Notes on e-mail. You should have an ACTIVE SFSU e-mail account that will enable you to receive e-mail messages from me. Please do not ask me to e-mail you at a non-SFSU e-mail address. If you prefer to use another e-mail address, arrange to forward messages automatically from your SFSU account to your preferred account. When you contact me by e-mail, please identify yourself with your full name and refer to this class (I teach several classes so it’s helpful to know which one you’re referring to), and allow 36 hours for a response, although I usually respond within 24 hours except on weekends.

SYLLABUS

As the introductory course in S.F. State’s interdisciplinary environmental studies program, this course has several objectives:

1) To explain and emphasize the interdisciplinary nature of environmental problems and solutions and the corresponding interdisciplinary nature of the ENVS program. This will be illustrated through both lectures and readings.
2) To explain the environmental impacts of the U.S. political/economic system as a system, or ‘social structure’.
3) To acquaint students with the history, dynamics, and problems of, as well as opportunities for, environmentalism as a movement, especially in the United States but also globally.
4) To encourage students to become effective actors on behalf of the environment, and to understand the necessary, intimate connections between environmental defense and social justice in the 21st century, both in the U.S. and globally.

A final grade of C in this class is necessary to continue with the ENVS major.

WHAT IS EXPECTED FROM STUDENTS:

1) Regular class attendance and participation. If you miss more than 3 class sessions in the course of the semester without a valid excuse (e.g., evidence that you have seen a doctor when you were absent; death or severe illness in your immediate family), ½ letter will be deducted from your grade; 5 or more absences will cost you a whole letter grade. “My cousin’s wedding” isn’t an excusable absence. Please do not ask “What did we cover in class last time?” or “Did we cover anything important in class?” If you absolutely must miss a class, it’s your responsibility to get notes from a classmate. Any changes in assignment will be e-mailed to all students.

2) Timely completion of the assigned readings/film viewing; in addition to the textbooks, students are asked to follow current environmental events through regular newspaper reading and by seeking out environmental news on the internet. We may not discuss all of the assigned material in class—but you will be evaluated on it.

3) Exams at midterm and final; dates shown below (20% of grade each). Exams will be combination—multiple choice, short answer, essay, and will cover lectures and assigned readings.

4) Journal, minimum of two short entries or one long entry per week totaling a minimum of one single-spaced page per week, to be turned in 3 times at dates shown on syllabus. Semester total is 15 SINGLE SPACED pages; you should continue to write your journal while your earlier turn-ins are being graded. Each turn-in will count for 20% of your grade (60% total). A penalty will be assessed for late papers. Please note that the quality of your writing will affect your grade, more toward the end of the semester than toward the beginning. If you know that you have writing problems, I suggest that you get help with it soon; writing help is available (see below). Print out your journal on regular paper; clip the entries together. SAVE your graded journal after it has been returned to you, the next installment should be clipped to the first, so that every time you turn in your journal you turn in the whole thing. It’s helpful for me to see how your journal is progressing over the semester and whether and how you respond to my comments and criticisms.

Journal purpose and description: The journal assignment is intended both to encourage and to document your engagement with the assigned readings and lectures, with environmental and environmentally-
relevant news, with the role of environmental issues in politics, and with assigned activities. In other words, I want to see evidence that you’re doing the reading and thinking about what you read (feel free to disagree with what you read or hear in lectures, keeping in mind that you should always provide evidence, either logical or factual, for your opinions); that you’re trying to apply what you’re learning in the classroom to what you observe outside the classroom and hear or read in the news, and that you’re getting your feet wet and beginning to become an environmentally engaged citizen. Here’s an example of how you might reflect on assigned reading. In *The Story of Stuff*, Annie Leonard argues that people should “reactivate their inner citizen”—that is, become informed and engaged in their communities and in politics. Apparently, she worries that this is not happening, even among the college-age people who are the primary audience for her book (statistical evidence about low turnout of younger voters suggests that she is correct, in general). You might reflect on the reasons for this: is it that people don’t believe that their participation makes any difference—perhaps because the system is too corrupt? Or is it that they’re just too distracted by other activities such as entertainment and social media? Or is it that they just don’t think that politics is relevant to their lives (but maybe they’re engaged in their communities in other ways)? Supply some evidence to back up your opinions—there are your own beliefs about this, of course, but you might also want to ask some of your fellow students about their attitudes toward and participation in politics. (You are not, however, being asked to name names or disclose anything of a personal nature.) The evidence you use to support your opinions doesn’t have to be formal for this assignment, but getting in the habit of examining your assumptions and supporting your arguments with evidence is an essential skill, and you should practice it in your journal. That is one of the things I will look for when I evaluate your work. I expect to see at least one (fairly detailed) reflection on something in each of the assigned books over the course of the semester, and further integration of the books into reflections on class lectures, news, and activities.

**News:** If you are not a regular consumer of news, please plan to become one; I’ll look for evidence in your journal that you’re following and learning from the news—things like what kinds of decisions are being made (or not), who is making them and why; how citizens may be able to participate in decisionmaking or how they’re prevented or blocked from doing so. Some of what you learn is going to be frustrating: think about it; start considering what you might do about it; write about it. Not all news relevant to environmental affairs is specifically “environmental,”—for instance, cuts to the federal budget, which political conservatives want because they are worried about the budget deficit, are likely to affect the budgets of government agencies such as the EPA. So reading a newspaper with general coverage (The S.F. Chronicle, The New York Times) is an excellent idea, at least once in a while. Good sources of environmental news are available online and/or on the radio for free; here are a few recommended sources:

- Living on Earth (radio, archived online). Saturday afternoons @4:00 on KQED (public) radio, 88.5 FM.
- Grist—environmental news online.
- High Country News—print magazine covering the Western U.S. Full access available online through the SFSU library. Go to “electronic journals.”
- Yale 360. Online; Yale University environmental magazine.
- Climate Progress. Online blog covering climate science and climate and energy politics.

**Activities:** (3 total). **First activity (to be discussed in first journal turn-in):** Find out who your member of Congress is, if you don’t already know—that is, who represents you in the U.S. House of Representatives. (Type “who is my congressperson” into the Google search bar.) Look at his/her website. Comment on what you find out about his/her environmental record, also about whether you thought this exercise useful, and why or why not. The League of Conservation Voters’ website may help you to evaluate your representative’s activities in Congress on environmental issues.

**Activities 2 and 3:** These should be organized group activities that interest you with some purpose related to the general subject matter of the class, so you have lots of choices. They should not be simply recreational: although fun may be a side benefit it shouldn’t be the main purpose of the activity (if your main thoughts after an event were that the weather was wonderful and the beer was cold, you should either choose another activity or reconsider your own approach to it, or both). Of the two activities you’re asked to do, **make at least one of them something that you haven’t done before, perhaps something that’s a bit outside your usual comfort level.** For instance, if you’ve never attended a public meeting, consider
attending a city council or board of supervisors’ meeting where environmental policy or the environmental consequences of a proposed development will be discussed. An activity could be participating in a volunteer day—putting solar panels on a house, leafleting for a cause that’s important to you, participating in ecological restoration. It could be attending an event such as the Goldman Environmental Awards, a meeting of a political club, a meeting to organize political activity (e.g., Citizens’ Climate Lobby, Sierra Club). It could be attending an Eco-students’ or Fossil Free meeting on campus. Whatever your two activities are, reflect on them in your journal. An activity that you didn’t like can still be a learning experience; a meeting that wasn’t satisfying because it wasn’t run very well might give you some ideas about how to run a better meeting (for example).

Writing help: If you need general help with your writing, please contact the Learning Assistance Center (drop in at HSS 348, call (415) 338-1993, or e-mail lac@sfsu.edu.)

Plagiarism. The use of material drawn from articles, books or any other source without citing and/or using quotation marks when appropriate—is a serious offense and may result in ZERO credit for the assignment, depending on how much of the assignment is plagiarized. DON’T DO IT! (It’s easier to detect than you may think.) Informal citation of your textbooks and the lectures is fine for journal purposes (in other words you can just use the word “Foster” to refer to that textbook, without including the publication data that usually accompanies citations. But if you quote Foster directly, quotation marks should be used. If you refer to material that isn’t required for the class, such as a story on the Living on Earth program, include the date of the show. If you’re referring to a book you read outside of class, the title, author and publication date should be given, but you don’t need to include a formal bibliography with your journal.

REQUIRED READING
Annie Leonard, The Story of Stuff; John Bellamy Foster, The Vulnerable Planet; Benjamin Kline, First Along the River, 2nd ed. All are available in the University bookstore, but you may purchase them elsewhere if you wish. Films and some internet reading are also required (see below). On the library’s main page, type ‘films on demand’ into the search bar; then locate the films on demand database. You’ll be asked for your library account data, so you MUST have a library account. Once you’re into the films on demand database, you can use the searchbar to locate the film by title or by segment, which means the number.

APPROXIMATE SCHEDULE:
1/26 Introduction to course and assignments.
2/6 LAST DAY TO DROP WITHOUT PETITION.
2/4-11 What’s a social structure? The equation P x A x T=I: environmental impact of social structures. Leonard, introductory material and Ch. 1.
2/16 Ecosystems and their value to humans. Listen to the David Suzuki interview on Living on Earth (loe.org) for August 24, 2012 (about 16 minutes). Read Leonard, Ch. 2.
2/21 Last day to add with an exception
3/2 JOURNAL NUMBER ONE DUE, 5 single-spaced pages.
2/18-3/9 What we’re doing to ecosystems: the ‘big 5’ human environmental impacts. Read Leonard, Ch. 3, watch the BBC film on YouTube “The Truth About Climate Change” Parts 1 and 2 (locate with a Google search using the film title); read David Roberts on Grist, “Two Reasons Climate Change is not like other environmental problems,” (type David Roberts Two Reasons into the Google search bar); the piece on habitat loss on
Annenberg Learner (use Habitat Loss Annenberg Learner as the search term); and listen to “Agony and Ivory” and “Peru Fishery Collapse” on Living on Earth. Read “Impacts of Pollution on Biodiversity,” on the Australian Department of the Environment website here: http://www.environment.gov.au/node/21594#impactsofpollutiononbiodiversity. Also read Bill McKibben, “Climate Change’s Terrifying New Math.” Locate online via Google.

3/11-16 Social structures and environmental impact. We weren’t always “consumers”: pre-capitalist social structures. Read “Introduction to Indigenous Traditions,” by John Grim, Yale University. Website: Forum on Religion and Ecology (locate with a Google search), and Kline, Chs. 1-2.

3/18 MIDTERM EXAM
3/23-25 SPRING BREAK
3/30-4/1 Agriculture; the rise of capitalism. Bellamy-Foster 1-3, Kline, 3; Leonard, 4.

4/20-5/13 Environmentalisms, from the Progressive Era to the present. Finish Kline (Chs. 5-11) and Bellamy-Foster (Chs. 6-7); in Leonard read Epilogue and Appendices.

5/13 (last day) Journal #3 due: FIVE SINGLE-SPACED PAGES (MINIMUM); turn in sets 1 and 2.
5/20 (Wed.) FINAL EXAM, 8:30-10:30.

PLEASE READ AND NOTE CAREFULLY THE FOLLOWING POLICIES OF THE COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Final Exam: According to Academic Senate policy F76-12 a time period is set aside at the end of each semester for a formal examination period. All classes are expected to meet during the final examination period whether an examination is given or not. The final examination schedule is published each semester in the Class Schedule.
http://www.sfsu.edu/~acadres/final_exams/finals15.htm

CHSS Withdrawal Policy: The last day to drop a class is February 6, 2015 until 11:59pm. Starting February 7 – April 24, 2015 you must submit a withdrawal petition. Withdrawal from a class starting February 7, 2015 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 25 – May 15, 2015 you may not withdraw from a class or the University, except in the case of a serious documented illness or verified accident. Please refer to the following website for further information on withdrawal polices:
https://chss.sfsu.edu/advising/
CR/NC Option: The last day to request CR/NC option is **March 20, 2015 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 permit numbers is **January 26 – February 6, 2015**. The period to add classes by Exception is **February 7 – February 20, 2015**. It is your responsibility to procure a late permit number from your instructor and add the class. Faculty cannot add you into a class. Starting **February 21, 2015**, 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/regsched.html](http://www.sfsu.edu/~admisrec/reg/regsched.html)

**Disability Programs and Resource Center:** Students with disabilities who need reasonable accommodations are encouraged to contact the instructor. The Disability Programs and Resource Center (DPRC) is available to facilitate the reasonable accommodations process. The DPRC, 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).