Ecology and Human Impacts on the Environment (Biology 315)  
Fall 2013 Syllabus

Instructor: Dr. Francis Bozzolo  
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Email: fhbozzolo@gmail.com  
Office hours: Monday & Wednesday 3:00 pm – 4:00 pm, and by appointment  
Class schedule: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, 9:00 am – 9:50 am (LS 248)  
Final exam: Monday, Dec. 16, 8:00 am – 10:00 am  
Class website: Blackboard (https://blackboard.sdsu.edu/)

Class overview and purpose
Ecology and Human Impacts on the Environment is an introductory class in environmental science, conservation, and human health in which we explore the diverse ways in which people directly and indirectly influence the earth’s ecosystems. The class is designed to introduce non-biology majors to the natural world and ecological interactions, and to focus on the ways in which humans modify and interfere with the functioning of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, the atmosphere, lithosphere, and so forth. The course begins with a summary of human population growth and environmental problems, and an introduction to ecology. We will then transitions into detailed examination of some of the most pressing environmental problems we face on land, in freshwater, and in the sea. The overriding objective of the course is to provide students with a modern perspective on the impact of our growing human population and resource needs on habitats, species, and biodiversity, and to explore ways to reduce environmental degradation in the face of increased demands on natural resources.

Summary of course goals
After taking this course, you should be able to:
1. Describe patterns of human population growth and consumption.  
2. Explain the basic ways that ecosystems and their biological communities function.  
3. Describe the primary ways humans affect ecological systems and ecosystem function.  
4. List the ways in which species interact in nature and list examples of how human activities influence these interactions.
5. Describe how matter and energy flow through ecosystems and how climate change influences these processes.
6. List the major terrestrial and aquatic resources used by people and describe how their acquisition and use influence communities of organisms on land and in the sea.
7. Describe how human population growth, human history, resource management, and political relationships within and among the world’s countries influence our ability to preserve species and maintain ecosystem function.

Course Materials
- **Textbook:** None.
- **Outside Readings:** This course will incorporate outside readings from scholarly journals, popular science essays, news articles, and other relevant sources. Readings will supplement lectures, and material from readings may be included on quizzes and exams. Readings will be announced on Blackboard.
- **ParScore Forms (REQUIRED):** Available at the Aztec bookstore. You must have the correct form. Each exam will require one red ParScore form (F-289-PAR-L) and a #2 pencil.

Grading
Your grade will be based on the percentage of total points earned as indicated below. Final grades will be determined by the class average and my judgment regarding class performance (e.g., curving). No extra-credit assignments will be given.

- 5 online quizzes (6 given, lowest dropped; 5 points each) 25 5.26%
- 3 midterm exams (100 points each) 300 63.16%
- Final exam 150 31.58%
- **Total** 475 100.00%

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**Online quizzes.** Six quizzes will be administered through Blackboard, and will be distributed throughout the semester. Students will be notified at the end of class on the days when they are posted, and will have 24 hours, from noon that day to noon the next, to take the exam. A password to access the quiz will be provided in class. If you experience problems with Blackboard and notify me after 10am the day they are due, I may not be able to address them in time to allow you to take the quiz. There are no make-ups for missed quizzes.

**Exams** will primarily be in multiple choice formats. They will cover lecture material and relevant readings. You will be responsible for both lecture material and all reading material for each
exam. Each exam will only cover material presented since the preceding exam. This includes the final exam (i.e., it is not comprehensive).

Students with exam accommodations through the university’s Student Disability Services should speak with me sufficiently in advance to arrange those.

Blackboard
The primary goal of this class is for students to learn. At the same time, different methods of learning may work best for each student. I strongly recommend that students attend lectures in order to benefit the most from class, and be able to ask questions and engage in any discussions during lecture. However, lecture slides will also be posted on Blackboard for students to view, or re-view. While these may be posted ahead of class, this should not be expected.

Missed exams and assignments
If you miss an exam due to injury, illness, bereavement, or other events beyond your control, you must contact me no later than the day after the exam with a valid excuse to be accorded the privilege of taking a make-up exam. Missing an exam because your employer wants you to work is not an adequate justification. It is your responsibility to confirm that I have received the communication. No make-up exams will be given for the final exam.

University policy provides students with excusable absences for observance of religious holidays. According to university policy, students must review the class schedule and notify instructors within two weeks of the start of classes if they foresee that the class requirements conflict with a religious observance. After that date I may not accept religious observance as an excuse for being absent or for failure to complete an assignment or take an exam. It is never acceptable to request to be excused from an exam for religious reasons after the exam has been given.

If you wish to dispute or discuss an exam grade, you must do so within one week from the time an exam grade is posted.

Cheating, plagiarism, and academic misconduct
Cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic misconduct will not be tolerated. A student found to be cheating on any exam or assignment will receive a zero on the exam or assignment. In addition, the instructor reserves the right to take any action they see fit, including expulsion from the course, and the event will be reported to campus judicial authorities and may lead to additional actions from the University. Expulsion from the university is a possible consequence of cheating. Cheating constitutes any situation in which a student claims another’s work for their own (e.g., copying exam answers or handing in plagiarized text in a homework assignment). I encourage you to review the university’s policy on plagiarism so you are aware of what constitutes academic misconduct.

http://its.sdsu.edu/docs/TURN_Plagiarism_AcadSen.pdf
http://science.widener.edu/svb/essay/plagiar.html
**Class conduct**

Please be considerate of the instructor and other students during lectures by not talking, listening to music, texting, surfing the internet, or doing other non-class related activities. You will be asked to leave if you are being disruptive during lectures. Students also must be aware that coming late to class is disruptive to the instructor and to their fellow students. I expect students to be on time and will begin lectures on time. *Repeated disruptive behavior will not be tolerated and may result in your being asked to leave the class permanently.*

Please silence or turn off your cell phone prior to the beginning of class. If your cell phone rings, you will need to turn it off without answering it. If you are expecting an emergency call and need to monitor your phone, please let me know before class and we will make any necessary arrangements.

**Dropping the course**

The last day to drop is September 9, 2013. After that date, you must present documentation of a work-related issue or other problem (not simply a low grade) to the Undergraduate Advising Office of the Biology Department. The last day to drop without the risk of penalty comes very early in the semester. If you are unsure of what to do, please feel free to talk with me about your concerns.