

ESI2050

Spring 2025

Course time and location: 11-11:55am MWF – Fermanian 201

Instructor: Dr. Ben Cater

Office Hours: 10-11am MWF and by appointment.

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PLNU MISSION: TEACH, SHAPE, SEND

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

COURSE DESCRIPTION

ESI 2050 is an undergraduate course designed to introduce students to the interdisciplinary nature and basic vocabulary of humanities-based environmental studies. Caring for our earth and each other is an issue that spans disciplines, and we will spend time examining how this care manifests in diverse fields from biology and art to business and literature. By learning to listen to the diverse approaches that disciplines use to talk about and address environmental issues, I hope you will have an environmental lens (sort of like invisible glasses) or framework that you can use in any course or situation, allowing you to see how we can care for the earth and other humans no matter what we do. I also hope that you will begin building your environmental studies community with your learning colleagues in this course, forming supportive relationships that will go beyond your time at PLNU.

COURSE CATALOG DESCRIPTION

A general introduction and overview of the discipline of environmental studies (including history and practice) that serves majors, potential majors, and other interested students. Attention will be given to methodology (3 units)

PROGRAM AND COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

PLO 1. Synthesize scientific and humanistic studies through practical environmental application.

PLO 2. Locate, evaluate, and effectively use information to address environmental concerns.

PLO 3. Identify and articulate sociocultural dynamics as they relate to the natural world.

PLO 4. Present analysis to formal audiences, demonstrating appropriate strategies for audience engagement and oral communication.

PLO 5. Identify and secure post-graduate studies or careers in environmental fields.

CLO1. Memorize (knowledge) and employ (application) fundamental concepts in the field of environmental studies. (PLO 1, 2, 3);

CLO2. Consider (evaluation & analysis) the human relationship with the natural world through diverse disciplines. (PLO 2, 3);

CLO3. Exhibit (application) increasing competency in gathering knowledge from diverse places. (PLO 3);

CLO4. Communicate (application, comprehension) ideas with increasing competency addressing appropriate audience, purpose, and medium. (PLO 2, 3, 4).

REQUIRED TEXTS

Berry, Wendell. *The Unsettling of America* (REQ)

Additional readings will be available on the syllabus, in the Course Reader located in Modules, or distributed in class.

COURSE COMMUNICATION AND DIGITAL DEVICES

Students are responsible for all communication sent by Dr. Cater to their PLNU email and Canvas accounts. Dr. Cater prefers face-to-face communication and welcomes office drop-ins. He frequently emails students about lectures and assignments, so please check your Canvas inbox regularly.

MAKE-UPS AND ACCOMMODATIONS

Make-up exams and quizzes will not be allowed without a university-approved reason that is agreed to in writing by the university Provost. Students have 1 day from the original date of the exam/quiz to request a makeup; after that, the exam/quiz becomes a zero. In compliance with federal and state laws, students requesting academic accommodations “must file documentation with the Educational Access Center (EAC), located in the Bond Academic Center.” The EAC will then contact the student’s instructor and “provide written recommendations for reasonable and appropriate accommodations to meet the individual needs of the student.” For more information, see “Academic Accommodations” in the Undergraduate Catalog.

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

Participation	25 pts
Quizzes	50 pts
Reading Notes	100 pts
Outdoor Reflections	150 pts
Book Review	150 pts
Research Paper	150 pts

Reading Notes

Students will be assigned weekly readings that correlate with lecture topics. Readings are intended to deepen your understanding of one or more topics brought up in lectures.

Notes should be typed and include 1) a summary of the readings' main arguments and sub-arguments 2) three questions for class discussion. Failure to include these items will result in a zero for the assignment. Notes must be submitted to Canvas before the beginning of class - no late notes will be accepted.

Outdoor Reflections

Three times during the semester, students will find an outdoor space to sit/walk/hike/paddle for 30 minutes. Each space must be different and identified in the reflection (ex. the surf in front of campus, the natural park at Sunset Cliffs, hiking at Mission Trails, etc.). Take notes of what you see, hear, and smell, paying careful attention to plants, animals, insects, distant noises, and scents. Then use your notes to compose a well-written reflection that describes in sensory detail how the experience affected you. Include any insights or connections to class discussions or readings if relevant, as well as a selfie of your time outdoors. Be prepared to share your reflections in class.

Book Review

Meet with Dr. Cater to choose a book on one aspect of Environmental Studies that especially interests you. Read it and take detailed notes. Then use your notes to write a 2–3-page book review (12-point font, 1-inch margins) that identifies the book's main argument, evidence, and contribution to the field. Dr. Cater will provide detailed rubric and model book review to emulate. Upload your book review and reading notes to Canvas.

Research Paper

Write a 5–7-page research essay on a topic related to environmental studies. Examples include climate change mitigation strategies, biodiversity loss, renewable energy solutions, environmental justice, or sustainable agriculture. Topics must be focused, neither too narrow nor too broad, and rely on credible academic sources such as journal articles, books, government reports, documentaries, and reputable websites. Aim for a mix of

primary and secondary sources. At the end of the semester, students will present their papers to the class.

FINAL EXAM POLICY

Successful completion of this class requires taking the final exam on its scheduled day. No requests for early examinations or alternative days will be approved.

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. Faculty should follow and students may appeal using the procedure in the university Catalog. For more information, see the following link:

https://catalog.pointloma.edu/content.php?catoid=41&navoid=2435#Academic_Honesty

UNIVERSITY COPYRIGHT POLICY

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

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) POLICY

You are allowed to use Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools (e.g, ChatGPT, iA Writer, Marmot, Botowski) to generate ideas, but you are not allowed to use AI tools to generate content (text, video, audio, images) that will end up in any work submitted to be graded for this course. If you have any doubts about using AI, please gain permission from the instructor.

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.

*You may report an incident(s) using the Bias Incident Reporting Form located here: https://www.pointloma.edu/bias?market_source=vp

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.

SCHEDULE

Below is an approximate schedule of topics, assignments, and assessments. Dr. Cater reserves the right to make adjustments if necessary.

Jan 13: Course introduction and syllabus

Jan 15: Creation, the Church, and Environmental Studies

Jan 17: Creation, the Church, and Environmental Studies

- Sider, "Redeeming the Environmentalists"
(<https://www.christianitytoday.com/1993/06/redeeming-environmentalists/>)
- White, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis"

Jan 20: MLK Day (NO CLASS)

Jan 22: Nature and the Natural

Jan 24: Nature and the Natural

- Dillard, "Seeing" (CR)
- McDermott, "Nature" in *Everyday Glory* (copies to be handed out in class)

Jan 27: Commons

Jan 29: Commons

- Harden, "The Tragedy of the Commons"
- Weisman, "Prelude: Monkey Koan"

Jan 31: A World Without Edges

Feb: 3: **Quiz**

- documentary TBA

Feb 5: Planetary Architecture

Feb 7: Planetary Architecture

- Carson, excerpt from "Silent Spring"
- Leopold, excerpt from "Sand County Almanac"
- **Research Paper Check-in (discuss possible topics for research)**

Feb 10: The Most Successful Species

Feb 12: The Most Successful Species

- Cronon, Chpt. 7 in *Changes in the Land* (to be handed out in class)

Feb 14: Climate Change

- **Outdoor Reflection #1 due**

Feb 17: Climate Change

- Moore, "Could the Climate Crisis Make Religion Even Crazier?"
(<https://www.christianitytoday.com/2022/07/russell-moore-philip-jenkins-climate-crisis-religion-crazy/>)
- Nixon, "'This Changes Everything,' by Naomi Klein"
(<https://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/09/books/review/naomi-klein-this-changes-everything-review.html>)

Feb 19: Humans and their Habitats

- Wilson, "Half Planet"

Feb 21: NO CLASS MEETING

- Instead of class, we'll meet on Saturday, Sept 22 to sail. See Dr. Cater if you cannot attend to complete an alternative assignment. Details to follow.
- **Research Paper Check-in (email Dr. Cater your research paper topic)**

Feb 24: Biological Diversity

Feb 26: **Quiz**

- documentary TBA

Feb 28: Perspectives on Sustainability

- Atkinson, “The Utility of Global Thinking”
(<https://www.context.org/iclib/ic25/atkisson/>)
- Berry, “The Futility of Global Thinking”

March 3: Environmental Awareness

March 5: Environmental Awareness

March 7: Collective Action

- **Book Review due**

March 10-14: Spring Break (NO CLASS)

March 17: Markets

March 19: Markets

- Sagoff Arizona Law Review, “At the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima”

March 21: Addressing Affluence

- **Research Paper Check-in (email Dr. Cater your bibliography)**

March 24: Learning

March 26: Learning

- Solnit, excerpt from “Hope in the Dark”

March 28: Quiz

- **Outdoor Reflection #2 due**

March 31: TBA

April 2: The Unsettling of America

April 4: The Unsettling of America

April 7: The Ecological Crisis as a Crisis of Agriculture

April 9: The Agricultural Crisis as a Crisis of Culture

April 11: Living in the Future: The “Modern” Agricultural Ideal

April 14: The Use of Energy

April 16: The Body and the Earth

April 18: Easter Break (NO CLASS)

April 21: **Research Paper Check-in (first draft is due)**

April 23: Jefferson, Morrill, and the Upper Crust

April 25: Margins

April 28: TBA

April 30: TBA

May 2: TBA

- **Outdoor Reflection #3 due**

May 5: 10:30am-1pm Final Exam

- **Research Paper Final Draft and Presentation Due**