



COURSE OUTLINE

THE ENVIRONMENT

The course provides students with an opportunity to examine a range of issues of environmental importance. Our continuing reliance on fossil fuels, for example, is leading to a rise in greenhouse gases causing climate change. We look at the problems that this will generate, such as rising sea levels. The decline in food production, destruction of fish stocks and the rise in population numbers have already created the spectre of widespread food shortages. We will examine possible solutions. The consequences of degradation of habitats like the rain forests, and the acceleration in the loss of plant and animal species will also be considered, as will the necessity for waste reduction and re-use of valuable resources.

Students will consider and assess the ecological problems which are currently facing the world and threatening the survival of humanity. By the end of the course students will be better informed about the problems which will impact on their lives, and will have some grasp of the ways in which they can be tackled on both a personal and a national level. This is a dynamic subject, and as well as the topics listed below, specific attention will be given to topical environmental issues as they arise during the course.

- Man's effect on the environment.
- Overpopulation and the consequent decline in food and water availability.
- Pollution due to poor waste management and modern farming methods.
- Habitat destruction, deforestation and loss of species.
- Use of fossil fuels and their effect on CO₂ levels in the atmosphere.
- Peak oil: approaching the maximum rate of petroleum extraction. Climate change.
- Towards the future.....possible scenarios.
- What can we all do?

Course aim

To gain a better awareness and understanding of a wide range of issues affecting the environment, and of the ways in which these issues may be addressed.

Assessment Process

The weighting of the assessment is principally focused on the work done on written research papers and by an end of course test. These marks, combined with an assessment of student performance in class, make up the final grade for the course, as shown.

Grade breakdown

- 40% Research papers
- 40% Test
- 20% Class Participation

Credit

This class is normally delivered over one term, with 90 teaching contact hours or equivalent in the Michaelmas term, and 60 teaching contact hours for Hilary and Trinity terms. For students requesting credit, we recommend the transfer of three college credits for Michaelmas and two college credits for Hilary and Trinity, on successful completion of the class.

Assessment Criteria

Distinction Grade A	Appropriate, accurate and well-detailed knowledge of environmental issues. Excellent organisation and structure of arguments, displaying substantial evidence and awareness of recent developments. Excellent communication skills.
Credit Grade B	Appropriate and detailed but slightly limited knowledge of environmental issues. Arguments presented coherently, but these are not always fully supported. Oral and written skills good.
Merit Grade C	Limited environmental knowledge, but this is generally accurate. Reasonable arguments constructed and some evidence of breadth or depth is displayed. Oral and communication skills satisfactory.
Pass Grade D	Description of issues is weak and understanding is muddled and incomplete. Merely basic knowledge is displayed orally and in written form. Weak communication skills.
Fail	Failure to reach a minimum standard of communication, content and argument.

Recommended Reading

The books recommended below cover a very wide area of knowledge, but this is only a small sample of possible sources. Other books will be recommended for further study of particular topics.

Rachel Carson Silent Spring
ISBN 978-0141184944

George Monbiot Heat: How We Can Stop The Planet Burning
ISBN 978-0141026626

Deborah Cadbury The Feminization of Nature
ISBN 978-0241137468

If you are unable to obtain books locally, they may be ordered from

<http://bookshop.blackwell.co.uk>

or

www.Amazon.co.uk