



LJWL(es)

School of Humanities, Arts & Public Engagement

ESI 4020 – Advanced Environmental Studies

3 units

Fall 2025

T/R 3 pm – 4:15 pm

Bond Academic Center 156 (BAC156)

Thursday, 12/18, 4:30 pm – 7 pm

INFORMATION	SPECIFICS FOR THE COURSE
Instructor title and name:	Dr. Breeann Kyte Kirby
Email:	bkirby@pointloma.edu
Office location and hours:	BAC 109 by appointment
Instagram:	@naturenarratives

PLNU Mission

To Teach ~ To Shape ~ To Send

Point Loma Nazarene University exists to provide higher education in a vital Christian community where minds are engaged and challenged, character is modeled and formed, and service is an expression of faith. Being of Wesleyan heritage, we strive to be a learning community where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.

Course Description

What am I going to learn in this class?

ESI 4020, Advanced Environmental Studies, is the capstone course for your interdisciplinary studies in sustainability and creation care. It is designed for you to engage in a rigorous and reflective semester where you will look back at your career as a scholar at PLNU and produce a major project that will be ready for publication or submission in an application. In this course, you will be part of a community of thinkers who are all “training” in their practice with their specific and diverse concentrations in Environmental Studies. You will continue to develop the skills that are needed to both read critically and write strategically at an advanced level with the goal you will produce works that will be able to live in

the world outside academia. To this end, we will read and listen to guests share about the field of environmental studies, read and discuss your own work-in-progress, and talk about publication, work, and life beyond school. Your final portfolio will be a summation of your growth at PLNU as well as a springboard to launch you into your future in Environmental studies.

The PLNU catalog says that ESI 4020 is

A senior-level capstone course for Environmental Studies majors and an advanced course for non-majors, incorporating practices and experiences from concentration coursework as well as the internship. Priority is given to students declared in the Environmental Studies major.

Prerequisite(s): [ESI 2050](#) or consent of instructor.

Program and Course Learning Outcomes

The Program (PLO) and Course (CLO) Learning Outcomes are as follows:

Program Learning Outcomes

Students who complete the program in Environmental Studies will be able to:

1. Synthesize (Synthesis, Application) scientific and humanistic studies through practical environmental application.
2. Locate, evaluate, and effectively use (Application, Evaluation) information to address environmental concerns.
3. Identify and articulate (Knowledge, Comprehension & Analysis) sociocultural dynamics as they relate to the natural world.
4. Present (Evaluation, Application) analysis to formal audiences, demonstrating appropriate strategies for audience engagement and oral communication.
5. Identify and secure (Application) post-graduate studies or careers in environmental fields.

Course Learning Outcomes:

Students who complete ESI 4020 will be able to:

1. Create (synthesis) and present (application) a portfolio of work that demonstrates reflection and community engagement. **(PLO 1, 2, 3, 4)**
2. Consider (evaluation & analysis) the human relationship with the natural world through diverse disciplines. **(PLO 2, 3)**
3. Exhibit (application) competency in gathering knowledge from diverse places. **(PLO 3)**
4. Communicate (application, comprehension) ideas with competency addressing appropriate audience, purpose, and medium. **(PLO 2, 3, 4)**

Required Texts and Recommended Study Resources

Students are responsible for having the required course textbooks prior to the first day of class.

All supplemental materials posted on this course site (including articles, book excerpts, or other documents) are provided for your personal academic use. These materials may be protected by copyright law and should not be duplicated or distributed without permission of the copyright owner.

Where do I have to spend my money for this class?

1. Sze, Julie *Environmental Justice in a Moment of Danger*
ISBN: 978-0520300743
2. Solnit, Rebecca and Thelma Young Lutunatabua eds. *Not Too Late*
ISBN: 978-1642598971
3. Printouts from Canvas as well as your work—plan accordingly (about \$50-\$75)
4. Various office supplies (lined paper, highlighters, pens, stapler, Scotch tape);
5. (Optional) Notebook/Journal for in-class free writing.

In the interest of lightening the financial burden of college education, I have placed our additional readings on Canvas rather than constructing a course reader. **You must read this material before class AND either bring in printouts of the pages or a NON CELL PHONE device to read them on. If you do not, I will sweetly ask you to leave class to retrieve the materials (including books on the days we read the above books).** Point Loma Nazarene University, as a non-profit educational institution, is entitled by law to use materials protected by the US Copyright Act for classroom education. However, any use of those materials outside the course may violate the law.

Lomabooks Instructions for Students:

This course is part of our course material delivery program, **LomaBooks**. The bookstore will provide each student with a convenient package containing all required physical materials; all digitally delivered materials will be integrated into Canvas.

You should have received an email from the bookstore confirming the list of materials that will be provided for each of your courses and asking you to select how you would like to receive any printed components (in-store pick up or home delivery). If you have not done so already, please confirm your fulfillment preference so the bookstore can prepare your materials.

For more information about **LomaBooks**, please go: [HERE](#)

Course Credit Hour Information

In the interest of providing sufficient time to accomplish the stated Course Learning Outcomes, this class meets the PLNU credit hour policy for a 3-unit class delivered over 15 weeks. It is anticipated that students will spend a minimum of 37.5 participation hours per credit hour on their coursework. For this course, students will spend an estimated 112.5 - 125 total hours meeting the course learning outcomes.

Below is the breakdown of hours to reach that goal:

Hours	Activity	
30	Reading	
35	Class Participation (including meeting, various activities, and listening to lectures)	
51	Assignments	
	Contract	1
	NTL Presentation	5
	Scholarship Map	2
	Two Best	2
	Final Presentation	7
	Reflection Essay	2
	Literature/Resource Review	7
	Proposal	5
	Project	20
TOTAL HOURS	116	

Of course, some of you will take shorter or longer to do a particular activity. The goal here isn't to be perfectly accurate, just fair in assessment of how long an activity should take you. I will not be giving partial credit for activities: you either get full credit or not at all (in which case, I will give you an opportunity to try again).

Assessment and Grading

How do I pass this course?

1. Participate in this course
2. Do all the assignments
3. Turn them in on time

What does that look like?

This course has two goals: a capstone project that you can take into the world outside academia and a portfolio that is a summation of your evolution as a critical thinker at PLNU. To these ends, we will spend time examining yourself, the career options in environmental studies and sustainability, and creating a project for a job portfolio or a graduate school application. Some of the writing will be curated pieces you've already written that exemplify how you apply the lens of environmental studies to various disciplines (course assignments) and a reflective essay that provides a narrative of your growth. The capstone project will also be part of your portfolio. With this portfolio, I aim for you to gain insight into your environmental passion as well as insight into what kind of career you would want to pursue.

That's a lot to pack into a semester course that meets for about an hour a few days a week. But we're going to give it the clichéd good college try.

With all the work we will do, the main thing is that you get your ideas clearly down on paper. Expressing your ideas well is the hardest part of being a professional (in any field). How many of us have had such a great image/story/idea in our heads but when we set it down on paper, it just looks flat (hee! See what I did there?)? I emphasize revision and process because most of us need to produce what Anne Lamott calls "shitty first drafts" before we can see where our ideas need work. Ideally for your capstone project, you already have a "shitty first draft" somewhere that you want to develop—you can think back to your internship project, a project for class, or maybe something you did for your study abroad. But even if you do or don't have a good project idea yet, all of you will be heavily revising your capstone project so that it is the best you can possibly make it. And you will help each other find the good ideas, the clever sentences, and solid data within your drafts, turning those first drafts into coherent and engaging final products.

You will get the benefit from this course in proportion to how much you engage with the content. I expect you to read, engage with the texts, and have thoughts about it. In addition, there will be some sort of writing due every week. This isn't to scare you but to let you know the pacing of the course.

What are the specific assignments?

Contract (5%) You will write a contract that will establish the grade you desire in this class and the expectations we will both fulfill for you to earn that grade. You will evaluate it once at the midterm.

Scholarship Map (5%) For this assignment, you will make a visual map of how your time and courses taken at PLNU have influenced your mental landscape.

Two Best (5%) For this assignment, you should identify two pieces of writing that you consider your best work and write a short explanation to accompany your selections.

Literature/Resource Review (13%) You will compile an annotated bibliography of credible sources that will serve as a knowledge foundation for your capstone project. This assignment will have a minimum of 25 sources and will be related to your particular field within environmental studies. For example, a writer may have eco-literature in their review while a biologist would include scientific papers.

Check-Ins (12%) At certain points in the semester, you will lead class discussion based on various prompts. Check In #1 will present your preliminary ideas for project goals; Check In #2 will present sources you found for your Literature/Resource Review, connecting it to a career path in environmental studies/sustainability; Check In #3 will present a rough draft of your project poster.

NTL Presentation (8%) You will select a chapter from our text *Not Too Late* and present it to the class along with supplemental information that the chapter references.

Portfolio (34%) Your portfolio will be specific to you so they all will differ in length and content, but all will demonstrate reflection on your evolution as a scholar and activist at PLNU and include the following:

Introductory Reflection Essay (5%) This essay will be a critical reflection of yourself as a thinker, using the elements of your portfolio as supporting evidence for your claims.

Table of Contents

Action Plan/Proposal (7%) You will write an action plan for what your capstone project will be as well as how you intend to choose material for and create your capstone project.

Three artifacts from your time at PLNU These do not need to be revised, but they need to be intentionally chosen to demonstrate your evolution as a scholar and thinker at PLNU. You will explain your choices in your Introductory Reflection Essay.

Project Poster (7%) You will create a professional poster that presents your project in a visually appealing way.

Capstone Project (15%) This project can be whatever you choose: a socio-environmental report card, a creative piece of poetry or prose, a website, a research paper, a project report, a book, an art installation, etc . . . You will turn in different aspects of it throughout the semester. Use the breadth of experiences you had in your courses while in this program and your passion to help you decide. You will work in groups on this project, contributing your particular expertise.

Final Presentation (8%) For your final, you will give a public presentation of your project and the process you went through to create it.

Participation (10%): Because learning is an interactive process, you must engage in that

process to get anything out of it; meaning, you must interact with the instructor and the other students in class and via email (when appropriate) as well as engage in the process of developing your project. Effective learning happens in a dynamic environment. Therefore, you must interact with the instructor and the other students regularly. If you wish to earn your participation grade, you must have a good attitude; you must read all of the readings; you must do the participation assignments on Canvas or in class; and you must speak out. Make it your goal to come up with one good thought for class meeting and to share it. Use of cell phones will not be permitted unless you have an academic accommodation OR I give you specific permission. **If you use your device to disengage from course discussion, I will sweetly ask you to leave that day and try again next time.**

****For all of these assignments, further instructions will be given on Canvas and/or in class****

How will I know my grade in the course?

Because learning is a process, I want you to be able to engage in your work, taking the tools you learn from thing you produce into the next without worrying about how many points you might lose on an individual assignment. To eliminate grade anxiety, I've set this course up on a contract grading model. This model means that you can choose which grade you would like to earn right now at the beginning of the semester and then allocate your time wisely to earning that grade. Though you will not get an individual score on your assignment, I will give feedback. And I will give you one opportunity to redo the work if it does not meet contract standards. This redo is due back to me the next day the class meets.

For many of my classes, I give a scaffolding of what an A, B, or C contract should contain. However, this course is a bit different because it is a capstone course so you must complete all the assignments. Therefore, I would like you to devise what you think an A, B, or C contract would look like. If you do have a bit of anxiety about that, I'm thinking that in doing ALL the assignments to an acceptable level, you would earn a B. An A would denote excellence and dedication in the completion of those assignments. For a C grade, I'm willing to meet one-on-one and chat about what that contract could look like.

For all grade contracts, you will be an active and positive contributor to our classes, offering a respectful spirit and coming up with insightful ideas and worthwhile feedback.

I will not accept work that does not meet with the quality expected of your stated contract. If you do not quality work, then I will not accept it. There can be variable effort and quality put in at any contract level. Thus you can earn a minus (-) or a plus (+)—pluses are for B and C contracts only (sorry there are no A+s, but you are all A+ in my heart).

Here's a bit of space for us to discuss what we think is reasonable as a class for various contract parameters:

What if I turn in a late assignment?

If you turn in a late assignment, you risk negating your contract. We will talk about this further as a class. Here is a space for you to make notes on what we decide:

You'll note that I have given percentages of what each assignment's weight is. The breakdown of percentages for each grade threshold looks like this:

Standard Grade Scale Based on Percentages

A	B	C	D	F
A 93-100	B+ 87-89	C+ 77-79	D+ 67-69	F Less than 59
A- 90-92	B 83-86	C 73-76	D 63-66	
	B- 80-82	C- 70-72	D- 60-62	

Final Examination Policy

Successful completion of this class requires taking the final examination on its scheduled day. The final examination schedule is posted on the [Traditional Undergraduate Records: Final Exam Schedules](#) site. If you find yourself scheduled for three (3) or more final examinations on the same day, you are authorized to contact each professor to arrange a different time for one of those exams. However, unless you have three (3) or more exams on the same day, no requests for alternative final examinations will be granted.

Content Warning

I acknowledge that each of you comes to PLNU with your own unique life experiences. This contributes to the way you perceive various types of information. In ESI 4020, all of the class content, including that which may be intellectually or emotionally challenging, has been intentionally curated to achieve the learning goals for this course. The decision to include such material is not taken lightly. If you encounter a topic that is intellectually challenging for you, it can manifest in feelings of discomfort and upset. In response, I encourage you to come talk to me or your friends or family about it. Class topics are discussed for the sole purpose of expanding your intellectual engagement in the area of environmental issues, and I will support you throughout your learning in this course.

Spiritual Care

Please be aware PLNU strives to be a place where you grow as whole persons. To this end, we provide resources for our students to encounter God and grow in their Christian faith.

If you have questions, a desire to meet with the chaplain or have prayer requests you can contact your professor or the [Office of Spiritual Life and Formation](#).

State Authorization

State authorization is a formal determination by a state that Point Loma Nazarene University is approved to conduct activities regulated by that state. In certain states outside California, Point Loma Nazarene University is not authorized to enroll online (distance education) students. If a student moves to another state after admission to the program and/or enrollment in an online course, continuation within the program and/or course will depend on whether Point Loma Nazarene University is authorized to offer distance education courses in that state. It is the student's responsibility to notify the institution of any change in his or her physical location. Refer to the map on [State Authorization](#) to view which states allow distance education outside California.

PLNU Copyright Policy

Point Loma Nazarene University, as a non-profit educational institution, is entitled by law to use materials protected by the US Copyright Act for classroom education. Any use of those materials outside the class may violate the law.]

PLNU Recording Notification

In order to enhance the learning experience, please be advised that this course may be recorded by the professor for educational purposes, and access to these recordings will be limited to enrolled students and authorized personnel.

Note that all recordings are subject to copyright protection. Any unauthorized distribution or publication of these recordings without written approval from the University (refer to the Dean) is strictly prohibited.

PLNU Academic Honesty Policy

Students should demonstrate academic honesty by doing original work and by giving appropriate credit to the ideas of others. Academic dishonesty is the act of presenting information, ideas, and/or concepts as one's own when in reality they are the results of another person's creativity and effort. A faculty member who believes a situation involving academic dishonesty has been detected may assign a failing grade for that assignment or examination, or, depending on the seriousness of the offense, for the course. For all student appeals, faculty and students should follow the procedures outlined in the University Catalog. See [Academic Policies](#) for definitions of kinds of academic dishonesty and for further policy information.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy

If it is part of your creative process, you are allowed to use Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools (e.g, ChatGPT, iA Writer, Marmot, Botowski, etc.) in this course. However, I would like you to speak to me before about how you plan to use this tool in your work. Another thing to note: most publications DO NOT allow use of AI in creative works. At this current cultural moment, using AI will limit where you can publish and work.

Any work that utilizes AI-based tools must be clearly identified as such, including the specific tool(s) used. Please use the following sources to guide your citations when using AI.

[MLA Style Center: Citing Generative AI](#)

[APA Style: How to Cite ChatGPT](#)

[Chicago Manual of Style: Citing Content Developed or Generated by AI](#)

Further, you must include with your work the sequential prompts and methodology that you used to generate it. Failure to indicate AI as part of the work will be considered plagiarism.

It is important that you protect your colleagues' intellectual property. Providing AI with samples of your colleagues' works will result in an F in this course.

PLNU Academic Accommodations Policy

PLNU is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all its programs, services, and activities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students with disabilities may request course-related accommodations by contacting the Educational Access Center (EAC), located in the Bond Academic Center (EAC@pointloma.edu or 619-849-2533). Once a student's eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, the EAC will work with the student to create an Accommodation Plan (AP) that outlines allowed accommodations. Professors are able to view a student's approved accommodations through Accommodate.

PLNU highly recommends that students speak with their professors during the first two weeks of each semester/term about the implementation of their AP in that particular course. Accommodations are not retroactive so clarifying with the professor at the outset is one of the best ways to promote positive academic outcomes.

Students who need accommodations for a disability should contact the EAC as early as possible (i.e., ideally before the beginning of the semester) to assure appropriate accommodations can be provided. It is the student's responsibility to make the first contact with the EAC. Students cannot assume that because they had accommodations in the past, their eligibility at PLNU is automatic. All determinations at PLNU must go through the EAC process. This is to protect the privacy of students with disabilities who may not want to disclose this information and are not asking for any accommodations.

Language and Belonging

Point Loma Nazarene University faculty are committed to helping create a safe and hospitable learning environment for all students. As Christian scholars we are keenly aware of the power of language and believe in treating others with dignity. As such, it is important that our language be equitable, inclusive, and prejudice free. Inclusive/Bias-free language is the standard outlined by all major academic style guides, including MLA, APA, and Chicago, and it is the expected norm in university-level work. Good writing and speaking do not use unsubstantiated or irrelevant generalizations about personal qualities such as age, disability, economic class, ethnicity, marital status, parentage, political or religious beliefs,

race, gender, sex, or sexual orientation. Inclusive language also avoids using stereotypes or terminology that demeans persons or groups based on age, disability, class, ethnicity, gender, race, language, or national origin. Respectful use of language is particularly important when referring to those outside of the religious and lifestyle commitments of those in the PLNU community. By working toward precision and clarity of language, we mark ourselves as serious and respectful scholars, and we model the Christ-like quality of hospitality.

If you (or someone you know) have experienced other forms of discrimination, you can find more information on reporting and resources at www.pointloma.edu/nondiscrimination.

Sexual Misconduct and Discrimination

In support of a safe learning environment, if you (or someone you know) have experienced any form of sexual discrimination or misconduct, including sexual assault, dating or domestic violence, or stalking, know that accommodations and resources are available through the Title IX Office at pointloma.edu/Title-IX. Please be aware that under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, faculty and staff are required to disclose information about such misconduct to the Title IX Office.

If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can contact Counseling Services at counselingservices@pointloma.edu or find a list of campus pastors at pointloma.edu/Title-IX.

If you (or someone you know) have experienced other forms of discrimination or bias, you can find more information on reporting and resources at www.pointloma.edu/bias

PLNU Attendance and Participation Policy

Regular and punctual attendance at all class sessions is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. If the student is absent for more than 10 percent of class sessions, the faculty member will issue a written warning of de-enrollment. If the absences exceed 20 percent, the student may be de-enrolled without notice until the university withdrawal date or, after that date, receive an “F” grade.

Note: The information below must be included under the “PLNU Attendance and Participation Policy” Section if you are teaching an Online or Hybrid course.

Use of Technology

In order to be successful in the online or hybrid environment, you'll need to meet the minimum technology and system requirements; please refer to the [*Technology and System Requirements*](#) information. Additionally, students are required to have headphone speakers, microphone, or webcams compatible with their computer available to use. Please note that any course with online proctored exams requires a computer with a camera (tablets are not compatible nor allowable) to complete exams online.

Problems with technology do not relieve you of the responsibility of participating, turning in your assignments, or completing your class work.

Loma Writing Center

The Loma Writing Center exists to help all members of the PLNU community cultivate transferable writing skills to engage their academic, professional, personal, and spiritual communities. We work toward this goal by conducting one-on-one consultation sessions, supporting writing education across the PLNU community, and participating in ongoing writing center research.

Getting feedback from the Loma Writing Center while you're in the process of working on an assignment is a great way to improve the quality of your writing and develop as a writer. You are encouraged to talk with a trained writing consultant about getting started on an assignment, organizing your ideas, finding and citing sources, revising, editing for grammar and polishing final drafts, and more. For information about how to make in-person or online appointments, see [Loma Writing Center webpage](#) or visit the Loma Writer Center on the first floor of the Ryan Library, room 221.

- [Appointment Calendar](#)
- [Website](#)
- Email: writingcenter@pointloma.edu

Assignments At-A-Glance

Schedule

(*Subject to Change as needed to facilitate course goals*):¹

Readings and assignments are due on the date listed.

EJMD denotes readings from *Environmental Justice in a Moment of Danger*.

NTL denotes readings from *Not Too Late*

[Course Resources on Google Drive](#)

WEEK	Date	Read	Discuss	Do/Due
1	2 September		Syllabus	
	4 September	<i>NTL</i> pp. 3 – 16	Choosing a Project	Keirse Test Ecotypes Test
2	9 September	<i>EJMD</i> “Introduction”: pp. 1 – 24.	Choosing a Project	DUE: Scholarship Map
	11 September	<i>NTL</i> pp. 19 – 31	How to do an <i>NTL</i> presentation The difference between a project and research around a project	DUE: Two Best
3	16 September	Resources on Google Drive/Canvas	What is a Literature/Resource Review	DUE: Five sources about your project.
	18 September	Resources on Google Drive/Canvas	Project Expectations/ Working as a Team	DUE: Sign up for NTL Presentation DUE: Contract for Grade (Individual)
4	23 September	<i>EJMD</i> “1. This Movement of Movements”: pp. 25 – 50.	Stakeholders	DUE: Team Contract
	25 September	<i>EJMD</i> “2. Environmental Justice Encounters”: pp. 51 – 75.	SMART Goals	

¹ I reserve the right to change the syllabus as needed to facilitate our course goals. You will receive notification of these changes; after which time, you are responsible for required material.

Disclaimer: This class is taught at the college level; therefore, reading materials may be adult and/or controversial in connotation and/or denotation. The purpose of presenting such material is to expose you to various viewpoints—viewpoints that will act as sources for discussions. For this reason, no alternate materials will be provided.

Final Disclaimer: You will write A LOT. Writing is a muscle that must be exercised.

WEEK	Date	Read	Discuss	Do/Due
5	30 September		Check-In #1	DUE: Project Goals and Objectives
	2 October		Check-In #1	
6	7 October	<i>EJMD</i> “3. Restoring Environmental Justice” & “Conclusion”: pp. 76 – 102.		DUE: Peer Feedback DUE: <i>NTL</i> Presentation materials
	9 October	<i>NTL</i> Presentation		DUE: <i>NTL</i> Presentation materials
7	14 October	<i>NTL</i> Presentation		DUE: <i>NTL</i> Presentation materials DUE: Literature/ Resource Review
	16 October	<i>NTL</i> Presentation		DUE: <i>NTL</i> Presentation materials
8	21 October	<i>NTL</i> Presentation		DUE: Mid-Course Survey DUE: Contract Eval
	23 October	Fall Break		
9	28 October		Check-In #2	DUE: Project Action Plan/Proposal
	30 October		Check-In #2	
10	4 November	TBD		DUE: Peer Feedback
	6 November	TBD		
11	11 November	TBD		
	13 November		Posters	
12	18 November	No Formal Class		
	20 November	No Formal Class		
13	25 November	No Formal Class		
	27 November	NO CLASS THANKSGIVING BREAK		
14	2 December		Check-In #3	
	4 November	Check-In #3		
15	9 December			DUE: Peer Feedback
	11 December	TBD	Posters	DUE: Poster of Project DUE: Course Evaluations
Finals Week	FINAL EXAM 18 December, 4:30pm DUE: Final Presentation DUE: Portfolio (including Reflection Essay)			