

## **Environmental Studies 100**

### **Environment and Sustainability in Southern Africa**

*“This course is a great overview of environment and sustainability challenges of the southern African region. The course is an ideal opportunity to acquire first-hand knowledge and experience of contemporary socio-ecological issues of southern Africa in context. An extremely informative, well structured and relevant course that is suitable for both new and old environmental studies students” (Chris Masara: ESD/SD Professional- southern Africa).*

**Instructor:** Monika Shikongo

#### **Purpose of the Course**

This course explores and examines the human-nature interface in a southern African context of risk and vulnerability. The course draws insights from the social sciences to understand how environmental problems emerge and how their impacts can be mitigated.

Students will be provided with an opportunity to investigate the root causes of environmental problems and why environmental problems occur in a southern African context. You will be familiarized to some of the environmental concerns in southern Africa with particular emphasis on Namibia. The course will also introduce as well as investigate the impact of Climate Change in southern Africa. Climate Change adaptation strategies in a southern African context will be examined and discussed. An overview of Namibia’s ecosystems and biodiversity will also be explored by examining how various factors such as political, economic, historical, social and ecological factors impacts both.

#### **Course Description**

An inter-disciplinary introduction to current environmental issues. The course depends on ecological visions of the world and examines the connections we share as people living simultaneously in human community and in physical environments. In examining these connections, we depend on the insights offered by political science, biology, economics, literature, sociology, chemistry, and history as well as experiential education and service-learning. The issues examined in this class — neither remote nor abstract — exist in our everyday lives, and a central feature of the course is the application of knowledge gained in the class to a campus project.

#### **Required Readings**

Biggs, R. Bohensky, E. Desanker, P. Fabricius, C. Lynam, et al. *Nature Supporting People: The Southern African Millennium Ecosystem Assessment Integrated Report*. Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, Pretoria, South Africa 2004.

Brown, J and Bird, N. *Namibia’s Story: Sustainable natural resource management in Namibia: Successful community-based wildlife conservation*. Overseas Development Institute, 2010.

Bullard, R. *Confronting environmental racism: Voices from the grassroots*. South End Press, 1993.

Darkoh, M. *An overview of environmental issues in Southern Africa*. African Journal of Ecology. 47 (93-98). 2009.

- DLA Piper. *Climate Change in Southern Africa: ACTSA Briefing Paper*. DLA Piper, 2009.
- Hinz, M. *Customary Law and the Environment*. In O. Ruppel and K. Ruppel-Schlichting, *Environmental Law and Policy in Namibia: Towards Making Africa the Tree of Life*. Hans Seidel Foundation-Namibia. 2013.
- Hope, K and Lekorwe, M. *Urbanization and the Environment in Southern Africa: Towards a Managed Framework for the Sustainability of Cities*. *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management* 42. 6 (Nov 1999): 837.
- Kumar, R. and Toky. *Definition, Scope and Importance of Environmental Studies*. In R. Kumar and D. Nandal (eds). *Environmental Studies*. Department of forestry. Haryan Agricultural College, 2006.
- Mapaure, I. *Climate Change: Review of Climate Change in Namibia-Projected Trends, Vulnerability and Effects*. In O. Ruppel and K. Ruppel-Schlichting, *Environmental Law and Policy in Namibia: Towards Making Africa the Tree of Life*. Hans Seidel Foundation-Namibia, 2013.
- Martinez-Alier, J. *The Environmentalism of the Poor: A Study of Ecological Conflicts and Valuation*. Cheltenham-UK: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2002.
- Middleton, N. *The Global Casino: An Introduction to Environmental Issues*. London. Routledge. 5<sup>th</sup> ed, 2013.
- Miller, G and Spoolman, S. *Living in the Environment: Principles, Connections, and Solutions*, 17<sup>th</sup> ed. Cengage Learning, 2011.
- Namibia. Ministry of Environment and Tourism MET. (n.d). *Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) Enhancing Conservation, Development and Democracy in Namibia's Rural Areas*. Ministry of Environment and Tourism.
- Obi, C. *Environmental Movements in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Political Ecology of Power and Conflict*. United Nations Research Institute for Social Development. 2005.
- Ruppel. O, C. *A Constitutional Perspective on Environmental Law Developments in Namibia*. Windhoek: IUCN Academy of Law, 2010.
- Sola, L. *Impact of Poverty on the Environment in Southern Africa*. Southern African Regional Poverty Network, 2001.
- Tarr, P and Tarr, J. *Southern Africa: An overview of the Environment*. Southern African Institute for Environmental Assessment, 2003.
- Terraviva. *Telling Southern Africa's Ground and Surface Water Stories: SADC Groundwater and Drought Management Project*. Inter Press Service Africa, 2009.

## **Overarching Goals and/or Learning Outcomes**

At the end of the course, students will:

1. Develop understanding of approaches used by the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences in the exploration of relationships between humans and environments.
2. Be introduced to some environment and sustainability challenges of southern Africa in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in order to acquire an in-depth understanding of environment and sustainability challenges in context.
3. Explore the competing and contested socio-political, cultural, economic, and bio-physical dimensions of sustainability in a southern African context.
4. Undertake a fieldtrip to an environmental centre and explore the centre's philosophy of sustainable living and sustainability.
5. Sharpen your analytical skills in examining the causes and consequences of environmental problems through the application of sustainability framework in search of solutions.
6. Develop an understanding of how Namibia promotes sustainable natural resource –based livelihood within a framework of community based natural resource management as well as through biodiversity protection mechanisms.
7. Deepen your understanding of climate change impacts and adaptation in southern Africa.

8. Examine social approaches aimed towards the alleviation of contemporary environmental problems by applying different theoretical frameworks or conceptual lenses in order to evaluate how several environmental movements intend to promote the concepts of eco-efficiency, environmental justice, equitable economic growth and eco-feminism.
9. Reflect upon your role as agents of change to impact on social, economic and environmental justice through involvement at different educational, social and political levels.

### **Course Requirements (100%)**

- **Class Participation (10%):** You are expected to regularly attend classes. Class attendance is the most important means to achieve the learning goals for this course. This aspect of the assessment will comprise of compulsory class attendance, active class participation by providing feedback on assigned readings. You will also be required to engage with other students as well as with class guests, therefore you will be encouraged to ask questions as often as possible. Moreover, it will be your responsibility as a student to notify the course instructor in advance if you are unable to attend a class session.
- **Currents of Environmentalism (20%):** This assessment exercise will require you to select and discuss any Environmental Movement of your choice from unit 6 readings. In your discussion, you will be required to use the Martinez-Alier (2002) reading (Currents of Environmentalism) in order to explain the current/s of Environmentalism informing the activities of the Environmental Movement that you will select.
- **NaDEET Fieldtrip reflection (15%):** You will undertake a fieldtrip to the Namib Desert Environmental Education Trust (NaDEET) and upon you return. You will be required to reflect on the NaDEET philosophy and sustainability practices.
- **Water Resources and Humans (10%):** The purpose of this essay is to explore how poor access to clean water and sanitation affect the health of people in sub-Saharan Africa. You will be required to provide an analysis on how various population groups are affected by a lack of access to clean water and sanitation.
- **Climate Change and the Environment (10%):** You will be required to provide a detailed critical analysis of the impact of climate change in Namibia/southern Africa. Additionally, the assessment exercise will require you to identify a theme/s that you will critically engage with.
- **Interdisciplinary Blog Assignment (5%):** All students will be responsible for preparing two blog entries complete with photos during the semester. During the 1<sup>st</sup> week of the semester there will be a sign-up sheet posted, along with information about probable course content for the rest of the semester so that you could choose themes that most interest you and times of the semester that work best for you. The blogs will usually be written in groups of 3 (except a few groups of 4). A week begins on Monday and ends on Sunday. **Length of Blog Entries:** Approximately 1 page per group.
- **Final Integrative Projects (30%):** Final projects will address the Development Process, Religion, Political Science, Environmental Studies, History and Internship courses: This project can be done individually or in groups of up to three students. Projects should be creative (a play, a calendar, musical piece, etc), and should: 1) be rooted in critical analysis of issues important to Namibia

and/or South Africa, 2) draw upon your own experiences, and 3) be a synthesis of your learning that can be used to educate others on key issues facing Namibia and/or South Africa. Although this is an integrative project, each instructor will grade the final projects separately.

### Course Design

Unit	Topic
1	Introduction to Environment and Sustainability in Southern Africa
2	Sustainable Natural Resources Management
3	Environmental Movements: Re-defining Environmentalism
4	Sustainable Living and Sustainability at NaDEET
5	Water Resources and Challenges in Southern Africa
6	Integrated Risk Management in a Context of Climate Change
7	Environment and Urbanization
8	Wrap-up
9	Integrative Projects

### Teaching Methodology

The course is theoretically guided by humanities pedagogy thus incorporates elements of situated learning strategies in order to enhance the interaction of physical, mental and emotional experiences among students. One of the best ways to realize this kind of pedagogy is by means of supporting students to look into the social-ecological systems in which learning occurs. Consequently, a problem-based and solutions oriented approach will be utilized throughout the course. Therefore, the course will draw on various pedagogical methods such as course readings and class discussions of those readings, lectures, videos, classroom exercises, guest speakers by environmental stakeholders and field-based activities.

### Additional Comments

#### Explanation of Grades

Augsburg's grading system uses the following definitions:

Grade	Grade Points	Description
A	4.00	Excellent
A-	3.67	
B+	3.33	
B	3.00	Good
B-	2.67	
C+	2.33	
C	2.00	Satisfactory
C-	1.67	
D+	1.33	
D	1.00	Poor
D-	0.67	
F	0.00	Failure

A "Pass" grade is 2.0 or above.

**Grading Policy and Late Assignments**

You must submit assignments on time. If you need an extension, you must talk to us **in advance** to negotiate a new deadline. If you have not been given an extension in advance and you turn in a late assignment, you will be docked half a grade (from a 4.0 to a 3.5 or 3.5 to a 3.0, 3.0 to a 2.5, 2.5 to a 2.0, etc.) If you are more than one week late, you will be docked a full grade. No assignments will be accepted more than two weeks after the original deadline; a "0" will be given after that. Assignments due near the end of the semester will not be accepted after the last day of the semester.

**Augsburg Honesty Policy**

You are expected to follow the Augsburg Honesty Policy which is printed in the program manual. We assume that you have read the honesty policy, understand it, and are following it. Except when the assignment expressly encourages group work, it is assumed that all course work will be your own. You may not copy other students' work. The first occurrence of plagiarism will result in the failure of the assignment. A student who commits plagiarism a second time will fail the course.

**Students' Rights and Responsibilities**

Students with formally diagnosed learning or physical differences have legal rights to course modifications. Those who qualify should identify themselves to the instructor as soon as possible in order to obtain extra assistance.