

Seminar in Ecological and Environmental Issues (Bio 186B/ENVS 186B): Course Information

Fall 2009

Instructor:

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 & <http://www.csus.edu/indiv/c/colemanr/index.html>

Course Location & Times:

Lec: #84585 Wed 5:30 to 6:20pm Room 202 HMB

Office hours:

Ron Coleman Wed 2:00 - 5:00pm Room 119 HMB

What this course is about:

The purpose of this course is to expose you to a variety of current topics concerning ecological and environmental issues and to have you think about these issues in a meaningful way. As you will see, many of the issues that confront us both as scientists and as citizens are complex and solutions require substantial information and clear and creative thinking from many perspectives.

Learning Objectives:

Conceptual

- To be exposed to a variety of current topics in ecological and environmental issues

Practical

- To maintain a journal in which you summarize each talk and ideally reflect upon what you have heard

Attendance and Deadlines:

You are expected to attend **every** lecture. I will pass around a **sign-up sheet** to ensure that you are in fact present. You are excused from a maximum of two seminars. If you are absent for more than two seminars, you will not get credit for this course. Do not schedule medical appointments, car repairs, etc during the time allocated for this course. **Showing up late constitutes not being present.**

Textbook & Website:

There is no textbook for this course.

Web site: <http://www.csus.edu/indiv/c/colemanr/Courses/Bio186B/bio186B.html>

Exams:

There are no exams.

Grading:

This course is worth 1 unit.

To get credit for taking this course, you must do two things. First, you must attend the seminars as stated above (you are excused from a maximum of two of them).

Secondly, you must maintain a journal for the class. The journal will be evaluated early in the semester (approximately week 4) and after the last seminar. The purpose of early evaluation is to ensure that you are on the right track and that your journal entries are meeting the standard for receiving credit for the course. If they are found to be deficient, you will be given advice on how to improve your entries such that you will produce a journal of sufficient quality to receive credit at the end of the course.

Journal Format:

I highly recommend using a small bound notebook for your journal. A bundle of haphazard loose pages does NOT constitute a journal.

Your journal will have an entry for each seminar that you attend. Each entry will consist of the following:

1. The name of the speaker and the seminar title
2. The notes that you take during the seminar
3. A paragraph summarizing the main points of the seminar
4. A paragraph describing your reactions to the seminar (i.e., Do you agree with the speaker? Do you disagree? Do you need to know additional information before you can judge the material presented? Would you have presented the material a different way? etc).

Ground Rules:

This is a seminar course. All you really have to do is attend, listen, think critically and write your thoughts. You cannot do this properly if there are distractions or if you miss part of the talk.

Therefore,

1. Do not show up late or leave early. Do not ask me if you can leave early – you cannot! The start and ends of a seminar are often critical to understanding the context of what is being said.
2. You may not leave the seminar to go to the bathroom or some other errand unless it is an absolute emergency. The seminar is only 50 minutes long: plan your day!

3. Turn off cell phones before the seminar
4. You may eat, but use common sense. A quiet sandwich is a smart choice. Really crunchy snack food in a noisy package is a very bad choice.
5. Ask questions: It is general etiquette at seminars to hold questions to the end of the seminar. At that time, I strongly encourage you to ask questions. Speakers like questions, even difficult questions. Train yourself to think of at least one substantial question in every seminar. Even if you do not get a chance to ask your question, write it down in your journal.

Honor Code:

Don't cheat. Besides the fact that I will be forced to take strong measures if I catch you -- including recommending your dismissal from the class and from the university -- I will be profoundly disappointed in you.

Don't even think about doing any of the following:

- a. Giving or receiving information from another student. You may certainly discuss the seminars with other students – in fact, I encourage that – but you may not simply copy down your friend's notes or words into your journal. Using someone else's work constitutes cheating.
- b. Signing someone else's name on the attendance sheet.

Feedback:

I appreciate your feedback on this course. Let me know if you think of ways we can improve upon it.