

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

Fall 2015

Instructor:

Dr. Ron Coleman	Office:	119A Humboldt
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Course Location & Times:

Lec: #81430 Wed 5:30 to 6:20pm Room 202 HMB

Office hours:

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

BIO 186B. Ecological and Environmental Issues Seminar. Series of at least 10 seminars in ecological and environmental issues. Topics within each seminar will vary each semester. Note: May be repeated for credit. No more than one unit of BIO 186 may be counted toward the upper division major requirement. Prerequisite: BIO 10 or both BIO 1 and BIO 2. Cross Listed: ENVS 186B; only one may be counted for credit. Graded: Credit / No Credit. Units: 1.0

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 may miss a maximum of two seminars; however, if you miss a seminar for ANY reason (including medical reasons), you are required to turn in a 3 page written report (see below) on a current ecological or environmental issue, within two weeks of your absence. If you are absent for more than two seminars, or you fail to turn in the written reports for each seminar you missed, 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.**

Email policy:

As a Sac State student, you are responsible for regularly checking your Saclink email account (i.e., at least daily). Failing to do an assignment because you did not check your Saclink email account is your problem.

Furthermore, when corresponding with me about this course, you MUST use your Saclink email account, not a gmail, yahoo or any other email account. This is an official University policy (IRT-0102, January 1, 2010).

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.

Secondly, you must maintain a journal for the class. The journal will be evaluated early in the semester (approximately week 4), later in the semester (approximately week 8), 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. **WARNING:** those turning in inadequate journals at the end of the course will not receive credit for the course. And yes, there are always people that fail this 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 (these must be sufficient to answer questions about the content of 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).

A typical journal entry will be 3-5 pages long. If someone outside of the course cannot read your notes and reconstruct the seminar, i.e., who was speaking, what did they say, what were the controversial issues, etc., then you are not doing an adequate job of keeping a journal.

If you think about it, you will realize that the best time to do your journal is right after the seminar. It is pretty impossible to do it two weeks later.

Written Report:

If you have to miss one of the seminars, you must write a three page report on a current topic of environmental or ecological interest, focusing on a recent newspaper or magazine article or report. Your report must include your name, date, and complete information about your written sources. It must have page numbers and be double-spaced. It absolutely must be word processed (or typed). I will not accept hand-written reports. This report is due no later than two weeks after your absence.

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. 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.