



First Year Environmental Science

EVS4932 Class# 27775 (1 credit hour) – Fall 2023
W period 5 (11:45 – 12:35)
Classroom: Florida Gym, Room 265

Instructor: Dr. Danny Coenen (he/him), Instructional Associate Professor

Email: dcoenen@ufl.edu

Office Location: McCarty D, Room 2047

Drop-in help hours: T 12:00 – 1:00 & W 1:00 – 2:00, or by appointment

Teaching Assistant: Fernando Noriega Betancourt (he/him)

Email: fernandonoriega@ufl.edu

Office Location: McCarty D, Room 2053

Drop-in help hours: T 10:00 – 12:00, or by appointment

We are here for you! Please don't hesitate to ask for assistance!

Pilot Semester Disclaimer

First Year Environmental Science is offered for the first time this semester. This is not an established course, which has advantages and disadvantages for you as a student. Advantageous to you are low enrollment, greater flexibility in shaping the content of this course, and being able to influence - through your feedback - the future of this course, which we expect will become mandatory for incoming Environmental Science majors starting in fall 2024. Disadvantageous to you may be that lectures, activities, rubrics, and assignment instructions are not yet polished and may not be available as early as you are used to in established classes, and that there will likely be some changes to our schedule as we go along.

Course Description

Onboarding course for first year residential freshmen and HSAA students pursuing a B.S. or B.A. in Environmental Science. Sets up students for success in the Environmental Science major by guiding students through degree requirements, exploring departmental, college, and university resources, and discussing a variety of current environmental issues.

Prerequisites

Students in their first year pursuing a B.S. or B.A. in Environmental Science.

Place in Curriculum

Being an environmental science student at Florida's preeminent public university involves many opportunities and challenges. Lectures, facility visits, guest presentations, and activities will give students the opportunity to connect to current SNRE students, staff, faculty, and organizations, as well as resources available to them through the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences and the University as a whole. Throughout, topics students are likely to explore through their core and elective coursework are introduced.

All incoming residential freshmen and HSAA (High School Associate of Arts) students are expected to enroll. This course will count as an "Additional Skills and Concepts" elective on the degree audit.

Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of the semester, you will be able to:

- 1) recall selected environmental issues affecting social-ecological systems at different scales.
- 2) locate and use key departmental, college, and university resources for academic success, professional development, and personal well-being.
- 3) use the undergraduate catalog, schedule of courses, and degree audit to create a draft academic four-year plan.
- 4) Locate, identify, and cite scholarly sources of different types.
- 5) describe the process of scientific inquiry and apply scientific principles to design and execute a basic research project.

Course Structure

This is an in-person lecture course with one period of instruction per week. During the approximately 15 class meetings, we will spend roughly 1/3 of class time to explore the environmental science major, 1/3 to learn about CALS and University of Florida resources, and 1/3 to discuss environmental science topics of current interest.

Textbooks and Readings

None. Readings will be made available on the course Canvas site. Optionally, you may want to consider purchasing the following book for general consultation as you progress through your Environmental Science degree program:

Pontius, J. & McIntosh, A. (2020). *Critical skills for environmental professionals: Putting knowledge into practice*. Springer Nature Switzerland. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-28542-5>

Grading Policies

Grading is based on how well you apply the learned material as outlined by assignment-specific rubrics provided on Canvas and the student learning objectives listed in the syllabus. It is your responsibility to ensure that all assignments are successfully uploaded to Canvas. Missing, corrupt, or incompatible files may result in grade penalties up to a score of zero for the assignment. You are responsible for maintaining duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course until the end of the semester.

In case of a grading dispute, you must notify your instructor via email within one week of the date the grade is posted to Canvas. Please include an explanation of what aspect of your grade you disagree with. End-of-semester requests for grade bumps, assignment do-overs, additional extra credit, etc. will be denied. Please do not wait until the end of the semester to discuss problems with the course material or your performance in class. Your well-being and success are important to me, SNRE, the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, and the University of Florida, so please contact me to discuss any concerns as soon as they arise.

Information on current UF grading policies for assigning grade points can be found at <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>.

Grading scale

Grade	Points	Percent	Grade	Points	Percent
A:	930.0-1000	93.0-100.0%	C:	730.0-769.9	73.0-76.9%
A-	900.0-929.9	90.0-92.9%	C-	700.0-729.9	70.0-72.9%

B+:	870.0-899.9	87.0-89.9%	D+:	670.0-699.9	67.0-69.9%
B:	830.0-869.9	83.0-86.9%	D:	630.0-669.9	63.0-66.9%
B-:	800.0-829.9	80.0-82.9%	D-:	600.0-629.9	60.0-62.9%
C+:	770.0-799.9	77.0-79.9%	E:	0.0-599.9	0.0-59.9%

The final grade for this course is based on a 1000-point scale and will be weighted as follows:

Grade Component	Points	Percentage
Class orientation assignments	50	5.0%
Attendance	250	25.0%
Engagement	250	25.0%
Homework assignments	250	25.0%
End-of-term project	200	20.0%
Total	1000	100%

Class Orientation Assignments: During the first week of the semester, you will complete a survey and take a quiz to ensure that you understand important rules specified in this syllabus. This quiz will be on Canvas and may be retaken an unlimited number of times up to the deadline until you are satisfied with your score.

Attendance: Attending class regularly is foundational to learning. Your attendance grade is based on the number of class sessions you are present for. Please arrive on time and be prepared to learn. Repeated unexcused absences and inappropriate or disruptive classroom behavior will result in a reduction of your attendance grade (see Course Policies for details).

Engagement: Learning is an active process facilitated by reflecting on, critically thinking about, and applying readings, lecture material, and out-of-class experiences. Your engagement grade is based on the quantity and quality of your contributions to formal and informal in-class discussions and activities. You are strongly encouraged to participate during each class meeting by asking relevant questions, engaging in discussion, or sharing personal experiences on the topic. The precise number of engagement opportunities will vary depending on the needs and interests of this semester's cohort of students.

Homework assignments: Most weeks, students will complete an assignment related to a current or upcoming course topic. Specific assignments may include:

- Creating your academic four-year plan
- Creating an academic CV
- Creating a professional email template, including signature
- Preparing questions for guest presenters
- Reflection and discussion activities
- Hypothesis and research plan formulation
- Critiques of reading materials
- Field observations

End-of-term project: You will propose, plan, and execute a basic observational or research study of environmental interest, and submit a research report.

Course Policies

Diversity and Inclusiveness Statement

Diversity is one of our biggest assets in the classroom and in environmental science. Different perspectives enrich our understanding of the variety of human-nature interactions and are imperative to developing just solutions to complex environmental problems. This classroom is a place where you will be treated with respect, and I welcome individuals of all ages, backgrounds, beliefs, ethnicities & races, genders, gender identities, gender expressions, national origins, religions (if any), sexual orientations, ability – and other visible and nonvisible differences. All members of this class are expected to contribute to a respectful, welcoming, and inclusive environment for every other member of the class. This does not mean that you are not allowed to disagree with others, but that such differences should be explored without ad hominem judgment.

It is my goal to present diverse societal perspectives on environmental issues. For pedagogical reasons, this may include strategies such as “playing devil’s advocate” or “putting yourself in the shoes of others” from time to time. At no point should students misconstrue such pedagogical strategies as an endorsement of any position in conflict with CS/HB 7 as adopted by the 2022 Florida legislature.

Should I inadvertently make a statement offensive to you, please let me know so that I may learn and grow from the incident.

Attendance Policy

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies. [Click here to read the university attendance policies](#). Requirements specific to this class are outlined below:

On-time attendance is mandatory. You are permitted to miss up to two class periods without impact to your attendance grade, although any missed engagement activities will incur a score of zero.

Absences will be excused:

- in case of illness or injury, upon receipt of a doctor’s note or equivalent, or by following the procedure outlined here: <https://care.dso.ufl.edu/instructor-notifications>.
- in case of religious holidays, by informing me via email ahead of time.
- in case of military duty, jury duty, participation in academic conferences, or participation in official university or UAA events, by providing appropriate evidence ahead of time.
- in case of family emergencies, deaths, or other extenuating circumstances, by following the procedure outlined here: <https://care.dso.ufl.edu/instructor-notifications>.
- in all other cases, or if you are unsure, please email me as soon as feasible. Absences are generally not excused for personal non-emergency travel and vehicle problems.

If absent, it is your responsibility to make yourself aware of all due dates via the course e-learning site.

Make-up Policy

To maintain fairness, only work missed due to excused absences can be made up. For absences excused ahead of time, I will develop a make-up plan and schedule. In case of documented illnesses or emergencies, arrangements for completing make-up exams or assignments should be made upon your return to class. If experiencing truly extenuating circumstances resulting in longer absences, you should notify me as soon as possible to develop a plan to make up missed work. Missed extra credit opportunities cannot be made up. If you miss an exam for a non-excusable reason, a score of zero will be entered.

Late Work

You are responsible for turning assignments in on time unless an extension has been requested via email prior to the deadline. In case of true documented emergencies, I may waive this requirement. Technical difficulties are not generally an excuse for missing an assessment or assignment; you should have contingency plans in case any such issues arise. I recommend storing your documents on a cloud service that can be accessed from any device ([Dropbox](#) and [OneDrive](#) are free to UF students), and having a plan for internet outages (such as identifying a source for public WiFi near you or tethering through your cell phone). Try not to wait until the last minute to submit assignments!

Assignments submitted between one and five days late will incur a penalty of 10% of the possible points per day. Work submitted more than five days late will be assigned a score of zero.

I highly recommend starting on assignments early to preclude unexpected emergencies or late-semester stress from compromising your grade. Deadline extensions may be available on certain assignments if requested at least 24 hours ahead of the deadline via email. If extended deadlines are not met, late penalties will be assessed based on the original, not the revised due date!

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Statement

AI applications including natural language chatbots like ChatGPT are an amazing new technology that is revolutionizing the way we access information, just like computers, the internet, and mobile phones did in prior decades. AI can be a useful tool for tasks such as editing, spellchecking, organizing, and brainstorming. **Other uses, including copying & pasting chatbot output and representing as your own work, are not appropriate in college courses; doing so constitutes academic dishonesty.**

Drop-in Help Hours

Please take advantage of office hours to discuss any questions or concerns. Contact your teaching assistant for basic questions, help with assignments, and clarifications regarding grades and feedback. Contact me regarding absences, grading disputes, concerns about other students, and any other issues. If you cannot be present for the regularly scheduled help hours, we will attempt to accommodate you at an alternate time.

Course Communication

The preferred way to get ahold of me or your TA outside of drop-in help hours is via Canvas message or direct email from your official UF email account. You can expect a response within 24 hours on weekdays in most cases. Emails from outside providers, like Gmail, are not considered secure and will be deleted to protect student privacy.

All students are expected to check the course web site on Canvas (<https://elearning.ufl.edu>) each weekday. In addition, we may send specific communications directly to your UF email, which you should check daily as well. You should enable Canvas notifications for this class, so that you are notified immediately about grading, assignment feedback, due date changes, announcements, etc.

External Communication

You may use GroupMe or similar tools to communicate with other students about the class and environmental science-related topics. You may not, however, discuss quiz questions/answers with others, or collaborate on any assignments intended to be worked on individually. Doing so constitutes academic dishonesty.

Canvas Display Name Change

Canvas uses the "Display Name" as set in myUFL. The Display Name is what you want people to see in the UF Directory, such as "Ally" instead of "Allison." To update your display name, go to one.ufl.edu, click on the

dropdown at the top right, and select "Directory Profile." Click "Edit" on the right of the name panel, uncheck "Use my legal name" under "Display Name," update how you wish your name to be displayed, and click "Submit" at the bottom. This change may take up to 24 hours to appear in Canvas. This does not change your legal name for official UF records.

Paper Guidelines

All writing assignments will be submitted to Canvas and must be in **.docx** or **.pdf** format, with the proper file extension. Other file formats will not be accepted. All assignments must include citations and references formatted according to APA 7th edition.

If you experience difficulties in the writing process are encouraged to contact your TA or me for advice or visit the UF Writing Studio (see *Campus Helping Resources* below).

I strongly recommend watching the following video on academic honesty, citing sources, and proper paraphrasing by the end of the drop-add period: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g81hPRKWsdM>

Technical Difficulties

For help with technical issues or difficulties with Canvas, please contact the UF Computing Help Desk at <https://helpdesk.ufl.edu> .

352-392-HELP (4357)

Walk-in: HUB 132

While technical difficulties are not generally an acceptable excuse, any requests for make-ups (assignments, exams, etc.) due to technical issues should be accompanied by the ticket number received from the UF Computing Help Desk when the problem was reported to them. The ticket number will document the time and date of the problem. You should email me within 24 hours of the technical difficulty if you wish to request a make-up.

CALS and University of Florida Policies

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

As a student at the University of Florida, you have committed yourself to uphold the Honor Code, which includes the following pledge: *"We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity."* You are expected to exhibit behavior consistent with this commitment to the UF academic community, and on all work submitted for credit at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: *"On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment."* It is assumed that you will complete all work independently in each course unless the instructor provides explicit permission for you to collaborate on course tasks (e.g. assignments, papers, quizzes, exams). Furthermore, as part of your obligation to uphold the Honor Code, you should report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. It is your individual responsibility to know and comply with all university policies and procedures regarding academic integrity and the Student Honor Code. Violations of the Honor Code at the University of Florida will not be tolerated. Violations will be reported to the Dean of Students Office for consideration of disciplinary action. For more information regarding the Student Honor Code, please see: <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/process/student-honor-code/>.

PLAGIARISM, WHETHER INTENTIONAL OR UNINTENTIONAL, IS A SERIOUS AND POTENTIALLY CAREER-ENDING FORM OF ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT. Copying and pasting from external sources without attribution is never okay in academia. Direct quotes are not commonly used in science writing;

paraphrases accompanied by a proper in-text citation should be used instead. Inappropriate use of direct quotes in this class will result in a loss of credit.

Grades and Grade Points

For information on current UF policies for assigning grade points, see <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

Course Evaluation Process

Student assessment of instruction is an important part of efforts to improve teaching and learning. At the end of the semester, students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course using a standard set of university and college criteria. Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at: <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at: <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

Zoom Conference Privacy

Should it become necessary or convenient to hold classes virtually using zoom, those class sessions may be audio-visually recorded for students in the class to refer back and for enrolled students who are unable to attend live. Students who participate with their camera engaged or utilize a profile image are agreeing to have their video or image recorded. If you are unwilling to consent to have your profile or video image recorded, be sure to keep your camera off and do not use a profile image. Likewise, students who un-mute during class and participate orally are agreeing to have their voices recorded. If you are not willing to consent to have your voice recorded during class, you will need to keep your mute button activated. As in all courses, unauthorized sharing of recorded materials is prohibited.

Software Use

All UF faculty, staff and students are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against university policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate.

Services for Students with Disabilities

The Disability Resource Center coordinates the needed accommodations of students with disabilities. This includes registering disabilities, recommending academic accommodations within the classroom, accessing special adaptive computer equipment, providing interpretation services and mediating faculty-student disability related issues. Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation.

You must submit this documentation prior to submitting assignments or taking quizzes or exams. Accommodations are not retroactive; therefore, students should contact the office as soon as possible in the term for which they are seeking accommodations. The DRC may be contacted by visiting 001 Reid Hall, calling 352-392-8565, or visiting their web site at www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/.

Student Complaints

Residential Course: <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>

Online Course: <https://pfs.tnt.aa.ufl.edu/state-authorization-status/#student-complaint>

Campus Helping Resources

Your wellbeing is important to me and the University of Florida community. If you experience a crisis or personal problem that interferes with your wellbeing, please utilize the university's counseling resources. The Counseling & Wellness Center provides confidential counseling services at no cost for currently enrolled students. Resources are available on campus for students having personal problems or lacking clear career or academic goals, which interfere with their academic performance. You are, of course, always welcome and encouraged to talk to me about any issues that interfere with your academic performance and wellbeing.

- *U Matter We Care*. 352-292-2273. UF's umbrella program for UF's caring culture. Provides students in distress with support and coordination of the wide variety of appropriate resources. <https://umatter.ufl.edu/>
- *University Counseling & Wellness Center*, 3190 Radio Road, 352-392-1575. Counseling Services, Groups and Workshops, Outreach and Consultation, Self-Help Library & Wellness Coaching. <https://www.counseling.ufl.edu/>
- *Gatorwell Health Promotion Services, multiple locations on campus*, 352-273-4450. GatorWell uses health promotion strategies to educate UF students about health and wellness topics relevant to the college experience. <https://gatorwell.ufsa.ufl.edu/>
- *Career Connections Center*, First floor Reitz Union, 352-392-1601, <https://career.ufl.edu/>
- Student Success Initiative, <https://studentsuccess.ufl.edu/>
- *Dean of Students Office*, 202 Peabody Hall, 392-1261. Among other services, the DSO assists students who are experiencing situations that compromises their ability to attend classes. This includes family emergencies and medical issues (including mental health crises). <https://care.dso.ufl.edu/>
- *CLAS Academic Resources*, Turlington Hall, 352-392-2010 or 352-392-6420. General study skills, tutoring, and supplemental instruction for select classes. <https://academicresources.clas.ufl.edu/>
- *Writing Studio*, 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers. <https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>
- *Field and Fork Pantry*. Food and toiletries for students experiencing food insecurity. <https://pantry.fieldandfork.ufl.edu/>
- *UF Help Desk*. 352-392-4357. Technical support for computer issues and UF web services. <https://helpdesk.ufl.edu/>
- *University Police Department*, 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies). <https://www.police.ufl.edu/>

Course Alterations

Due to unforeseen circumstances or to enhance class learning opportunities, it may be necessary to alter the information given in this syllabus during the semester. Such changes are not unusual and should be expected. All changes to the syllabus will be posted to Canvas. It is your responsibility to keep up with any syllabus changes.