



Course Syllabus: Foundations of Environmental Science  
McCoy College of Science, Math and Engineering  
ENSC 1114 section X30  
Fall Semester 2025

**Contact Information**

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**Course Objective**

To learn about the natural and human components of environmental science; to understand that scientific observations make possible 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

**Textbook & Instructional Materials**

The Environment and You by Christiansen, Leege, and Juliana, 3rd Edition.

**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Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individuals to whom credit is given) are prohibited. Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct. [Office of Student Conduct](#)

## 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.

## Grading

Assignments	Points
Quizzes (15 at 10 pts each)	150
Readings (5 at 25 pts each)	125
Discussions (7 at 25 pts each)	175
Midterm Exam	150
End of term Exam	150
Lab grade	250
Total Points	1000

Table 2: Total points for final grade.

Grade	Points
A	>900
B	800 to 899
C	700 to 799
D	600 to 699
F	Less than 600

## Quizzes

All quizzes are posted within their weekly folders. **There are reviews available for each weekly quiz, which cover the topics on the quiz (and the tests).** Each quiz question has a one-point value. All quizzes are timed and must be

completed within 25 minutes. Quiz scores will contribute to 15% of the final grade in this course.

### **Readings**

There are five readings from environmental literature, each with an assignment. Reading assignments count towards 12.5% of the final grade in this course.

### **Discussions**

There are seven Discussions. These require reading an assigned article or website and/or watching a video. You are also required to find a related article, website, or video and to answer guiding questions about both the assigned material and your selection. You will then read and comment on two other students' postings. Discussions will count towards 17.5% of the final grade in this course. See "How to Succeed in this Course" for more guidelines.

### **Tests**

Each of the two course exams is posted in its weekly folder. Each test is available for the week prior to the due date and is due by 11:55 pm on the due date. The test must be completed within 90 minutes.

### **Mid-Term Test**

The midterm Test covers Chapters 1 - 8 in the textbook. **There are quiz reviews that also cover the topics for this test. These reviews are available now on D2L.** The test comprises multiple choice and true-false questions. Students will take the test online during week eight. The mid-term test is worth 15% of the final grade in the course.

### **End-of-term Test**

The end-of-term test covers Chapters 10 through 15 in the textbook. **There are quiz reviews that also cover the topics for this test. These reviews are available now on D2L.** The test comprises multiple choice and true-false questions. Students will take the exam online during week sixteen. The end-of-term exam is worth 15% of the final grade in the course.

### **Laboratory**

Laboratory assignments are included in the weekly folders with the other course materials. I do not use the lab section on D2L. All assignments and all grading are within the main course section on D2L. Students will take an online quiz that assesses understanding of each lab assignment, preferably while they are doing the lab assignment. The laboratory grade counts towards 25% of the final grade in the course. See "How to Succeed in the Lab" for more guidelines.

### **Extra Credit**

Extra credit is available for each test. Students may submit an extra Discussion Assignment to count towards 5 points extra credit on each test.

### **Late Work**

Late work may be accepted on a case-by-case basis. Communicate with your instructor if you have a reasonable need for extra time to complete coursework. Students will not be allowed to make up late work unless they communicate with the instructor via email within 24 hours (before or after) of having missed the due date. Communications should be sent to [rebecca.dodge@msutexas.edu](mailto:rebecca.dodge@msutexas.edu)

### **Important Dates**

Last day for term schedule changes: August 28, 2025

Deadline for December graduates to file for graduation: September 22, 2025

Last Day to drop with a grade of "W:" November 24, 2025. 4:00 p.m.

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

### **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. Chrome browser is recommended for best functionality. Please use these links:

- [Login Instructions](#)
- [Distance Education](#)
- [Online Problem Reporting System](#)

### **Participation**

Students are expected to participate in all aspects of the classes in which they are enrolled. For this class, participation involves taking the weekly progress monitor quizzes and tests within the allowed period. Posting and replying to Discussion topics in a timely manner are both part of participation. Although in general students are graded on intellectual effort and performance rather than participation, non-participation may lower the student's grade. A student who fails to participate in discussions and to submit quizzes and tests in a timely manner may be dropped from a course by the instructor. The instructor must give the student a verbal or written warning prior to being dropped from the class. The instructor's records will stand as evidence of participation. Any individual faculty member or college has the authority to establish a participation policy, providing the policy is in accordance with the General University Policies.

### **Online Computer Requirements**

Taking an online class requires you to have access to a computer (with Internet access) to complete and upload your assignments. It is your responsibility to have (or have access to) a working computer in this class. Quizzes, Discussion posts, Reading Assignments, and tests are due by the due date, and personal

computer technical difficulties will not be considered reason for the instructor to allow students extra time to submit assignments, tests, or discussion postings. Computers are available on campus in various areas of the buildings as well as the Academic Success Center. Your computer being down is not an excuse for missing a deadline! There are many places to access your class! Online classes can be accessed from any computer in the world that is connected to the internet. If you have technical difficulties in the course, there is a student helpdesk available to you. The college cannot work directly on student computers due to both liability and resource limitations; however, they are able to help you get connected to our online services. For help, log into [D2L](#).

### **Instructor Class Policies**

Netiquette is a set of rules for behaving properly online. Something about cyberspace makes it easy for people to forget that they are interacting with other real people. The following bullet points cover some basics to communicating online:

- Be sensitive to the fact that there will be cultural and linguistic backgrounds, as well as different political and religious beliefs.
- Use good taste when composing your responses in Discussion Forums. Swearing and profanity is also part of being sensitive to your classmates and should be avoided. Also, consider that slang can be misunderstood or misinterpreted.
- Do not use all capital letters when composing your responses as this is considered "shouting" on the Internet and is regarded as impolite or aggressive. It is also stressful on the eye when trying to read your message.
- Be respectful of your others' views and opinions. Avoid "flaming" (publicly attacking or insulting) them as this can decrease the chances of getting all different types of points of view.
- Be careful when using acronyms. If you use an acronym, it is best to spell out its meaning first, and then put the acronym in parentheses afterward for example: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs). After that, you can use the acronym freely throughout your message.
- Use good grammar and spelling and avoid using text-messaging shortcuts.

### **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.

### **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

College policy strictly prohibits the use of tobacco products in any building owned or operated by WATC. Adult students may smoke only in the outside designated-smoking areas at each location.

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 has 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 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 [MSU Catalog](#)

**\*Notice:** Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor. The changes will be announced in the Course News on D2L.

## Schedules:

The Course and Laboratory schedules below include brief activity descriptions, on a week-by-week basis. In general, you will be reading the assigned chapters in the textbook; watching a set of short lectures that provide an overview of the chapter materials; taking a short quiz to monitor your progress; submitting a post to the Discussion and commenting on the posts of other students; or, submitting a Reading Assignment; and doing a Laboratory activity. Test weeks (week 8 and week 16) will not have a Reading Assignment or Discussion assignment (other than an optional one for extra credit). Assignments are typically due in the week following the assignment; *do not hesitate to turn them in early*. Exceptions are noted in the schedules for the lab and the course. Keep track of these exceptions, especially towards the end of the semester when due dates are compressed so that the only things due during finals week are the second test and the optional extra credit Discussion Assignment. Most Quizzes, Tests, and Lab quizzes will be graded, and appear in the D2L gradebook, automatically. Discussions and Readings will be graded by your professor after submission and will appear in the gradebook within one week.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with your questions, ideas, and concerns. I will generally respond within 24 hours, and post grades within one week.

## Course Schedule Fall 2025

Week	Activities/Assignments/Exams	Due Date
Week 1 8/25 to 8/29	Read Chap. 1 & 2 View Environmental Issues lectures (Chap. 1 and 2) Take Read Me First Quiz Take Environmental Issues Quiz Readings Assignment (RA) 1 Desert Solitaire	Quiz is due 8/27 (due earlier than typical) Quiz due 9/2 RA due 9/4
Week 2 9/1- to 9/5	Read Chap. 3 and View Chemistry and Energy lectures Take Chem and Energy Quiz Submit to Sustainability Discussion	Quiz due 9/9 Discussion due 9/11
Week 3 9/8 to 9/12	View Geoscience lectures Take Geoscience Quiz Submit to Dead Zones Discussion	Quiz due 9/16 Discussion due 9/18
Week 4 9/15 to 9/19	View Atmosphere lectures Take Atmosphere Quiz Readings Assignment (RA) 2 Storm Spirit	Quiz due 9/23 RA due 9/25
Week 5 9/22 to 9/26	Read Chap. 4 and 5 and View Population and Human Population lectures Take Population Quiz Submit to Population Discussion	Quiz due 9/30/1 Discussion due 10/2
Week 6 9/29 to 10/3	Read Chap. 6 and View Ecosystems lectures Take Ecosystems Quiz Readings Assignment (RA) 3 Stalking Muskrats	Quiz due 10/7 RA due 10/9
Week 7 10/6 to 10/10	Read chapter 7 and View Biomes and Landscapes lectures Take Biomes and Landscapes Quiz Readings Assignment (RA) 4 The Sun's Home	Quiz due 10/14 RA due 10/16
Week 8 10/13 to 10/17	Read Chapter 8 and View Biodiversity lectures Take Biodiversity Quiz Test 1 is available Extra credit discussion Hurricane Sandy is available (optional)	Quiz due 10/21 Test due 10/23 Xcred discussion due 10/23



Week	Activities/Assignments/Exams	Due Date
Week 9 10/20 to 10/24	Test 1 is due Read chapter 13 and View Forests lectures Take Forests Quiz Submit to Tourism Discussion	Test and Xcred due 10/23  Quiz due 10/28 Discussion due 10/30
Week 10 10/27 to 10/31	Read Chapter 12 and view Agriculture lectures Take Agriculture Quiz Submit to Cutting Carbon Discussion	Quiz due 11/4  Discussion due 11/6
Week 11 11/3 to 11/7	Read Chap. 11 and View Earth's Water lectures Take Water Quiz Submit to Green Deserts Discussion	Quiz due 11/11 Discussion due 11/13
Week 12 11/10 to 11/14	Read Chapter 10 and View Air Quality lectures Take Air Quality Quiz Readings Assignment (RA) 5 Clan of the One-breasted Women	Quiz due 11/18 RA due 11/20
Week 13 11/17 to 11/21	Read chapter 14 and View Nonrenewable Energy lectures Take Nonrenewable Energy Quiz Submit to Path for Energy Development in Africa Discussion	Quiz due 11/26 Discussion due 11/26 (due earlier than typical)
Week 14 11/24 to 11/28	Thanksgiving Holiday week No new assignments (assignments are due from last week)	Quiz due 11/25 Discussion due 11/25
Week 15 12/1 to 12/5	Read chapter 15 and View Renewable Energy lectures Take Renewable Energy Quiz Test 2 available Extra credit discussion is available (optional)	Quiz due 12/5 (due earlier than typical) Test 2 due 12/9 Xcred discussion due 12/9
Week 16 finals 12/8 to 12/12	Test 2 is due Submit extra credit discussion (optional)	Test 2 due 12/9 Xcred discussion due 12/9

## Laboratory Schedule Fall 2025

Week	Activities/Assignments/Exams	Due Date
Week 1 8/25 to 8/29	No laboratory assignment week one	
Week 2 9/01 to 9/05	Energy Transitions in the Developing World	Due 9/10
Week 3 9/08 to 9/12	Air Quality Story Map (My NASA Data)	Due 9/17
Week 4 9/15 to 9/19	Exploring Plate Boundaries IRIS	Due 9/24
Week 5 9/22 to 9/26	Hurricanes as Heat Engines (My NASA Data)	Due 10/1
Week 6 9/29 to 10/3	World Population	Due 10/08
Week 7 10/06 to 10/10	Ecosystems/Biomes Coral Reefs	Due 10/15
Week 8 10/13 to 10/17	<i>No new lab assignment; lab from last week due</i>	<i>(Due 10/15)</i>
Week 9 10/20 to 10/24	Ecoregions of Texas	Due 10/29
Week 10 10/27 to 10/31	Tropical Deforestation	Due 11/05
Week 11 10/03 to 11/7	Genetically Modified Organisms in our food supply	Due 11/12
Week 12 11/10 to 11/14	Ocean Circulation Patterns (My NASA Data)	Due 11/19
Week 13 11/17 to 11/21	Impact of Volcanic Eruptions on Air Quality (My NASA Data)	Due 11//26
Week 14 11/24 to 11/28	No new lab assignment; lab from last week due THANKSGIVING	(Due 11/26)
Week 15 12/1 to 12/5	Switch Energy Documentary	Due 12/4(due earlier than typical)
Week 16 12/8 to 12/12	FINALS WEEK TAKE CLASS TEST 2	NA