

**Introduction to Environmental Studies**  
**ENVS 300, Section 1. SFSU, Spring 2016**  
**Lecturer: Julio Magalhães (“Dr. J”)**

**ENVS 300 INTRODUCTION TO ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES – SYLLABUS**

**Instructor:**

Julio Magalhães. Office: HSS 332.

Office Hours: Thursday, 9:30 - 10:30 AM, 2:00 – 3:00 PM, and by appointment

Phone: 650-209-0604, Email: [DrJ@sfsu.edu](mailto:DrJ@sfsu.edu) (put “ENVS300” at start of subject line)

**Time & Classroom:** Tuesday & Thursday: 11:00 AM – 12:15 PM, HSS 102

**Final Exam:** Tuesday May 24 , 10:45 AM -1:15 PM

**Course Description:** This course introduces students to the core concepts of the multiple disciplines of environmental studies and the need for their integration: environmental science & technology, environmental economics, environmental ethics, and environmental policy. This section of the course will focus on global climate change and sustainability as a framework for introducing environmental studies and its interdisciplinary nature. Students will explore the science, ethical principles, social structures, technologies, and political and economic processes necessary for humans to live sustainably in community with each other, other species and our natural environment. Students will also explore strategies to effect constructive change.

*The format of this course section will seek to maximize interactivity and student participation through a roughly equal mix of lecture and interactive seminar.*

**Course Objectives:**

By the end of the semester, students should be able to:

1. Describe scientific, social, political, economic, ethical, and technical dimensions of sustainability and climate change.
2. Evaluate and think critically and quantitatively about environmental challenges and proposed solutions.
3. Improve their writing, critical reading, quantitative reasoning, and literature research skills.
4. Understand and apply basic concepts for creating constructive change around environmental challenges.
5. Identify or better define their own environmental interests and values.

**Course Prerequisites:** Upper division standing or consent of instructor. Priority enrollment for Environmental Studies majors.

**Course Textbooks and Readings:**

***Required textbooks:***

The Worldwatch Institute, *State of the World 2013: Is Sustainability Still Possible?* (Island Press, 2013).

URL: <http://www.worldwatch.org/bookstore/publication/state-world-2013-sustainability-still-possible>

ISBN: 978-1-61091-449-9 for paperback book

ISBN: 978-1-61091-458-1 for electronic book (Adobe Digital Editions)

Northwest Earth Institute, *Choices for Sustainable Living* (NWEI, 2014).

URL: <http://www.nwei.org/product/choices-for-sustainable-living/>

Both of the above required textbooks are available in hardcopy as well as eBook format. *I heartily recommend the eBook format since it is easy to carry with you, saves you money, and saves trees.* You will need *Choices for Sustainable Living* for use on the class seminar days, so if you do not have a way to properly view this text during class with a laptop computer or other mobile device, purchasing the hardcopy version would be your best choice.

*Additional course readings:* Articles and other reading materials will be posted on the course iLearn page.

*The reading assignments form an essential foundation for the lecture and seminar components of this course. You are expected to complete the reading assignments by the class session in which the material will be discussed to allow you to fully participate in class discussions and activities. These class discussions and activities are a very important part of this course. *Deadlines for the readings are included in the course schedule at the end of this syllabus.**

### **Assessment / Grading**

Based on the total number of points accumulated by the end of the semester. Try to focus on the learning; let the grades take care of themselves!

Reading questions & assignments	200 points (20%)
Class participation/ “true” attendance/ attitude	200 points (20%)
Final exam (comprehensive):	150 points (15%)
Local sustainability initiatives paper	150 points (15%)
Local sustainability group presentation	100 points (10%)
Grist.org news story presentation	100 points (10%)
<u>In-class assignments &amp; activities:</u>	<u>100 points (10%)</u>
TOTAL =	1000 points

**A:** 100% -90%, **B:** 89.9% - 80%, **C:** 79.9 % - 70%, **D:** 69.9 % - 60%, etc.

Incompletes are only given for extraordinary circumstances (e.g. death in the family, personal illness) that prevent a student from completing the course.

**Reading questions & assignments (20%):** *Reading questions:* To help you reflect on the readings and prepare you for the seminar days in class, reading questions on the *Choices for Sustainable Living* readings will be assigned. Each of these will be scored: I will be evaluating them for evidence that you have done the reading and have made a genuine attempt to answer the questions. Your reading questions must be submitted through the TurnItIn link on the course iLearn page \*before the start of class\*. *Due dates are listed on the course schedule.*  
*Assignments:* To help you think about and apply the material presented in lecture and *State of the World 2013* readings, you will periodically submit written assignments covering this material. *The due dates for these assignments (Assignments #0, 1, 2, 3, 4) are listed on the course schedule at the end of the syllabus.*

**Class participation/ “true” attendance/ attitude” (20%):** This course is designed to be quite interactive, and the *Choices for Sustainable Living* seminar-session days and Grist presentation discussions by the class are a major aspect of this course. This part of your grade will be based on three factors: i. an evaluation by me of your participation based on my observations of you in class. ii. your journal entries consisting of reflections on your efforts to achieve the action commitments you made during the previous *Choices* session. The due dates for these “Session Reflections” are listed on the course schedule. iii. your “true” attendance record.

**NOTE:** To have productive and enjoyable class sessions, we all need to be prepared for participation, which has 3 parts: we all need to have read and reflected on the day’s assignment, we all need to be present when class starts, and we all need to contribute to our class discussion. The reading assignments and reading questions help you achieve part #1 and set you up for success in class participation. The “Reading questions” portion of your grade, the “Class participation/ “true” attendance/ attitude”, and the “In-class assignments & activities” portions of your grade evaluate your success in being interactive and the quality of your participation. Thus, **up to 50% of your grade depends on the quality of your engagement with class material, class discussion and your active enthusiastic participation.**

**Final Exam (15%):** The final exam will be comprehensive and can include multiple choice, short answer, simple numerical problems, and/or longer-form answer questions based on the class discussions, lectures, and readings. If you keep-up with lectures, seminar-sessions, in-class activities, reading, reading questions, and assignments, you should do fine on the final exam.

**Local Sustainability Initiatives Paper (15%):** A 5-10 page research paper on local sustainability initiatives undertaken by local governments or local private organizations. The goal of this paper is to allow you to apply what you have learned about sustainability in this course and learn in detail about local examples of sustainability policies and practices that are all around us. Further instructions about this paper will be provided separately.

**Local sustainability group presentation (10%):** You will make a short in-class presentation on your local sustainability initiatives paper as part of a small group (3-4 people). The members of your small group will have a common aspect to their research papers-- for example: papers on sustainability practices of cities, similar aspects of sustainability at different types of organizations or the same types of organizations--, and your presentation will give you an opportunity to learn more about the work of your fellow team members and to educate the rest of the class. Further details will be provided on a separate handout.

**Grist.org news story presentation (10%):** Over the course of the semester, each student will get a chance to present a Grist.org news story. You will be asked to scan the Grist web site for an interesting story that is relevant to some issue that we have been discussing in class, or that you have a personal interest in. You will have five minutes to present your topic and then to introduce a discussion question related to it. Your presentation will be scored according to the following criteria:

- Is the story significant and worthy of the class's attention?
- Is the topic of the story presented in a clear and engaging way?
- Is there a thoughtful and accessible discussion question for the story?
- Does the discussion question inspire a productive class discussion?

Dates of the Grist.org presentations are listed on the course schedule at the end of this syllabus. *A Google Doc will be used early in the course to allow you to select a date for your presentation. Sign-up early to get your preferred date!*

**In-class assignments & activities (10%):** Includes short written answer questions or quantitative questions worked-on in class within a small group and handed-in individually. This component of your grade also includes your short submissions from the *Choices for Sustainable Living* seminar session days when you take on the role of opener, facilitator, or notetaker. All students will serve in at least two of these roles within their seminar-session groups at least once during the semester.

**Attendance Policy:** Attendance in class is expected. Because much of the class will involve small group and full class discussions, notes from class are a poor substitute for being there. If you miss a class it is your responsibility to find out what you missed. I also want to avoid "electronic absences;" ***if you are texting or communicating electronically in other ways, you aren't really present in our classroom and will be marked absent.*** *Let's all stay focused and present while we're together in the classroom!*

### **Student Responsibilities:**

- FAITHFUL CLASS ATTENDANCE is a must since material will be presented in class that is not found in the readings. In addition, a large part of your grade is based on in-class seminar-style discussion and activities. These in-class activities cannot be made up.
- Show COMMON COURTESY
- ARRIVE ON TIME. At the instructor's discretion, late arrivals may not be allowed into class
- Please turn cell phones off; no "instant messaging" during class. *Avoid "electronic absences".*
- ASK QUESTIONS, BE PREPARED, BE ENGAGED, and PARTICIPATE !
- CLEARLY WRITTEN SUBMITTED ASSIGNMENTS: Written assignments will generally be submitted through TurnItIn and must be written so that someone not in the class could understand what you have written. *This means clearly stating the original question, presenting your approach to the answer, and explaining the basis and sources for your answer and your reasoning.*

**Plagiarism:** The general rule is that if you get an idea or piece of information from a source, then you need to cite that source – otherwise it is considered plagiarism. Also you are not allowed to use ANY wording from some other source unless you put it in quotes. Borrowing a sentence and slightly rewriting it is plagiarism. See the course readings on proper use of quotes and paraphrasing. Plagiarism also includes employing or allowing another person to write or substantially alter work that a student then submits as their own. Any assignment found to be plagiarized will be given a zero grade. Serious cases will be reported to the Dean of the College, and may be reported to the University Judicial Affairs Officer for further action.

### **Important dates and deadlines:**

**CHSS Withdrawal Policy:** **The last day to drop a class is February 9, 2016 until 11:59pm. Starting February 10 – April 26, 2016, you must submit a withdrawal petition.** Withdrawal from a class starting **February 10, 2016** will be considered for *serious and compelling* reasons only and **must have accompanying documentation**. The following reasons are not considered *serious and compelling*: Changing your major, poor performance, class not required for graduation/major, or more time needed for other classes. If you wish to withdraw from class due to unexpected changes in your work schedule, illness or family emergencies, **documentation will be required**, along with a copy of unofficial transcripts. Submit your petition **within a reasonable timeframe (e.g., within 2 weeks of a change in work hours)**. From **April 27 – May 17, 2016** you may not withdraw from a class or the University, except in the case of a **serious** documented illness or verified accident. **You are only allowed to withdraw from a maximum of 18 units and take a class no more than 2 times at SF State.** Please refer to the following website for further information on withdrawal policies:  
<http://chss.sfsu.edu/src>

**CR/NC Option:** **The last day to request CR/NC option is March 20, 2016 until 11:59pm.** The Associate Dean will not approve requests for changes if you miss this deadline.

**Late Add Policy:** **The period to add classes via permission numbers is January 27 – February 9, 2016. The period to add classes by Exception is February 10 – February 23, 2016.** It is your responsibility to procure a late permission number from your instructor and add the class. Faculty cannot add you into a class. Starting **February 24, 2016**, a Waiver of College Regulations form must be signed by your instructor, Chair and CHSS Associate Dean to add. This will be approved only if there was an administrative error.

**Check your registration through *SF State Gateway*:** Sign up for CR/NC, drop and add classes by the appropriate deadline online through *SF State Gateway*. **ALWAYS** check your registration after making any changes and **BEFORE** deadlines to be sure you are registered properly for your classes. Deadlines for all registration procedures, including withdrawals and requests for credit/no credit, are listed in the class schedule and will be strictly adhered to by the instructor, the Department Chair and the Associate Dean of College of Health & Social Sciences. **It is ALWAYS the student's responsibility to ensure their schedule is correct, even if the instructor indicates they will drop you.**

This can be viewed on the Registration Calendar at the following website:

<http://www.sfsu.edu/~admisrec/reg/regsched2163.html>

**Disability Programs and Resource Center:** Students with disabilities who need reasonable accommodations are encouraged to work with the instructor and contact Disability Programs and Resource Center (DPRC). They are located in SSB 110, can be reached by telephone at 415-338-2472 (voice/TTY) or by e-mail at [dprc@sfsu.edu](mailto:dprc@sfsu.edu).

**Student disclosures of sexual violence:** SF State fosters a campus free of sexual violence including sexual harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and/or any form of sex or gender discrimination. If you disclose a personal experience as an SF State student, the course instructor is required to notify the Dean of Students. To disclose any such violence confidentially, contact:

**The SAFE Place** - (415) 338-2208 \_ [http://www.sfsu.edu/~safe\\_plc/](http://www.sfsu.edu/~safe_plc/)

**Counseling and Psychological Services Center** - (415) 338-2208 <http://psyservs.sfsu.edu/>

For more information on your rights and available resources : <http://titleix.sfsu.edu>

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**Course Schedule & Key Dates**

Week #	Date	Topic/ Event	Reading Assignment Due	Assignment Due
1	Thu, Jan 28, 16	Course Introduction		
2	Tue, Feb 2, 16	Overview of Environmental Studies	McConnell & Abel 2008 short reading & Jefferson quote (on iLearn)	
2	Thu, Feb 4, 16	Global Population Growth & Sustainability		<b>Grist presentations #1; Assignment #0</b>
3	Tue, Feb 9, 16	<i>Seminar Session 1: “A Call to Sustainability”</i>	<i>Choices</i> Session 1: “A Call to Sustainability”	Session 1 Reading Questions
3	Thu, Feb 11, 16	Air Pollution & Greenhouse Gases		Session 1 Facilitator, Opener, & Notetaker Short Submissions
4	Tue, Feb 16, 16	Climate Change		<b>Grist presentations #2</b>
4	Thu, Feb 18, 16	The Climate Change Challenge		
5	Tue, Feb 23, 16	<i>Seminar Session 2: “Ecological Principles”</i>	<i>Choices</i> Session 2: “Ecological Principles”	Session 2 Reading Questions; Session 1 Reflections
5	Thu, Feb 25, 16	Planetary Systems & Boundaries	<i>State of the World</i> , Chap. 2: “Respecting Planetary Boundaries & Reconnecting to the Biosphere”	<b>Grist presentations #3;</b> Session 2 Facilitator, Opener, & Notetaker Short Submissions
6	Tue, Mar 1, 16	Ecological Footprints & Planetary Limits	<i>State of the World</i> , Chap. 4: “Getting to One-Planet Living”, pgs. 39-43.	<b>Grist presentations #4; Assignment #1</b>
6	Thu, Mar 3, 16	Food, climate & the future	<i>State of the World</i> , Chap. 17: “Agriculture: Growing Food-- and Solutions”	<b>Grist presentations #5</b>
7	Tue, Mar 8, 16	<i>Seminar Session 3: “Food”</i>	<i>Choices</i> Session 3: “Food”	Session 3 Reading Questions; Session 2 Reflections
7	Thu, Mar 10, 16	Sustainable Energy: Part 1		<b>Grist presentations #6;</b> Session 3 Facilitator, Opener, & Notetaker Short Submissions
8	Tue, Mar 15, 16	Sustainable Energy: Part 2	<i>State of the World</i> , Chap. 15: “Beyond Fossil Fuels: Assessing Energy Alternatives”	<b>Grist presentations #7</b>
8	Thu, Mar 17, 16	Sustainable Energy: Part 3	<i>State of the World</i> , Chap 8: “Renewable Energy’s Natural Resource Impacts”	<b>Local Sustainability Initiatives Paper Proposal Due</b>
	Mar. 22 & Mar. 24, 16	<b>SPRING RECESS: NO CLASS</b>		
9	Tue, Mar 29, 16	<i>Seminar Session 4: “Community”</i>	<i>Choices</i> Session 4: “Community”	Session 4 Reading Questions; Session 3 Reflections
	Thu, Mar 31, 16	<b>CESAR CHAVEZ DAY HOLIDAY: NO CLASS</b>		Session 4 Facilitator, Opener, & Notetaker Short Submissions
10	Tue, Apr 5, 16	Environmental Policy: Part 1		<b>Grist presentations #8; Assignment #2</b>
10	Thu, Apr 7, 16	Environmental Policy: Part 2	<i>State of the World</i> , Chap. 4: “Getting to One-Planet Living”, pgs. 43-50.	<b>Grist presentations #9</b>
11	Tue, Apr 12, 16	<i>Seminar Session 5: “Transportation”</i>	<i>Choices</i> Session 5: “Transportation”	Session 5 Reading Questions; Session 4 Reflections
11	Thu, Apr 14, 16	Local Action on Climate Change	<i>Cool Cities Report</i> , pgs. 1-7	<b>Grist presentations #10;</b> Session 5 Facilitator, Opener, & Notetaker Short Submissions

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**Course Schedule & Key Dates (cont.)**

<b>Week #</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic/ Event</b>	<b>Reading Assignment Due</b>	<b>Assignment Due</b>
12	Tue, Apr 19, 16	“Do The Math”	<i>State of the World</i> , Chap. 14: “Keep Them in the Ground: Ending the Fossil Fuel Era”	<b>Grist presentations #11</b>
12	Thu, Apr 21, 16	The Story of Stuff		<b>Local Sustainability Initiatives Paper Due &amp; Group Presentation Meetings</b>
13	Tue, Apr 26, 16	<i>Seminar Session 6: “Consumption &amp; Economy”</i>	<i>Choices</i> Session 6: “Consumption & Economy”	Session 6 Reading Questions; Session 5 Reflections
13	Thu, Apr 28, 16	Organizing to Create a More Sustainable World: Part 1	<i>State of the World</i> , Chap. 23: “Moving from Individual Change to Societal Change”	<b>Grist presentations #12; Assignment #3;</b> Session 6 Facilitator, Opener, & Notetaker Short Submissions
14	Tue, May 3, 16	Organizing to Create a More Sustainable World: Part 2		
14	Thu, May 5, 16	Economics & The Environment	<i>State of the World</i> , Chap. 11: Building a Sustainable and Desirable Economy-in-Society-in-Nature”	<b>Grist presentations #13</b>
15	Tue, May 10, 16	Group Presentations: Sustainability Initiatives in the Bay Area		<b>Local Sustainability Initiative Presentations Due</b>
15	Thu, May 12, 16	Group Presentations: Sustainability Initiatives in the Bay Area		<b>Assignment #4</b>
16	Tue, May 17, 16	<i>Seminar Session 7: “Visions of Sustainability”</i>	<i>Choices</i> Session 7: “Visions of Sustainability”	Session 7 Reading Questions; Session 7 Facilitator, Opener, & Notetaker Short Submissions
17	Tue, May 24, 16	<b>FINAL EXAM</b>		