

Bio 15 / PM 14 - Course Syllabus

Conservation Biology



This syllabus contains all pertinent information about the class. It is written to make your life easier and to give you an idea about the format of the course. Keep it accessible in your binder/desktop and refer to it if you have questions about the class. Make sure to **read it** during the first week of class.

Peter Svensson

Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays between 9:20am -10:50am in V5 (in the new 'village' on the north side of campus) (These hours may change.)

The class meets on Mondays and Wednesdays between 10:55am-12:20pm in V9.

Messages: The **best way** to contact me is via e-mail. My voice mail is (408) 741-2558. The interface on Angel also allows for messages. I will be on Angel every day throughout the semester.

Class Meetings: The class meets on Mondays and Wednesdays between 1055am -1220pm in V9 (in the Village).

E-mail: Peter_Svensson@westvalley.edu

Biology 15/ PM 14 is a three unit class acceptable for credit at the California State University

Introduction to Conservation Biology: This non-majors course will give you an overview of the field of conservation biology. We will focus on the growth of the human populations and its impact on the world due to a combination of growth and overconsumption. This is a very important and pertinent topic in modern times.



Topics: We will cover a large array of topics on a weekly/biweekly basis combining biological knowledge with environmental themes. Among other things we will cover biodiversity, the growth of the human population, the overuse of resources, the impact on other organisms and environments as well as the work towards building sustainable solutions for these issues.

Required Materials:

These can be purchased directly in our bookstore or from the internet.

Textbook: Withgott/Brennan *Essential Environment*, 3rd ed. (2009) Pearson This is your main resource in the class and will accompany you many late nights. Additional materials will be available on the web site. The text book serves as a required core of knowledge utilized to understand the contemporary issues covered in the course.

- Clover: "The End of the Line", University of California Press (2008).
- Lester Brown: Plan B 4.0 – *Mobilizing to Save Civilization* (2009). Available for free (as PDF files) at <http://www.earth-policy.org/index.php?/books/pb4> {see link on web site}
- Scantrons (4)



Optional:

- **World on the Edge: How to Prevent Environmental and Economic Collapse** By Lester R. Brown. Available as a free download on the web. See course web page.

Curriculum: The class is composed of numerous modules which are presented in a weekly format. Lectures are integrated with discussions, films as well as reading assignments as we cover each topic.

Tentative Course TOPICS:(subject to change)

Week 1:	Introduction to Conservation Biology	Ch 1
	Biodiversity	
Week 2:	Biodiversity on Earth/ Communities	Ch 4
Week 3:	Communities and Populations	Ch 5
	The Human Population	Ch 6
Week 4:	Exam #1	
	Climate Change/ Global Warming	Ch 14
Week 5:	Global Warming	Ch 14
	Energy – Non-renewable Resources	Ch 15
Week 6:	Energy – Renewable Resources	Ch 16
Week 7:	Exam #2	
	Pollution	Ch 12
Week 8:	Pollution - The Chemical Industry	
	SPRING BREAK	
Week 9:	Water	Ch 12
Week 10:	Air	Ch 13
Week 11:	Exam #3	
	Food and Agriculture	Ch 7
Week 12:	The Food Supply	Ch 7
Week 13:	The Fisheries	Ch 17
Week 14:	Conservation	Ch 8
Week 15:	Ethics and Environmental Policy	Ch 2
	<u>FINAL EXAM: Wednesday May 25 9:40-11:40am in V9</u>	

Angel & Computers: Please get familiar with the Angel interface at

http://www.westvalley.edu/dl/angel_login.html

and login at

<http://wvmccd.angellearning.com/>

This is a good way to communicate with the class. In my own experience I prefer the Firefox browser, which is fast and powerful (and free), but other browsers work as well.

<http://www.mozilla.com/en-US/firefox/personal.html>

The college recommends that students only use Firefox or Internet Explorer while logged into Angel.



There is also a class web page at

<http://instruct.westvalley.edu/svensson/B15/consindex.html>

which serves as your main portal to supplementary material found on the web (sites and articles). I will remind you when new material has been posted on the site.

The Class Room: Please follow these points to enrich your class experience:

- Be an **active participant** in the class. An understanding of the topics we cover will come to you much more easily if you prepare for class. Ask questions! Be curious!
- **Attend every class.** By doing so you will keep up with the class and its assignments and be a powerful contributor to class discussions and do well on the exams as well as the assignments.
- **Do not procrastinate.**

Assessment: In class you will be assessed through three exams (3x100) as well as a final exam (150 pts). None of these are cumulative. You will also be required to turn in five essays based on reading assignments (5x20=100pts). The tentative total number of points you can earn throughout the semester is 550 pts. However, these numbers may be revised depending on circumstances.

Academic Deadlines: Last day to drop without a 'W' is February 11. Last day to drop with a 'W' is April 29. Last day to add is February 11. It is **your responsibility** to follow the deadlines posted by West Valley College. If you do not notify admissions/records you will end up with an 'F' as a final grade.

Exams: Written exams will consist of multiple choice questions, figures as well as essay questions. The first three exams (100 pts each) are not cumulative. The final exam is worth 150 pts and is required. If you for some important reason miss an exam **you will need to notify me within 24 hours** via e-mail. If you fail to do so you will not be able to make up the exam. There will be **no** make-up exams unless you have a valid documented reason (e.g. medical emergencies etc. [e.g. vacations or dental appointments do not qualify]). Do not make appointments or plans that conflict with your scheduled class hours. During your exams you are only allowed to use your pencil and scantron unless instructed otherwise. You cannot use additional sheets of paper, dictionaries, calculators, ipods etc. unless you have received special permission. Hats/caps (blocking your eyes) need to be removed during the exams.

Grades: Your final grade in the course is based on the number of points you accumulate during the semester.

Grading Scale: A 90-100%; B 80-89%; C 70-79%; D 60-69%; F < 60%

Keeping track of your grades: Approximately once per month (after each exam) I will post a score sheet on the web as well as pass it around in the classroom so you can get an idea of how you are doing in the lecture portion of the class. By the end of October you will also receive an update that includes your midterm grade from your required laboratory section. I highly recommend that you keep track of your own grade during the semester by recording the scores you receive on the exams as well as the point value of each exam. With those figures you can easily calculate your percentage. The scale above will give you your current grade.

Cheating: is **not tolerated** and is unfair to the other students in the class. Cheating includes plagiarism (copying material from a source, e.g. a book or the web), looking at another student's exam/scantron, using notes or talking/whispering during an exam. Plagiarism is a serious and common problem. Read about it at: <http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml>. **Do not copy any sentences or paragraphs from any source into the pages of your written assignments.** The copy/paste function of your word processor is a fantastic tool. However, write your own papers/assignments. The student will be reported to the chairman of the division, and the incident will be recorded in the student's permanent record. A student found cheating will immediately be dropped from the course and receive an 'F' as a final grade. Read this section one more time. It is essential that you understand the consequences of this class policy. **I will fail a student found cheating in my class or on any of the course assignments.**

The Lessons/Modules: The lectures introduce and cover an array of environmental topics. Take good notes from lectures, films, assigned articles as well as the accompanying chapters from the text to master this aspect of the course. It is important that you are an active note taker. The process of note taking keeps you alert and focused on the main components of the unit. A student that just sits back and “enjoys”/ ”absorbs” the lecture is likely to not remember much of the material when you are quizzed on the material. Even if you do not study your notes at a later date the activity of taking them helps you to learn the material. Personally I find notes to be a useful tool to actively learn material as I am making them and an excellent review in preparation for the exams.

Earning a Grade:

1. Focus on the fact that you are immersing yourself in the field of biology for the next 15 weeks.
2. Attend all classes each week
3. Be an active participant [listen, take notes and ask questions]
4. Plan your study time
5. Continuously review the material
6. Always turn in your assignments and projects on time.
7. Ask for help when you need help



Study Techniques: The course will follow the outline of the text. I will work hard to present the material in the class and serve as a resource to you. Unfortunately, I am not taking your exams ☹️. You are expected to keep up with the assigned readings. It is a good idea to regard a class and its associated study time in the same way as you would a job [i.e. one shows up on time, leaves on time and do the work one is expected to do in and outside of class]. You will do poorly in the course if you fall behind. I strongly encourage looking over the assigned chapter/s before lecture, and reading it/them as soon as possible after lecture. It is important to take good lecture notes (i.e. to not only copy the board/screen but to actually record keywords, concepts and facts from the lecture). Try to make an outline of the concepts and terminology covered in lecture as you take notes. Make an effort to go over your notes within a day or two. The best setting for such a review is with one or two other students from the class. The students should preferably be at the same level as yourself (i.e. equally motivated and interested). Forming a **study group** is often a key to success in this course. Let me know if you are interested in forming such a group as soon as possible. Contact me in case you have questions about the material. According to college guidelines, **in order to earn a 'C'** in the class, one should study two hours for every hour one spends in class [3 hours of lectures per week is equivalent to **6 hours of active and focused studying per week**]. The laboratory component adds to the commitment. However, higher grades demand more of an effort. Gear your time based on the grade you hope to receive. I recommend a time allocation of 10 hours per week for an 'A'. Biology is a lot of

Biology 15/ Park Management 14
Conservation Biology [3 units] [#92924 or #94043]
Spring Semester 2011
MW 1055-1220pm in V9

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fun but it is also time consuming. The following web site contains several useful links in regards to notetaking skills:

http://www.ex.ac.uk/dll/studyskills/note_taking_skills.htm

Special Accommodations: Please e-mail me in case you need special accommodations in my class. If you have a learning or physical need that will require special accommodations in this class you will need to notify me in writing of your accommodation needs. West Valley College makes reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities. College materials will be available in alternate formats (Braille, audio, electronic format, or large print) upon request. Please contact the Disability and Educational Support Program at (408) 741-2010 (voice) or (408) 741-2658 (TTY) for such assistance.

Counseling: The college provides free initial counseling sessions for students in need of such services. Feel free to contact Counseling Services in case you are having problems at school or at home (x2009).

