EVST 425.01: The Human Role in Environmental Change

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See my homepage for more info!
http://www.cas.umt.edu/geograph/courses/baied.htm

CLASS MEETINGS: ROOM 344 Social Science Building
MONDAY, WEDNESDAY AND FRIDAY 01:10 PM - 02:00 PM

OFFICE HOURS: Mondays 12-01 PM, Wednesdays and Fridays after class, AND by appointment in 204 Social Science Building

COURSE DESCRIPTION

If we are to understand environmental issues and to develop sound environmental policy, we must assess the role that people have played and continue to play in environmental change. More and more frequently we find public constituencies and private interest groups debating the nature of human impact on the environment and the best ways to minimize potentially harmful consequences of human activities. Unfortunately for those who would shape environmental policy, the present condition of earth's ecosystems is the result of a long history of human/environmental interactions, and not simply a product of recent activities. Our goal in this course is not to cover every possible aspect of human influence upon the environment, but to provide students with a basis for thinking about human-environmental systems and the tools necessary to assess our role. We are to trace human impacts through time on vegetation, animals, landforms, soils, climate, and atmosphere. And, we will focus on the complex interactions among history, culture, science, law, and economics inherent in designing and assessing environmental policy.

EXPECTATIONS AND READINGS

There are two core text for this course that will help us better understand the role of humans and anthropogenic impact upon the environment and landscape change. A set of additional literature will be available for photocopying and further reading. They will be placed on reserve at Mansfield Library. A basic course bibliography and suggested readings follows at the end of this outline. Reading assignments have been selected from a number of different publications, some available at Mansfield Library. The texts can be bought from The Bookstore at UM.
Required Textbooks


EXPECTATIONS AND GRADING

In order to foster analysis, classes will revolve around major concepts and themes that I will introduce. I expect all students to read ahead and be ready not only for questioning me but also to be questioned by me on the assigned readings. In addition, the final phase of the course will center on students’ presentations of their own research with a follow-up discussion by all of us as well as by my suggestions to improve the written research report (term paper).

There are, however, some details to consider before we move ahead with this assignment: I NEED TO SEE a short, two-paragraph, term-paper proposal laying out the theme and issue/s you want to deal with before you actually move ahead on your research. I will meet separately with each of you to discuss the proposal and APPROVE it. The term paper will allow you to expand your knowledge on a topic, issue, region, or area of your choice. You are free to choose a topic that really interests you. If you need help with this task just stop by my office in 204 Social Science Building to discuss potential themes for the term paper. We will schedule this assignment as soon as we have a better idea of final enrollment, but I would like to know and see (in writing) your choice of topic/theme by October 15.

The research report of no more than fifteen double-spaced pages, including notes and references, will be due during the last week of classes (examination week). It may be submitted at any time but not before your oral presentation. This report should draw upon at least five sources other than assigned readings and should conform to the conventions contained in any recent edition of Kate L. Turabian’s *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press). The research will serve as the basis for the oral presentation, roughly fifteen minutes in length.

Also, TWO EXAMS will be given following an essay-type format. I will give you details (dates and material) of this assignment as we move ahead and have a more or less definite enrollment count.

Course Grade

You will be assessed in three areas: class participation (assistance, questions, real interest), two exams, and the short term-paper (research report) and oral presentation. The final grade will be based on performance in the above mentioned areas and as a percentage of the final grade:

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Participation points – you’ll get them all if you come to class (two absences are free – but not on exam days or on your oral presentation days!); if you do assignments on time; if you engage fully in discussions and demonstrate a commitment to improving your reasoning abilities in your writing and speaking.

SOME SUGGESTED AND REQUIRED READINGS


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