

UPPER DIVISION GENERAL EDUCATION NEW COURSE PROPOSAL FOR AREA DD – SOCIAL SCIENCES

ENVS 390-2 (4/28/16)

Please Read Instructions on Next Page of This Form

Course Number ENVS 390-2 Course Title Environmental Issues Through Film

- ☐ This is a new course. A FORM C is being filed concurrently. (A T form is being filed)
Ⓒ This is an existing course not currently satisfying an UDGE requirement, which is not being changed.
Ⓒ This is an existing course not currently satisfying an UDGE requirement, which is undergoing change. A FORM C-2 is being filed concurrently.
Ⓒ This is an existing course currently satisfying an UDGE requirement which is being submitted for recertification. A FORM C-2 is required only if the course is being changed.

- 1. Please attach a syllabus or draft syllabus of the course. See attached description/Course topics/Assignments/SLOs
2. How many units is this course? 3 (Upper-Division General Education courses are limited to 3 units.)
3.a. Does this course have (a) prerequisite (s) other than completion of LDGE requirements?

yes  x no

b. Does this course fulfill requirements for a major by the academic unit in which the course is offered? Check the YES box even if the course counts as an elective in the major.

xyes  no

c. If you answered "yes" to 3.a. or 3.b., then the course is an exception to the definition printed on the next page of this form, and you must explain why the GE committee should make an exception for this course. Please describe how this course is designed to provide valuable and appropriate learning experiences to both majors and non-majors.

This is a new topics course that will be offered in the new and emerging interdisciplinary majors of Environmental Studies. The course can be taken by ENVS majors but does not presuppose a knowledge base from the major. The class dealing with important and relevant topics of how different segments of the population face disproportional burden of environmental pollution and the resulting health consequences. The class draws in analysis of environment, race, ethnicity, gender, North-South dimensions to examine environmental issues such as climate change, food production/security and globalization, consumption and resource use, exposure to toxins and environmental justice, and environmental movements around these issues, drawing from social sciences, humanities and natural sciences.

Read Questions 4-8 in the instructions on the next page of this form and submit your answers as attachments. The instructions do not have to be printed or submitted.

Signature

Pamela Stricker

2/9/16

Originator

Pamela Stricker

2/9/16

Program Director

Date

General Education Coordinator

Date

General Education Committee Chair

Date

**FORM INSTRUCTIONS FOR UDGE-DD (WHITE)  
UPPER DIVISION GENERAL EDUCATION NEW COURSE PROPOSAL  
FOR AREA DD – SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**The Definition of Upper Division GE Courses:**

Upper Division General Education provides an opportunity for students to learn about areas of study outside their academic major. Upper Division General Education courses assume satisfaction of Lower Division General Education Requirements and develop upper division skills. Courses should not require discipline-specific prerequisites. Designed for non-majors, these courses make explicit the basic assumptions, principles and methods of the disciplinary or interdisciplinary area of study. This conceptual framework and the applicability of these principles and methods should be emphasized throughout the course.

Upper Division General Education courses should help students see how disciplines, ideas, issues and knowledge are often interrelated, intersecting and interconnected. Upper Division General Education courses should present knowledge which can enhance students' lives outside the classroom or their studies in other subjects. These courses should also provide students with a classroom environment that fosters independent, active, engaged learning and a genuine curiosity about the subject matter.

Upper Division General Education courses shall be three-unit courses so that three such courses will exactly correspond with the 9-unit Upper Division General Education requirement of the CSU.

**Attachments and responses to questions 1-4 will help the General Education Committee decide if the course is truly suitable to the General Education student. Please read the definition of Upper Division General Education printed above before answering these questions.**

1. Please attach a syllabus or draft syllabus of the course.
2. How many units is this course? Upper-Division General Education Courses are limited to (3) units.
3.
  - a. Does this course have (a) prerequisite (s) other than completion of LDGE requirements?
  - b. Does this course fulfill requirements for a major by the academic unit in which the course is offered? Check the YES box even if the course counts as an elective in the major.
  - c. If you answered "yes" to 3.a. or 3.b., then the course is an exception to the definition printed above, and you must explain why the GE committee should make an exception for this course. Please describe how this course is designed to provide valuable and appropriate learning experiences to both majors and non-majors.
4. Upper division general-education students may have fulfilled their lower division area D requirements in broad, interdisciplinary courses or in a different discipline than the discipline in which this course is offered. Please explain how this course introduces such students to the basic assumptions, principles and methods of the discipline, and how connection is made between these fundamentals and the particular applications emphasized in the course.

**Criteria for Upper Division Area DD Courses:**

**Questions 5-7 will help the General Education Committee decide if the course belongs in the Social Sciences category.**

Address the criteria implied by the following instructions. Courses satisfying the UDGE Social Science DD requirement focus on broad, unifying themes in the social sciences from cross-disciplinary perspectives. Social science courses should enhance student awareness of and comprehension of human, social, political and economic institutions and behavior and their historical background.

5. Please specify how this course enables students to do one or both of the following: (a) analyze problems using social scientific reasoning; and/or (b) understand the historical and/or social context of major political, intellectual, economic, scientific, technological, or cultural developments.
6. Please specify how this course explores the ways in which society and culture are affected by two or more of the following: (a) gender; (b) ethnicity; (c) class; (d) regional identities; (e) global identities.
7. Please specify how this course helps students to recognize the value of multidisciplinary explorations.

**Assessment for Upper Division Area DD Courses:**

**Question 6 will help the General Education Committee to evaluate whether you have planned sufficiently for assessing the success of your course.**

8.
  - a. Please give examples explaining how the work assigned to students (quizzes, tests, essays, projects, etc.) allows you to measure how successful individual students are in meeting the UDGE learning objectives for this course. Please attach an example of the type of assignment you will use to evaluate how successfully students meet the UDGE learning objectives.
  - b. If you use any course assessment activities (e.g., "pre" and "post" testing, class-wide analysis of individual test questions, etc.) that measure whether or not the class as a whole successfully meets the General Education learning objectives for this course, please attach examples of these as well.

2. How many units is this course? Upper-Division General Education Courses are limited to (3) units. – 3 units
3.
  - a. Does this course have (a) prerequisite (s) other than completion of LDGE requirements? *No*.
  - b. Does this course fulfill requirements for a major by the academic unit in which the course is offered? Check the YES box even if the course counts as an elective in the major.
  - c. If you answered “yes” to 3.a. or 3.b., then the course is an exception to the definition printed above, and you must explain why the GE committee should make an exception for this course. Please describe how this course is designed to provide valuable and appropriate learning experiences to both majors and non-majors.

*This course is a class which counts as a course in the major but it is not one of the specialized courses in the major that we will develop over time to teach specialized skills for the major. This course will enhance student writing and enhance their critical thinking skills and the material is pitched at a level that requires no background in ENVS so that non-majors and majors can both be successful in it. We will be developing tracks in the major that offer specialized information and skills but this is not one of those classes. We are in the very early stages of curriculum development in the major. But at the same time, we have grown very rapidly and need to create courses, which will help us support our rapidly growing major.*

4. Upper division general-education students may have fulfilled their lower division area D requirements in broad, interdisciplinary courses or in a different discipline than the discipline in which this course is offered. Please explain how this course introduces such students to the basic assumptions, principles and methods of the discipline, and how connection is made between these fundamentals and the particular applications emphasized in the course.

*This course, in an interdisciplinary fashion, introduces students, majors and non-majors, to some of the key environmental issues that we face on the planet. It explores the human impact on the environment and how humans are (differently) impacted by environmental pollution, degradation, climate change and the like. The class, through interdisciplinary introductory readings along with my audio/text lectures provides a foundation from which the students then can analyze the information portrayed in the films and documentaries, regarding these environmental problems and issues. The book review and salon discussion enables students to more fully delve into one of the issues covered in class and more deeply explore how the issue/problem is being dealt with by interested stakeholders, social movements, government officials, environmentalists, etc. I always provide all of my courses, with a Tips for Success folder which includes specific instructions on writing discussion posts, tips on leading a class discussion, writing papers, as well as tips on writing discussions, rubrics, writing using proper grammar/syntax, etc. Students from across the university have told me how helpful these tips have been for them, regardless of major.*

**Criteria for Upper Division Area DD Courses:**

**Questions 5-7 will help the General Education Committee decide if the course belongs in the Social Sciences category.**

Address the criteria implied by the following instructions. Courses satisfying the UJGE Social Science DD requirement focus on broad, unifying themes in the social sciences from cross-disciplinary perspectives. Social science courses should enhance student awareness of and comprehension of human, social, political and economic institutions and behavior and their historical background.

5. Please specify how this course enables students to do one or both of the following: (a) analyze problems using social scientific reasoning; and/or (b) understand the historical and/or social context of major political, intellectual, economic, scientific, technological, or cultural developments.

*This course will draw upon works within social sciences, humanities and natural sciences to explore environmental issues and problems (climate change, food and agriculture, consumption, pollution, drought, water quality) and their impacts on human and non-human species in depth utilizing film and documentary. The course assumes no prior knowledge of environmental issues. We will focus our attention on the dynamics of issues such as climate change and those who deny its existence; food and agriculture and the dynamics regarding food security, food production and globalization; consumption and resource use; drought on both national and international scale; and toxins, pollution and water quality and the environmental movements which organize around these issues. We are developing new upper division electives for this new major.*

6. Please specify how this course explores the ways in which society and culture are affected by two or more of the following: (a) gender; (b) ethnicity; (c) class; (d) regional identities; (e) global identities.

*The course examines global identities and issues of race/ethnicity, gender and class in terms of climate change; access to water and issues of drought; food production/security and globalization; environmental justice/inequalities and racism and exposure to toxins, pollutions and water quality and human health, and consumption and resource use.*

7. Please specify how this course helps students to recognize the value of multidisciplinary explorations.

*Environmental Studies, is by nature an interdisciplinary major, drawing together concepts, theories and methodologies from the social and behavioral sciences, natural sciences, arts and the humanities. This course, Environmental Issues Through Film examines involve an interdisciplinary examination of fundamental environmental problems faced by individuals and communities of color in the Global North and South, such as climate change, food justice, water scarcity, water quality, health risks resulting from toxins and pollution and*

*consumption and resource use. In this course, we will explore how film and documentaries can help communicate environmental issues, promote action, and drive change. Students will learn about how environmental issues and policy are presented in film and documentary while also actively critiquing and engaging with these tools, asking if and how they can inspire positive environmental action.*

**Assessment for Upper Division Area DD Courses:**

**Question 6 will help the General Education Committee to evaluate whether you have planned sufficiently for assessing the success of your course.**

8. a. Please give examples explaining how the work assigned to students (quizzes, tests, essays, projects, etc.) allows you to measure how successful individual students are in meeting the UDGE learning objectives for this course. Please attach an example of the type of assignment you will use to evaluate how successfully students meet the UDGE learning objectives.

*This course will utilize writing and critical thinking assignments such as small-group discussions, critical film analyses, and critical book review (of outside book in addition to regular assigned readings).*

b. If you use any course assessment activities (e.g., “pre” and “post” testing, class-wide analysis of individual test questions, etc.) that measure whether or not the class as a whole successfully meets the General Education learning objectives for this course, please attach examples of these as well.

N/A

**Subject:** FW: ENVS 390-2 addendum

**From:** Pamela Stricker <[striker@csusm.edu](mailto:striker@csusm.edu)>  
**Date:** April 27, 2016 at 10:40:16 PM PDT  
**To:** Yvonne Meulemans <[ymeulema@csusm.edu](mailto:ymeulema@csusm.edu)>  
**Cc:** Pamela Stricker <[striker@csusm.edu](mailto:striker@csusm.edu)>  
**Subject:** ENVS 390-2 addendum

Hi Yvonne,

Thanks for all of your kind patience and assistance.

I have attached the document and also am pasting it here for your convenience. The new portion is highlighted in blue for the committee's convenience.

Thanks again!

Pamela

## Addendum to ENVS 390-2

### Special Topics Course

#### Environmental Issues Through Film

5. Please specify how this course enables students to do one or both of the following: (a) analyze problems using social scientific reasoning; and/or (b) understand the historical and/or social context of major political, intellectual, economic, scientific, technological, or cultural developments.

*This course will draw upon works within social sciences, humanities and natural sciences to explore environmental issues and problems (climate change, food and agriculture, consumption, pollution, drought, water quality) and their impacts on human and non-human species in depth utilizing film and documentary. The course assumes no prior knowledge of environmental issues. We will focus our attention on the dynamics of issues such as climate change and those who deny its existence; food and agriculture and the dynamics regarding food security, food production and globalization; consumption and resource use; drought on both national and international scale; and toxins, pollution and water quality and the environmental movements which organize around these issues. We are developing new upper division electives for this new major. Students, using social scientific reasoning, will analyze a deeper treatment of one course topic in reading, analyzing and writing a critical book analysis, which they will also contextualize within the assigned course material. In addition to submitting it for grading, they will also discuss their respective book analyses within a special online book salon. See syllabus for more detail on this assignment.*

6. Please specify how this course explores the ways in which society and culture are affected by two or more of the following: (a) gender; (b) ethnicity; (c) class; (d) regional identities; (e) global identities.

*The course examines global identities and issues of race/ethnicity, gender and class in terms of climate change; access to water and issues of drought; food production/security and globalization; environmental justice/inequalities and racism and exposure to toxins, pollutions and water quality and human health, and consumption and resource use. Students will explore and analyze gender, race and ethnicity and class in course readings, lectures and in written responses to discussion forum prompts and in crafting critical film analyses during the weeks of environmental justice, climate change and food justice. Students will explore and analyze regional identities class in course readings, lectures and in written responses to discussion forum prompts and in crafting critical film analyses during the weeks the course covers water and drought and food and exposure to toxins. Students will explore and analyze global identities class in course readings, lectures and in written responses to discussion forum prompts and in crafting critical film analyses during the weeks the course cover climate change and food production/scarcity and globalization. Students will also again cover one or more of these topics in their respective critical book analysis discussed in Q5. Please see syllabus for more.*

7. Please specify how this course helps students to recognize the value of multidisciplinary explorations.

*Environmental Studies, is by nature an interdisciplinary major, drawing together concepts, theories and methodologies from the social and behavioral sciences, natural sciences, arts and the humanities. This course, Environmental Issues Through Film examines involve an interdisciplinary examination of fundamental environmental problems faced by individuals and communities of color in the Global North and South, such as climate change, food justice, water scarcity, water quality, health risks resulting from toxins and pollution and consumption and resource use. In this course, we will explore how film and documentaries can help communicate environmental issues, promote action, and drive change. Students will learn about how environmental issues and policy are presented in film and documentary while also actively critiquing and engaging with these tools, asking if and how they can inspire positive environmental action. Students will become recognize concepts from history, political science, environmental ethics, sociology, economics and natural sciences in addition to concepts within the interdisciplinary field of environmental studies (e.g. Tragedy of Commons, demographic trap, NIMBY, resource conflict/resource wars, food deserts, environmental justice, environmental racism, civic environmentalism and deliberative democracy) in course readings and lectures and in films/documentaries viewed. Learning these concepts will help them analyze the themes and issues they encounter in course readings, films, and facilitate their ability to discuss and analyzes the environmental issues covered in class in response to discussion forum prompts and in crafting critical film analyses as well as the critical book analysis.*

## **ENVS 390-2 Environmental Issues Through Film**

**Summer Session 2016: Meets Virtually June 6 – July 9**

**Instructor: Prof. Pamela Stricker**

**Office: SBSB 4134**

**Email: [stricker@csusm.edu](mailto:stricker@csusm.edu)**

**Phone: 750-8020**

**Virtual Office hours: by apt via Big Blue Button**

\* I will try to respond to your emails regarding course material within 24 hours.

This is an upper-division course that counts as an upper division elective in Environmental Studies and UD elective units for other majors. In this course, we will explore how film and documentaries can help communicate environmental issues, promote action, and drive change. Students will learn about how environmental issues and policy are presented in film and documentary while also actively critiquing and engaging with these tools, asking if and how they can inspire positive environmental action. This course will also be rich in discussion, activity, and opportunities for outside the-box thinking. I encourage students from all fields with all backgrounds to enroll. The course assumes no prior knowledge of environmental issues or background in film or documentaries.

This course is designed for students to explore environmental issues and problems (climate change, food and agriculture, consumption, pollution, drought, water quality) and their impacts on human and non-human species in depth utilizing film and documentary. The course assumes no prior knowledge of environmental issues. The attempt to understand environmental issues in the United States and across the globe is not simply having the “facts.” There will undoubtedly be many facts to assess and to dispute; answers will depend on the nature of available data, on the interests of the sources consulted, and on how the questions are asked. We will focus our attention on the dynamics of issues such as climate change and those who deny its existence; food and agriculture and the dynamics regarding food security, food production and globalization; consumption and resource use; drought on both national and international scale; and toxins, pollution and water quality and the environmental movements which organize around these issues.

This course is conducted through films, posted lectures, and discussion posts. Students are expected to read weekly assignments, listen to lectures, be prepared to engage in class discussions and exercises, and critically analyze the films. Students will also read an additional book (chosen from a list of suggested titles), which focuses in depth on an environmental topic (e.g. climate change, water scarcity) and craft a critical book analysis and participate in an online book club discussion (separate from regular class discussions). Assignments are due at 9 pm on Mondays and Thursdays.

Learning outcomes for the course: On successful completion of the course, students should be able to:

1. Name ways in which humans have impacted the environment.
2. Develop a greater appreciation for the centrality of environmental issues in

national and international affairs and be able to discuss possible solutions to these issues.

3. Examine the forces that are placing ever-increasing pressure on natural resources in the United States and across the globe (especially water).

4. Develop an understanding of environmental film and documentaries with the ability to evaluate environmental issues ethically and aesthetically.

5. Strengthen writing, critical thinking, and communicative skills.

#### ENVS Program Learning Objectives:

Students who graduate with a Bachelor of Arts in Environmental Studies will be able to:

1. Understand processes of ecological systems and how human systems – such as social, cultural, and political systems – interact with the environment on local, regional, and global scales. \*
2. Develop an understanding of environmental philosophy, art, and literature with the ability to evaluate environmental issues ethically and aesthetically.
3. Develop an understanding of the environmental impact review process including concepts such as cost-benefit analysis, risk assessment, mitigation, and the precautionary principle. Gain basic understanding of landmark environmental policy as well as major international environmental accords.
4. Develop introductory competence in geographic information systems (GIS).
5. Develop an understanding of environmental justice and critically examine the interactions of human/social systems and the environment, using the lens of race/ethnicity, class and gender and along North-South divide.\*
6. Develop strong writing, critical thinking, communicative, and research skills. \*
7. Develop understanding of conflicts over values as well as conflict resolution in environmental issues.
8. Understand environmental policymaking processes locally, nationally, and globally, and how policy is established through formal and informal collective-decision making processes involving actors and stakeholders inside and outside of the formal sectors of government.

\*ENVS Program Learning Outcomes applicable to ENVS 390-2

This 3-unit course is 6 weeks in length. This is an accelerated format in comparison to most 3-unit university courses, which run for 15 weeks. Students are expected to work 18-24 hours to cover the assigned material and to complete the assignments. This format works best for students who are self-motivated to work at their own pace; who have regular computer access; who are proficient with computer technology; and who complete tasks with little input from instructors.

Note: Online learning is not for everyone. Some students have unrealistic expectations that online courses are less time consuming or “easier” than traditional courses. While online courses may be convenient, you still have to read your textbooks, write papers and



have virtual discussions with classmates/professors, and even participate in a group book club. This online format does not mean you can work at your own pace. Each week there are multiple assignments to complete with strict deadlines. You do have the flexibility in that you do not have to be online at a certain time of any given day, however, you are expected to be online at least three times a week to respond to postings, chat with your group about your book, etc., and meet all assignment deadlines.

Teaching Philosophy: Teaching and learning are both two-way processes. As both professor and student, we each have a responsibility to the class to be prepared and ready to discuss the assigned readings and concepts presented. Environmental Studies can be very controversial. We must learn to respect one another and agree to respectfully disagree. Listening with an open mind is another important quality in being a good student and teacher. In this course, I am more interested in the development of your analytical skills rather than your ability to parrot “talking points”. Backing up one’s position with facts, figures and logical analysis rather than anecdotal evidence is always a better method for convincing others of your position. This is a course about major environmental issues and the human impact on the environment in the United States and around the world. During the semester, we will discuss some of the most pressing contemporary issues in, challenges, and problems facing our nation: climate change, resource scarcity (especially water), environmental justice, sustainability, development, population and consumption. We will discuss them within the context of policy problems and issues from the perspective of policy analysts drawing on social science research, **not ideologues** and we will discuss a variety of solutions to policy problems, drawn from mainstream public policy specialists and reputable think tanks.

Students will be expected to complete a collection of readings, which serve as background to the environmental issues we are studying, view feature films (*Erin Brockovich*, *Day After Tomorrow*) along with a selection of documentaries like (*Inconvenient Truth*, *11th Hour*, *Great Global Warming Swindle*, *Blue Gold*, *Flow*, *Escape from Affluenza*, *Story of Stuff*, *Blue Vinyl*, *A Very Healthy Baby Girl*, *Gasland*, *Crude Awakening*, *Harvest of Pride*, *King Corn*, *Bitter Seeds*, *Real Dirt on Farmer John*, *Blue Planet*, *Selections from Shark Week*, *episode Flipper*). Students will complete one movie critique for each cluster of film or documentaries viewed (two per week). Students will also read an in depth book on a specific topic covered in class, complete a critical book analysis and discuss the book in an online book club setting. (This is a separate assignment from weekly class discussions.)

Students will also rotate in leading the week’s class discussion. In other words, you will serve either as the discussion leader or discussion responder for a given week. Leaders will first post in response to the question and then responders will respond.

Assigned readings – to be drawn from variety of texts such as the WorldWatch reports (WorldWatch 2015 and previous issues along with other texts providing background on the issues for the class, climate change, drought, food security/food justice, toxins, pollution, endangered species, energy, environmental justice/environmental racism and consumption and resource use.) These will be accessible to ENVS majors and non-majors.

Discussion posts – Class participation accounts for 33% of your grade. Please check CC for the assignment of discussion leaders and discussion responders for each week. (This is done before the class begins so you can schedule your time accordingly.) I am looking at the quality of the postings. I will grade the posts based on the sophistication of the thinking/analysis, level of writing and tone, logic of analysis and organization of writing. I am NOT asking you for your opinion on the readings, instead I am asking you to analyze them in terms of what you are learning, and have learned. I want to see critical analysis, contextualization, and consideration. I do not wish to read, “*I really liked (or hated) this reading. It was great (stupid).*” That’s not the kind of response an upper-division undergraduate ought to be writing. Please see discussion posts e-handout for specific information and my handout on asking good questions/leading a discussion (both posted in my Tips for Success folder on CC). I am happy to read one of your posts ahead of the deadline (by 24 hours) if you are unsure if you are composing it correctly.

For you to earn credit for your discussion posts, you must post your messages in the discussion section for that week using Cougar Classes by the deadlines specified in the calendar. The post you write as discussion starter will be worth 10 points. Discussion starter posts will each be about 2-3 paragraphs long (6-9 sentences each) and be designed to stimulate discussion. Each person will serve as discussion starter twice. Response posts will each be 1-2 paragraphs (about 3-6 sentences). You can go somewhat longer if you wish. You can also always post early if you are a discussion starter and you can post right after the discussion starters post if you are doing your weekly response post. You will post in your group area of the discussion board, unless otherwise instructed. Active participation in the class requires completion of the assigned readings as well as thoughtful consideration of the assignments and topics of the class. In other words, talking (posting) off the top of one's head does not generally merit participation credit. MAKE SURE you read the discussion post instructions in Tips for Success for a full discussion of how to do discussion posts.

Critical Film Analyses (CFAs)– The films/documentaries we will watch for this class are accessible either through Cougar Classes (CC) or directly online (via a link). A Critical Film Analysis is a well-thought out evaluative analysis of a film or documentary in which you will discuss the film utilizing knowledge gained from the assigned readings and class discussions. Since we are approaching this material from an interdisciplinary environmental studies perspective, you should consider how the film communicates environmental issues, promotes action, and drives change. I am NOT asking you for your opinion on the films, instead I am asking you to analyze them in terms of what you are learning, and have learned

You will submit one film analysis for each cluster of films. CFAs should be 2-4 pages (double-spaced). The following should be included in every CFA.

Writing your Critical Film Analysis

- Organize your thoughts.
- Briefly summarize common thread of the films/documentaries.

- Answer the specific questions I pose in the assignment link.
- Apply your knowledge from having read the assigned readings, not only current week but contextualizing previous readings and treatment of subjects we are studying.
- Think of examples from the films, lectures and readings to back up your analysis.
- Rename the films (just one collective title) and explain your choice.

Critical Book Analysis – Students will sign up to read one of the additional books and write a 4-6 page analytical review. See instructions on CC regarding the specific components of your book review. After submitting your book review, you will also discuss the book in a book club salon with others who read and reviewed the book. This will occur in a special section on the discussion board.

Books for Critical Analysis: (Select one for your analysis)

*Hot: Living through the Next 50 Years on Earth* – Mark Hertsgaard

*The Overspent American* – Juliet Schor

*Food* – Jennifer Clapp

*Toxic Communities: Environmental Racism, Industrial Pollution and Residential Mobility*, Dorceta Taylor

*Field Notes from a Catastrophe* – Elizabeth Kolbert

*The West Without Water* – B. Lynn Ingram and Frances Malamud-Roam

*This Changes Everything* – Naomi Klein

Additionally, students are expected to stay apprised of current issues. I suggest you read articles from *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, or the *Los Angeles Times*. These newspapers are all available in our Library and some are available via the Internet. Students are also encouraged to watch *The News Hour*, which airs on KPBS (Channel 15 or Cable Channel 11) at 7 p.m. for in-depth news coverage rather than “sound-byte or ideologically-biased” news. Additional online webs and blogs which might be useful include: [Center for Climate and Energy Solutions](#), [Real Climate](#), [Dot Earth](#), [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change](#), [UN Framework Convention on Climate Change](#), [Environmental News Network](#), and the journal *Nature*.

Evaluation Process – In this course, you will be evaluated in specific writing assignments and class discussions. The participation component is a very important portion of your grade based on your ability to thoughtfully discuss the assigned materials. Therefore you must keep up to date on required readings and prepare your thoughts and analysis before class so that you may fully participate in class discussions. Talking off the top of one’s head will **simply not merit credit**. The writing assignments and discussions are aimed at accomplishing a couple of goals. First, it allows me to assess how well you comprehend the course material (assigned readings and lectures). Second, it provides an opportunity for me to assist you in the development of critical thinking and communication skills. The latter two skills are essential for your development as a college-educated person and someone who will be competitive in today’s (and tomorrow’s) employment marketplace. Further, development and refinement of these skills will also facilitate your success in other courses, here at CSUSM and beyond.

Class Policies: Academic honesty and integrity are expected and required at all times. I will place a link on the Cougar Courses class web page regarding plagiarism and please see me if you have questions regarding what constitutes plagiarism. Also review the section from the CSUSM University Catalog on plagiarism and cheating as well as the university policy on Academic Honesty:

[http://www.csusm.edu/policies/active/documents/Academic\\_Honesty\\_Policy.html](http://www.csusm.edu/policies/active/documents/Academic_Honesty_Policy.html). I will fail (i.e. you will receive a 0) any student guilty of cheating and/or plagiarism for that assignment which could quite likely result in your failing the course in addition to whatever punishment meted out by the Dean of Students.

The course outline lists tentative dates for the topics that we will cover. I reserve the right to make changes to the schedule as necessary and will give all students advance notice of changes. Assignments will take place/are due on the specified dates in the syllabus subject to my change only. I will not accept late work. In extraordinary cases when a student is not able to take the scheduled assignment, I will consider allowing a makeup assignment if the student has contacted me prior to the assignment due date regarding his or her circumstance and received my permission. I reserve the right to request documentation of any excuse submitted. I can be contacted through the Q&A forum in Cougar Classes (CC), regular email (which I check daily M-F mornings), in person, and through voice mail, so you will be able to contact me regarding any problems you might be facing. (Cougar Classes Q&A forum is the fastest way for you to contact me as I look at that first. (Blue button information?))

Also my school email receives email from a variety of sources inside and outside of the university so it is slower to work through that email. If you do email me, please make sure to include ENVS 390 in subject line. So that I can answer that quickly.) All work will be graded promptly. All work should be kept as a record of your performance in class. While I strongly encourage group studying and cooperative learning, your work on all assignments must be your own. If you chose to drop my class, it is your responsibility to do so.

Make sure you have computer problems ironed out at the beginning of the semester before starting your first assignment and always back up your work in Word etc. while you are working. If you still somehow experience computer problems during an assignment that is to be turned in online, you must contact the help desk and cc me with the email or if by phone, email me immediately. Also if you have special circumstances, such as special testing needs, you must inform me of them before the end of the first week of class.

**Please contact me if you need help** because I am here to help facilitate your learning. I want all of my students to be successful so please do not hesitate to come see me during office hours. I also want your experience in my class and throughout your career as an Environmental Studies major (or other major) to be an enlightening and amazing time. Let me know how I can help you. I am very much looking forward to teaching this course and working with you this semester and in the years ahead! ☺

Introduction Post	1%
Critical film analyses (10)	33%
Forum discussions (10)	33%

Critical Book Analysis/discussion 33 %

I will be using the standard plus and minus grading system wherein (the cutoff for an A-is 90%),

A+ = 97-100	B+ = 89-87	C+ = 77-79	D+ = 67-69
A = 96-93	B = 86-83	C = 76-73	D = 66-68
A- = 92-90	B- = 82-80	C- = 72-70	D- = 65-60

F=below 60

Plus/minus grading is used.

- A (*Excellent*): Performance of the student has been at the highest level, showing sustained excellence in meetings all course objectives in exhibiting up an unusual degree of intellectual initiative.
- B (*Good*): Performance of the student has been in a high level, Showing consistent and effective achievement in meeting course objectives.
- C (*Satisfactory*): Performance of the student has been an adequate level, meeting the basic objectives of the course.
- D (*Passing*): Performance of the student has been less than adequate, meeting only the minimum course requirements.
- F (*Failing*): performance of the student has been such minimum course requirements have not been met.

Per the University Credit Hour Policy: Students enrolled in an accelerated online course should spend 18-24 hours per week engaged in study for the class. Further, students should note that the All University Writing Requirement mandates each student write 2500, words approximately 10 pages, in this three-unit course. This is satisfied through writing assignments, on the discussion board, critical film analyses and critical book analysis, (see above for specifics).

Course schedule (Subject to my revision)

#### **Week of June 6 -Pollution/Toxins/Environmental Justice**

Assigned readings – Tragedy of the Commons, Environmental Justice – Dumping in Dixie, Contamination of Water in Flint, Michigan

Lectures- Tragedy of the Commons: What Does it Mean?, Environmental Justice and Toxins, Environmental Justice Movements and Government (In)Action Films – *Erin Brockovich* (everyone watch)

*A Very Healthy Baby Girl, Blue Vinyl* (choose one)

#### **Week of June 13 – Water, drought and scarcity**

Assigned readings – Drought and water scarcity, Resource Wars

Lectures – Water Conflict in the United States, Global Water Conflict – Mideast, Africa, Asia

Films - *Blue Gold, Flow, Cadillac Desert – Mulholland's Dream* (watch two)

**Week of June 20 – Climate change: United States and Global Perspectives**

Assigned readings posted in CC– Climate change, Regulating Climate change

Lectures- Climate change in the US: Myths and Realities, International Efforts to Combat Climate Change

Films – *Day After Tomorrow* (selection), *Climate of Doubt: Frontline* (everyone watch), *An Inconvenient Truth* (everyone watch)

*11<sup>th</sup> Hour* or (selections) *Years of Living Dangerously* (choose one)

**Week of June 26- Consumption and Environment**

Assigned readings – Living as If Nature Really Mattered, Valuing Nature's Services

Lectures: Consumption in the U.S., Valuing Nature's Services: The Case of Bonaire, Consumption from a Global Perspective

Films- *Escape from Affluenza, Story of Stuff*

Critical Book Analysis due July 2 by 11 pm.

**Week of July 4 – Food Justice/Food security**

Assigned readings – State of the World/Eating Planet

Lectures: Green Revolution and Beyond, Globalization and Food, Sustainable Agriculture

Films - *Harvest of Pride, King Corn, Bitter Seeds, Real Dirt on Farmer John* (watch two).

### Critical Film Analysis

Answer the following questions in your 2 to 4 page film Analysis.

Your name, name of film/documentary

1. What are the main themes of the film?
2. How does this film pertain to the study of Environmental Studies ?
3. What concepts/theories discussed in class or readings can be used to explain what happens in the video?
4. What bearing do class readings have on the film? Be specific here. (Note-Failure to discuss the film/documentary within the context of this class will seriously lower your grade.)
5. If you could rename the film, what would it be and why?
6. What is your overall assessment of the film and how useful it is in illustrating the concepts of the readings and class discussion for the week?
7. Why? Do you have any suggestions for future classes in the sense of setting up the scene, content for students? (What I should say before viewing film, where it should be viewed in the next offering of this class?).

## ENVS 390-1 Environmental Issues Through Film

### Instructions on Critical Book Review

Your review should have two goals: first, to inform the reader about the content of the book, and second and more importantly, to provide an analysis that gives your judgment of the book's relevance to the issue being studied in depth. Your analysis takes place within the context of the material we are studying in the class. Thus you need to inform your audience, that is, your classmates and me, as to what you learned as you delved deeper into the topic which we all covered to a degree in the course. Your paper should be four to six pages long, not including the cover page or resources list/bibliography. You may go over the page count by two pages, e.g. 8. Please see the e-handout in tips for success for proper citation form.

The introduction of your review should include both a concise summary as well as your overall assessment of the book.

Next do not spend more than one-third of your paper summarizing the book. The point of the critical book review is to analyze the book within the context of the overall class material.

The summary should consist of a discussion and highlights of the major arguments, features, trends, concepts, themes, ideas, and characteristics of the book. While you may use direct quotes from the book (make sure you always give the page number), such quotes should never be the bulk of the summary. Much of your grade will depend on how well you describe and explain the material **IN YOUR OWN WORDS**. You might want to take the major organizing themes of the book and use them to organize your own discussion. This does **NOT** mean, however, that I want a chapter-by-chapter summary. Your goal is a unified essay.

For the next third of the paper, I would like you to critically analyze the book.

Here are some questions that you may wish to address as part of your analysis. You should definitely include Q1 and Q2. You do not need to use them all but I would suggest using at least a couple additional ones. As with any academic writing, it is best to rely more on evidence (points, quotes and make sure you correctly cite them) from the book or from material learned in this class or others. Facts, data, materials cites from authoritative sources are always excellent choices to back up one's position rather than simply opinion or statements such as "I liked this book because it was fun to read" or "I did not like this book because it was too long."



Also remember this is an essay so make sure you work flows together. In other words, do not use the questions as a checklist and answer each one. Make sure the paper is cohesive, and complete with topic sentences and transitions.

**Necessary question #1** - What is your overall opinion of the book? (Again, think more about the content of the book as opposed to likes and dislikes.) On what basis has this opinion been formulated? That is, tell the reader what you think and how you arrived at this judgment. What did you expect to learn when you picked up the book? To what extent – and how effectively – were your expectations met? Did you nod in agreement (or off to sleep)? Did you wish you could talk back to the author? Amplify upon and explain your reactions.

**Necessary question # 2.** Identify the author's thesis and explain it in your own words. How clearly and in what context is it stated and, subsequently, developed? To what extent and how effectively (i.e., with what kind of evidence) is this thesis proven? Use examples to amplify your responses. If arguments or perspectives were missing, why do you think this might be?

Also include 2-3 additional questions. You may use more if you wish. (You may go over the page count by 2 pages.) (Remember cover page and bibliography do not count in page count for paper. As always, I am looking for quality writing that is concise and clear.) You should also work into your answers, points contextualizing this book within the larger course material we have covered during the session.

Additional questions to consider:

What are the author's aims? How well have they been achieved, especially with regard to the way the book is organized? Are these aims supported or justified? (You might look back at the introduction to the book for help). How closely does the organization follow the author's aims?

How are the author's main points presented, explained, and supported? What assumptions lie behind these points?

How effectively does the author draw claims from the material being presented? Are connections between the claims and evidence made clearly and logically? Here you should definitely use examples to support your evaluation. Also remember to clearly cite your sources and when you cite specific examples from the text.

What conclusions does the author reach and how clearly are they stated? Do these conclusions follow from the thesis and aims and from the ways in which they were developed? In other words, how effectively does the book come together?

Does the author's presentation seem fair and accurate? Is the interpretation biased? Can you detect any distortion, exaggeration, or diminishing of material? If so, for what purpose might this have been done, and what effect does it have on the overall presentation?

For the final third of your paper, I would like for you to contextualize the book within the material we studied this session. Reading this additional book allows you to delve more deeply into a particular topic we covered more generally in the course. In this section, I want you to discuss how this book contributed to your deeper understanding of the topic. What did you learn specifically? How does this compare to the material you read in the regular portion of the class? How does it compare or contrast with the course material? What important lessons do you take from this book that build on what you learned in the course? Be specific and use points from the book, again properly cited, to back up your assertions.

Finally, include a conclusion that summarizes both your assessment of how the author presented her/his aims/purpose as well as how this book enriched your learning of the course material covered in the class.

Please contact me if you need any assistance or clarification of these directions. I want you to be successful.

Finally, and I hate to have to say this, but I am quite familiar with these books as well as what book reviews found online say about these books and what they contain. Make sure your work is your original work.

Some sections adapted from Zabin (2003) citing Robert Blackey, "Words to the Whys: Crafting Critical Book Reviews," *The History Teacher*, 27.2 (Feb. 1994): 159-66.