



## Course Syllabus

ENSC 1114: Foundations of Environmental Science  
Kimbell School of Geoscience  
McCoy College of Science, Mathematics, & Engineering  
Fall 2026 Section 101, MWF 1-1:50, Room BO 247

### Instructor Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Kashif Mahmud  
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Office hours: M 9:00-11:00AM, TuTh 12:00-1:30PM  
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This syllabus may change during the semester due to changes in course structure. Check D2L often for updates!

### Textbook & Instructional Materials (Optional)

Contemporary Environmental Issues, Michael C. Slattery. Kendall-Hunt, 8<sup>th</sup> Ed.

### Office Hours:

I can meet with students 1-on-1 at my (and the student's) discretion. For 1-to-1 meetings, we can adhere to the original office hours given above or schedule a meeting time via email. If you do not wish to meet in person. You are welcome to call my office during my office hour times. We can also use Zoom to set up virtual meetings.

### Communication:

**Email** – I will use your **\*D2L** email account to communicate with you. It is your responsibility to check your D2L email. When you email me you need to make sure that you are very clear in describing the question/issue. Always start by stating your name and what class you are in. Use formal language and give it a proofread. If I can't understand your writing, I can't respond in a meaningful way. Vague emails will not receive a response.

**D2L** – I recommend that you download the **\*'Brightspace Pulse'** app on your phones so that you can be alerted anytime I post anything on D2L. If you do not download this app, you can just log into D2L often to see any news updates and new material. I will alert you about new lecture material, assignments, quizzes, and tests via D2L news items.

### Course Objectives

To learn about the natural and human components of environmental science; to understand that scientific observations make possible the protection and management of Earth's environment. Students will be able to

- Explain environmental change in terms of continuous natural processes as well as growing human impacts

- Observe and report on the environment scientifically, using established methods and protocols to ensure accuracy
- Relate changes in environmental variables in one part of the Earth System to impacts on other systems
- Recognize real, discrete environmental issues and identify sustainable solutions
- Reflect on how your analysis of, assumptions about, and perspectives on environmental issues have changed over the period of this course, and how the activities in this course have facilitated this change

**Lecture Attendance:** Attendance is **mandatory** because you must complete all quizzes during the class hour. **Lab attendance is also mandatory.** Students with 3 or more unexcused Lab absences may be dropped from the course at the discretion of the instructor.

**Lecture Material (In-person & D2L):** Lectures will be delivered in-person during the lecture time (MWF 1-1:50PM). I will also upload the lecture slides to D2L after each class.

**Exams (In-person):** Exams will be administered in-person during the lecture time.

**Labs (In-person & D2L):** Lab will meet in-person. It is **very important** that you study the lab document before lab each week. You will be assigned online quizzes via D2L that will be due prior to each lab to test your knowledge of the lab material.

*Assessments related to the MSU Core Coursework*

*This class serves the MSU core (Life & Physical Sciences - 030N) and reports assessments in Critical Thinking, Communication skills (Written Communication), Empirical and Quantitative Skills (Quantitative Literacy), and Teamwork.*

### **Course Assessment and Grading**

- Numerous open-book quizzes will be given within lecture periods during the entire course. These quizzes will be administered via D2L and assess class participation and comprehension. Take notes from the lecture and utilize them to answer the quizzes. Quizzes are to be completed during a time window (usually 5 multiple-choice/true-false questions within 5 mins). The **best 70% of your quizzes** will be accounted for a **20%** of final grading. The lecture slides will be uploaded in D2L after the quiz.
- **Three** exams will be given this semester. Each exam will cover only the new material presented since the previous exam. Each exam will be given during a lecture period and will be comprised of multiple choice and true/false questions that may include interpretation of diagrams and graphs. **(10% each; 30% total)**

- **One** writing project will comprise a Journal based on newsletters, blogs, and online readings about the environment, and a self-assessment report of your new perspectives. **Total 5 news journal entries required, and 1 final self-assessment report (15%). Late submissions will not be accepted.** The use of generative AI tools (such as ChatGPT, Claude, or AI writing assistants) is **strictly prohibited** for any part of this assignment. This includes brainstorming, drafting, editing, or translating. Any submission containing AI-generated text will receive an automatic grade of zero (0) and will be referred for academic integrity review. *[AACU Critical Thinking: Explanation of issues, Influence of context and assumptions, Conclusions and related outcomes; AACU Written Communication: Context of and Purpose for Writing, Content Development, Genre and Disciplinary Conventions]*
- Group assignment will include an activity that will be presented in class (PowerPoint presentation). The presentation will cover an environmental “event” and its impact on the environment, such as impacts on human, animal, agricultural, economic, and other systems **(PowerPoint presentation, 10%)**. If you miss the day that your group does the presentation, you will do one on your own and present it during my office hours. *[AACU Teamwork: Facilitates the Contributions of Team Members, Individual Contributions Outside of Team Meetings, Fosters Constructive Team Climate]*
- The laboratory grade will be based on quizzes, lab documents, a lab midterm test, and a lab final test. **(25%)**. You will be responsible for keeping track of your lab grades. Lab 6 (carbon budget) is evaluated for quantitative skill; calculate the amount of carbon assimilated by MSU trees from tree attributes against that of carbon dioxide emitted by passenger vehicles on campus. *[AACU Quantitative Literacy: Calculation, Application / Analysis, Assumptions]*

Table 1. Overall percentage value for course exams and assignments

| <b>Assignments</b>      | <b>Percent</b> |
|-------------------------|----------------|
| Quizzes (The best 70%)  | 20             |
| Exam 1                  | 10             |
| Exam 2                  | 10             |
| News Journal Assignment | 15             |
| Project presentation    | 10             |
| Exam 3                  | 10             |
| Laboratory              | 25             |
| Total                   | 100            |

### Grading Standards

This class uses the following numerical equivalents for grades:

A = 100-90% | B = 89-80% | C = 79-70% | D = 69-60% | F = 59-0%.

### Extra Credit:

There will be no extra credit offered for this course. If you are struggling, try harder. If you are still struggling, come see me.

### Late Work and Excused Absences:

Make-up exams will only be given for university-excused absences. **\*In order to take a make-up exam, notification of a university-excused absence must be provided \*before or within one class period of the scheduled exam.**

If you are feeling ill for any reason, please refrain from attending lecture or lab in-person. You must inform your professor and TA as soon as you feel ill (and decide not to attend) before the class you miss. Please make use of the campus online health center or your own physician. A doctor's note will be required for excused absences.

All students should refer to the MSU Student Handbook for university policies related to student responsibilities, rights, and activities.

### **Desire-to-Learn (D2L)**

Extensive use of the MSU D2L program is a part of this course. Each student is expected to be familiar with this program as it provides a primary source of communication regarding assignments, examination materials, and general course information. You can log into [D2L](#) through the MSU Homepage. If you experience difficulties, please contact the technicians listed for the program or contact your instructor.

### **Recording Classes**

Recording classes is generally prohibited without the professor's explicit permission. Such recordings, when permitted, are for personal use only and may not be uploaded to the internet or otherwise shared, transmitted, or published without the professor's prior consent. Some faculty may not permit recordings of their classes. When it is feasible and appropriate, students may record classes to accommodate disabilities under the Americans With Disabilities Act, with prior approval of Disability Support Services. Such recordings may not be uploaded to the internet or otherwise shared, transmitted, or published.

### **Moffett Library**

Moffett Library provides resources and services to support student's studies and assignments, including books, peer-reviewed journals, databases, and multimedia materials accessible both on campus and remotely. The library offers media equipment checkout, reservable study rooms, and research assistance from librarians to help students effectively find, evaluate, and use information. Get started on this [Moffett Library webpage](#) to explore these resources and learn how to best utilize the library.

### **Student Handbook**

Refer to: [Student Handbook](#)

#### Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures:

Academic Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individual's to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct. Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism on course assignments will result, at a minimum, in a grade of '0' for that assignment. Depending on the magnitude of the offense, a course grade of 'F' or withdrawal from the course may be imposed.

#### Change of Schedule:

A student dropping a course (but not withdrawing from the University) within the first 12 class days of a regular semester or the first four class days of a summer semester is eligible for a 100% refund of applicable tuition and fees. Dates are published in the Schedule of Classes each semester.

#### Important Dates:

Last day for term schedule changes: 8/27

Deadline to file for graduation: 9/21

Last day to drop with a grade of "W:" 11/23

Refer to: [Drops, Withdrawals & Void](#)

#### Refund and Repayment Policy:

A student who withdraws or is administratively withdrawn from Midwestern State University (MSU) may be eligible to receive a refund for all or a portion of the tuition, fees and room/board charges that were paid to MSU for the semester. HOWEVER, if the student received financial aid (federal/state/institutional grants, loans and/or scholarships), all or a portion of the refund may be returned to the financial aid programs. As described below, two formulas (federal and state) exists in determining the amount of the refund. (Examples of each refund calculation will be made available upon request).

#### Services for Students With Disabilities:

In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Clark Student Center, Room 168, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to [Disability Support Services](#).

#### College Policies:

Campus Carry Rules/Policies

Refer to: [Campus Carry Rules and Policies](#)

#### Smoking/Tobacco Policy:

Midwestern State University seeks to provide a safe, healthy, pleasant environment for its faculty, staff, and students. To this end, the use of tobacco products, including smoke and smokeless tobacco, and the advertising, sale, free distribution, and discarding of tobacco products shall be prohibited in all indoor and outdoor facilities and in all university vehicles. The policy extends to faculty, staff, students, vendors, guests, and visitors.

#### Alcohol and Drug Policy:

To comply with the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989 and subsequent amendments, students and employees of Midwestern State are informed that strictly enforced policies are in place which prohibits the unlawful possession, use or distribution of any illicit drugs, including alcohol, on university property or as part of any university-sponsored activity. Students and employees are also subject to all applicable legal sanctions under local, state and federal law for any offenses involving illicit drugs on University property or at University-sponsored activities.

#### Campus Carry

Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes as prohibited. The new Constitutional Carry law does not change this process. Concealed carry still requires a License-to-carry permit, and openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit [Campus Carry](#).

#### Active Shooter

The safety and security of our campus is the responsibility of everyone in our community. Each of us has an obligation to be prepared to appropriately respond to threats to our campus, such as an active aggressor. Please review the information provided by the MSU Police Department regarding the options and strategies we can all use to stay safe during difficult situations. For more information, visit [MSUReady – Active Shooter](#). Students are encouraged to watch the video entitled “*Run. Hide. Fight.*” which may be electronically accessed via the University police department’s webpage: [“Run. Hide. Fight.”](#)

#### Grade Appeal Process:

Update as needed. Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University [Undergraduate Catalog](#)

### ENSC 1114 Lecture Schedule

| Week | Dates                               | Lecture Topics / Assignments / Projects / Exams                                                                                                                                 | Text Chapter(s) |
|------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1    | 8/24, 8/26, 8/30                    | Course Introduction; Environmental Physics and Chemistry                                                                                                                        | N/A             |
| 2    | 8/31, 9/2, 9/4                      | Geoscience; Atmospheric Science                                                                                                                                                 | N/A             |
| 3    | <u>9/7</u> , 9/9, 9/11              | <b>No Class <u>9/7</u> – Labor Day</b><br>Ecology                                                                                                                               | N/A             |
| 4    | 9/14, 9/16, 9/18                    | Environmental Ethics and Sustainability<br><b>Exam 1 – 9/18</b>                                                                                                                 | N/A<br>1        |
| 5    | 9/21, 9/23, 9/25                    | Human Population<br><b>Turn in first 3 news journals by 9/23</b>                                                                                                                | 2, 11           |
| 6    | 9/28, 9/30, 10/2                    | Energy Consumption – Electricity and Transportation                                                                                                                             | 3               |
| 7    | 10/5, 10/7, 10/9                    | Energy Consumption – Electricity and Transportation, Air Pollution and Atmospheric Deposition                                                                                   | 3, 4            |
| 8    | <u>10/12</u> , <u>10/14</u> , 10/16 | <b>No In-Person Class – <u>10/12</u>, <u>10/14</u></b> (Conference Travel)<br><b><u>One Lecture recording – Air Pollution and Atmospheric Deposition</u></b><br>Ozone depletion | 4, 5            |
| 9    | 10/19, 10/21, 10/23                 | Climate Change<br><b>Exam 2 – 10/23</b>                                                                                                                                         | 6               |
| 10   | 10/26, 10/28, 10/30                 | Climate Change; Deforestation<br><b>Turn in last 2 news journals with self-assessment by 10/28</b>                                                                              | 6, 7            |
| 11   | 11/2, 11/4, 11/6                    | Deforestation; Biodiversity                                                                                                                                                     | 7, 8            |
| 12   | 11/9, 11/11, 11/13                  | Biodiversity; Soil Degradation<br><b>Project presentation – Group and Topic selected by 11/11</b>                                                                               | 8, 9            |
| 13   | 11/16, 11/18, 11/20                 | Soil Degradation; The Water Crisis                                                                                                                                              | 9, 10           |
| 14   | 11/23, <u>11/25</u> , <u>11/27</u>  | The Water Crisis<br><b>No Class <u>11/25</u>, <u>11/27</u> – Thanksgiving holiday</b>                                                                                           | 10              |
| 15   | 11/30, 12/2, 12/4                   | <b>Project presentations – 11/30 and 12/2</b><br><b>Exam 3 – 12/4</b>                                                                                                           | N/A             |
| 16   | <b>Finals Week</b>                  | <b>No Class (Conference Travel)</b>                                                                                                                                             | N/A             |

Underlined dates are classes missed due to Holidays and Conference travel

### Notice

Changes in the course syllabus, format, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor.