**INSTRUCTOR**

**Rebekah Pine Parker**

Office Hours: By appointment via phone or Microsoft Teams

rpparker@bsc.edu

**LECTURE AND LAB TIMES**

**Lecture and Lab:** I will be teaching this class asynchronously meaning you can access the course material at any time. However, we will still operate on a weekly schedule (see last page for course calendar). Typically, I will have our week’s material posted by Monday morning and you will be given until Thursday of that week to read, review materials, participate in online forums and turn in assignments. Some assignments may continue into the next week. It is your responsibility to stay on task with the reading, lab, and lecture material.

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

* Raven, Peter and Linda Berg, Environment, **10th Edition**, John Wiley and Sons, Inc, 2018.
* Additional reading materials will be posted on our Moodle page

**REQUIRED TECHNOLOGY**

You will need access to a computer, webcam and reliable internet to complete this course. You will need to be familiar with Moodle, Microsoft Teams, Google Docs and FlipGrid as well as be able to navigate different articles, videos, and other platforms when necessary.

**OVERVIEW OF COURSE**

*Introduction to Urban Environmental Studies (*UES 150) is an interdisciplinary introduction to the complexities of environmental problems confronting us, our community, and the world. The course provides an overview of scientific knowledge on ecology and environmental management and examines political, economic, and ethical issues involved in the attainment of a sustainable future.

In UES 150, you will gain the basic knowledge and critical thinking skills needed to understand the complex environmental and ecological problems that you will encounter in your personal and professional lives. Through readings, case studies, lab exercises, and an environmental problems paper, you will become better informed about how you and those around you can help create a sustainable world.

UES 150 is a required core course in the **Urban Environmental Studies major and minor. The faculty UES Program Director is Dr. William Holt, Harbert 203C (**[**wholt@bsc.edu**](mailto:wholt@bsc.edu)**).**  More information on both can be found on the **Urban Environmental Studies Webpage**.

**COURSE GOALS**

1. To gain an understanding of the science of ecology.
2. To recognize the complexities and interconnectedness of urban environmental problems.
3. To evaluate the political, governmental, and economic perspectives that influence urban environmental decisions.
4. To develop an understanding of one’s potential for helping to create a sustainable future.
5. To improve critical reading, writing, computer, and analytical skills.

**This course is a designated Scientific Methodologies course in the Explorations curriculum. Therefore, by the end of this course, you should be able to**

1. Clearly define a problem/question and state an appropriate rationale for investigation
2. Develop a testable hypothesis
3. Test the hypothesis using the appropriate design, and correctly interpret the results
4. Communicate the findings in oral or written form

**These outcomes should greatly enhance your critical thinking and quantitative analysis skills. You will gain most of these outcomes through your work in laboratory exercises and case studies.**

**EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS**

1. Complete reading assignments, videos and exercises on time
2. Participate actively in all online communication (Moodle forum, Google docs, emails)
3. Treat everyone in the class with respect, regardless of their viewpoints
4. Gain understanding of environmental topics through lectures, discussions, and active learning

**EXAMS**

There will be two non-cumulative examinations. **NO MAKE-UP EXAMINATIONS WILL BE GIVEN.** Exams will be posted on our Moodle page and you will be given a 24-hour window to complete the exam. Exams will be multiple choice questions, short answer questions, and short essays.

**LECTURE ASSIGNMENTS**

Reading will be of **utmost importance** for this class because lecture material will assume that you have completed the reading beforehand. You will have assigned readings each week that will include your textbook, journal papers, news articles, and videos. Again, it is your responsibility to follow the reading assignments for the week and complete the corresponding lecture or activity only after you have prepared.

**CASE STUDIES**

You will have three case studies throughout the term, each worth 30 points. Depending on the topic, you will sometimes be placed in small groups for online discussion. The goal of case studies is to take a portion of the lecture or lab material and apply it to a specific environmental issue or question.

**ENERGY PRESENTATIONS**

You will be responsible for developing a presentation on a type of renewable energy source (solar, wind, hydropower, etc). Although these presentations are meant to be casual, you will still need to be thorough in coverage, innovative in presentation style, and work to incorporate class material. You will also be responsible for watching your classmate’s presentations. Details will be posted on Moodle.

**ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS PROJECT**

Every student will choose a topic on which research for a final project. This project will include background research, mapping, data collection (photos and/or video), and evaluation of a specific environmental issue that they think is particularly important for Birmingham (or wherever you are located). The topic does not have to be something that we covered in class but must have an environmental component. In designing your project, you must include the following components:

1. A description of an environmental problem. Start broad (give global or national perspective first), then describe how the problem is relevant to Birmingham. Use peer-reviewed articles and books to provide evidence. Information from reputable websites is ok, and should support, but not dominate your peer-reviewed references
2. Then describe how the problem is relevant to Birmingham (or other city) and the specific site you pick (campus, Cahaba River, new subdivision in Hoover, etc.). Use newspaper or online articles to describe the local problem, and peer-reviewed articles and books if you can find them.
3. Conduct field reconnaissance. Don’t feel like you need to travel far to research an issue. There are plenty to pick from on campus or in your neighborhood! Take pictures or videos of the problem. Gather lat/long of the issue and include a map of the site.
4. Propose solutions to the problem (both local and global, personal and political). Use peer-reviewed articles, etc. to support your proposed solutions.

Your paper must be between 1750 – 2000 words. In addition to the paper portion of the project, you must turn in any field data you collect. A sample format and rubric will be on Moodle. The final project is due to Moodle November 19th. You will have an outline plus 10 citations (at least 5 peer-reviewed journal articles) due on October 8th**.**

In addition to the paper, you and I will set up individual calls to discuss your paper. This meeting will allow me to ask questions and for you to explain or present your findings. This meeting will be worth 35 points.

**CLASS PARTICIPATION**

Class participation and interaction with instructors and students is one of the hallmarks of liberal arts education. With our shift to an online class we risk losing some of that connection. However, it is my goal this semester to provide the time, space and outlets for group interaction and interaction with me. In this effort, I will be using multiple platforms – Moodle, Microsoft teams, Google docs, maybe even social media – to engage and connect as a class. Participation will be judged on the quality and depth of your contribution. If you do not participate, your understanding of the topics will greatly suffer.

**Moodle**

It will be important for you to become familiar with the Moodle page for this course as soon as possible (lecture and lab material are on the same Moodle page). We will be using Moodle throughout the semester in numerous ways, including posting labs, readings, reading guides, important announcements, and discussion questions and answers. If I switch to a different platform for an assignment, directions will be on Moodle. You are also required to check your grades on Moodle to verify that the correct grades are recorded for your completed work. I will also use Moodle to communicate with you through email. **It is your responsibility to keep up with assignments and class changes on Moodle.**

**LATE ASSIGNMENTS**

Assignments may be turned in late for partial credit. If an acceptable excuse is provided, you may earn full credit for the late assignment provided it is turned in by a date specified by the instructor. Late assignments lose 10% of the total point value of the assignment per day for a maximum loss of 30%.

**EVALUATION**

Letter grades will be assigned at the end of the course based on the number of possible points that you can earn. This scale will be adjusted based on any changes in assignments.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Assignment** | **No.** | **Total Points** |
| Exams | 2 | 200 |
| Lecture Quizzes | 5 | 25 |
| Lecture Exercises/Moodle Discussions | 5 | 50 |
| Laboratory Reports  \*points vary based on the lab activity | 10 | 100 |
| Case Studies | 3 | 90 |
| Energy Presentation | 1 | 50 |
| Project Outline and Citations | 1 | 15 |
| Final Project | 1 | 100 |
| Final Project Presentation/Meeting with Prof. Parker | 1 | 35 |
| Class Participation | 1 | 50 |
| **TOTAL** |  | **715** |

**BSC GRADING SCALE**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| A | 715 – 662 points | 100% - 93% | C | 546 – 519 points | 76%-73% |
| A- | 661 – 640 points | 92% - 90% | C- | 518 ­– 497 points | 72%-70% |
| B+ | 639 – 619 points | 89% - 87% | D+ | 496 – 476 points | 69%-67% |
| B | 618 – 590 points | 86% - 83% | D | 475 – 426 points | 66%-60% |
| B- | 589 – 569 points | 82% - 80% | F | 425 – 0 points | 59%-0% |
| C+ | 568 – 547 points | 79% - 77% |  |  |  |

**OTHER IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF THE COURSE**

**BSC Honor Code**

You are expected to follow the BSC Honor Code in every aspect of this course. Instances of plagiarism, cheating, or other thefts of intellectual property will likely bring you before the BSC Honor Council. Penalties imposed by the Honor Council can include academic probation, suspension, and even expulsion. Instance of cheating on exams or other assignments will result in a zero for that assignment/exam, and depending on the extent of the infraction, a failing grade for the whole course.

**Accessibility/ Americans with Disabilities Act**

Birmingham-Southern College complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Students with disabilities who seek accommodations must make their request by contacting the Office of Accessibility in-person, via email (accessibility@bsc.edu), or by calling 205-226-7909. The Office of Accessibility is located in the Counseling and Health Services Suite of Norton Center Room 241. Students who are registered with the Office of Accessibility are responsible for providing faculty with a copy of their accommodation letter and scheduling a meeting to discuss how their approved accommodations will apply to this course. Visit the Office of Accessibility website for additional information or contact Angela Smith at awsmith@bsc.edu.

**Title IX**

Birmingham-Southern College is committed to the creation and maintenance of a safe learning environment for students and the campus community. The College forbids any type of sexual or gender-based misconduct among its students, faculty, and staff. The College encourages all members of the academic community to report suspected sexual and gender-based misconduct to the appropriate authorities so that it can be investigated, remedied, and eliminated. Such misconduct is prohibited whether the actor is a student, faculty member, staff member, contractor, visitor, or another member of the College community. BSC forbids retaliation against any person who has opposed, reported or participated in an investigation concerning sexual or gender-based misconduct.

In accordance with federal policy, all College employees are required to report information related to discrimination and harassment which includes, but is not limited to, sexual assault, relationship violence, stalking, and sexual harassment. For this reason, if you tell a faculty member about a situation of sexual harassment or sexual violence or other related misconduct, the faculty member must share that information with the Title IX coordinator. As a student, you can report allegations of sexual misconduct to officials in Student Development (Assistant Dean of Students, Dana Bekurs; Associate Dean of Students, W. David Miller; Vice President for Student Development, David Eberhardt), Campus Police, or confidential resources in Counseling Services, Health Services, and Religious Life. Please refer to the Title IX section of the BSC website for more information on filing a report and available resources.

**TENTATIVE SCHEDULE – Stay up to date on Moodle**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Week | Dates | Readings/Videos | Assignments | Topic/Notes |
| 1 | August 24 – 27 | Chapter 1 & 3  Moodle  Syllabus Overview Video | FlipGrid Intro Video  Eco Footprint Quiz  **Lab 1: Environmental Problems topic** | Introductions  Schedule meeting w/Prof. Parker |
| 2 | August 31 – Sept 2 | Chapter 4  Moodle | Quiz 1  **Lab 2: “Trip to the Beach”** | Ecosystems and the Physical Environment |
| 3 | Sept 7 – 10 | Chapter 5  Moodle | Case Study 1  Moodle Discussion 1  **Lab 3: Invasive Species** | Ecosystems and the Living Environment |
| 4 | Sept 14 – 17 | Chapter 16  Moodle | Quiz 2  **Lab 4: Endangered Species** | Biological Resources |
| 5 | Sept 21 – 24 | Moodle | Quiz 3  **Lab 5: Ruffner Mountain/Soils** | Soils and Ruffner Mountain |
| Exam 1 | Sept 28 | Moodle | Exam 1  No Lab |  |
| 6 | Sept 28 – Oct 1 | Chapter 13 and 21  Moodle | Moodle Discussion 2  **Lab 6: Cahaba** | Water Resources and Water Pollution |
| 7 | Oct 5 – Oct 8 | Moodle | Quiz 4  Case Study 3  **Lab 7: *Alabama’s Amazon***  Outline/Citations Due | Alabama’s Biodiversity |
| 8 | Oct 12 – 14 | Chapter 8, 9 and 18  Moodle | Case Study 2  Moodle Discussion 3  **Lab 8: Grocery store hunt** | Human Population and Food |
| 9 | Oct 19 – 22 | Moodle | Moodle Discussion 4 | Food con’t |
| Exam 2 | Oct 22 | Moodle | Exam 2 |  |
| 10 | Oct 26 – 29 | Chapter 10 & 11 | Case Study 3  Final Project Discussion w/Prof Parker  **Lab 9: Google Solar** | Energy |
| 11 | Nov 2 – 5 | Moodle | Energy Presentations (Due Nov 2 – more info TBA) |  |
| 12 | Nov 9 – 12 | Chapter 19 & 20  Moodle | Quiz 5  Moodle Discussion 5  **Lab 10: Climate** | Air Pollution and Global Climate Change |
| 13 | Nov 16 – 19 | Moodle | **Final Project Due**  **November 19** | End of Term |