only a few criteria that need minor improvement (+).

"B" papers will address many criteria successfully, with some criteria that need minor improvement or a few that require major improvement (-).

"C" papers will need minor or major improvements in most criteria, or will fail to address some criteria (X) while addressing others successfully.

"D" papers will address some of the criteria adequately, but will have many criteria that require substantial improvement or that are not addressed at all.

"F" papers will address some criteria adequately or even successfully, but the number of criteria that are not addressed or need major improvement will outnumber those positive aspects.

Grading Key:

(✓) indicates success and full marks

(+) indicates above average and needs minor improvement

(-) indicate below average and needs major improvement

(X) indicates not addressed

This assignment will be graded according to 6 major categories of criteria:

- Structure
- Content & Writing
- Evidence and Examples
- Grammar, Spelling & Sentence Structure
- Assignment Prompt & Formatting
- Draft and Peer Reviews

1. Structure

(✓, +, -, X)

Does the introduction paragraph adequately define and provide background information on the environmental issue discussed?	
Does the introduction paragraph include a clear, concise, easily identifiable, and uncontestable thesis statement?	
Does the introduction paragraph provide a useful “road map” that tells the reader what the paper will be about?	
Does the structure of the essay flow logically with coherent body paragraphs?	
Do the body paragraphs include clear and appropriate topic sentences?	
Do the body paragraphs include clear and appropriate transition sentences?	
Do the body paragraphs adequately expand on main points listed in the introduction thesis statement?	
Does the concluding paragraph provide a clear and concise summary of the paper?	
Does the concluding paragraph relate back to the objectives stated in the thesis statement?	
Does the concluding paragraph relate back to the big picture painted in the introduction?	

2. Content & Writing

(✓, +, -, X)

Does the author clearly identify the causes (drivers & pressures) of the environmental issue they are discussing?	
Does the author clearly identify the effects (state & impact) of the environmental issue they are discussing?	
Does the author clearly identify how the environmental issue they are discussing affects society, especially vulnerable communities?	

Does the author clearly identify potential solutions (e.g., policy-based, social, technological, etc.) to the environmental issue they are discussing?	
Are the arguments made in the paper logical and easy to understand?	
Does the author focus on a few ideas/concepts to support their argument?	
Does the author provide relevant background information (i.e. theories, statistics, etc.) to support their arguments?	
Does the author use appropriate organization/sequence to present their arguments?	
Does the assignment have an appropriate tone and level of details for the specific audience?	
Does the author display a depth of knowledge and critical thinking that goes beyond cursory in support of their arguments?	

3. Evidence and Examples

(✓,+, -,X)

Does the author properly cite any information or ideas that aren't originally theirs?	
Does the author include sufficient citations (at least 15 cited references) that bolster/strengthen their argument?	
Are these examples spread evenly throughout the paper (instead of being clustered)?	
Are the examples and cited references that are used suitable for the <i>paper topic</i> ?	
Are the cited references used suitable for a <i>college-level paper</i> ?	

4. Grammar, Spelling & Sentence Structure

(✓,+, -,X)

Does the author avoid making grammatical errors that distract the reader?	
Do the sentences contain variety and avoid making the paper sound monotonous?	
Are the sentences clear and concise?	
Does the assignment seem proofread and free of distracting typos?	
Does the author demonstrate a range in vocabulary, using terms properly and effectively?	

5. Assignment Prompt & Formatting

(✓,X)

Does the paper comply with the formatting instructions (font size, margins...)?	
Does the paper length comply with the instructions?	
Does the paper have an adequate title?	
Is the thesis statement bolded?	
Does the paper include a properly formatted References (works cited) page?	

6. Draft and Peer review

(✓,X)

Was the draft of the term paper submitted on time in the correct format?	
Were the peer reviews submitted on time and with sufficient comments/feedbacks?	