

IDS 090 - Summer 2008
Global Issues Forum
nknight@linfield.edu
Early Assignment! (see course requirements 1 & 2)
none officially, but frequent
mail and website

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e-mail:
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Welcome! Global Issues is a huge conceptual framework that can be approached from a number of non-exclusive standpoints - political, economic, environmental, technological, etc. I've chosen primarily an environmental standpoint, not only because it's what I've been teaching at Linfield for several years, but also because many of the human impacts we've had transcend political borders and encompass all of the above standpoints. In addition, we are in an age of increasing environmental awareness. I've noticed most people are fairly well informed of local issues, but the familiarity appears to be inversely related to the distance from the environmental situation. For example, most of us have at least some knowledge (and opinions!) about the local salmon situation, but how many of us are aware of economic pressures on wholesale prices paid to local commercial fishermen due to imports of farmed salmon from British Columbia, Chile, and Norway?

Also, many of the issues we are confronted with today have strong and valid points on two or more opposing positions or perspectives. As a result, resolution of these issues is going to be very challenging. But the first step is to increase public awareness of the complexities of these issues, in order that rational and well-founded decisions can be made. Toward that end of increasing awareness, the book I've chosen for the course is [Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Environmental Issues](#) (13th ed.) by Thomas A. Easton, a collection of several major environmental issues (many of which are global in nature), each with pro and con arguments by experts in their respective fields, along with well-written summaries and postscripts by the author. There will be time in this term to examine about half of these issues, and within the Discussion function of the course website lies the opportunity to consider them.

OBJECTIVES

After completing the course, you should be able to

- Focus on the importance of critical thinking and substantiation
- Recognize the complexities of environmental issues around the world and how they often include economic, social, and political components
- Comprehend the multiple aspects of recent human population growth with corresponding impacts on the environment
- Realize that our everyday use of resources may have had prior impacts in other parts of the world

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

Each week I'll pose (and post) a discussion question for each of the following issues to read:

Assignment	Discussion Questions Available	Your Posted Opinion	Your Individual Reply
Read Issues 2, 4	Tues, June 17	Fri, June 20	Sun, June 22
Read Issues 7, 8	Tues, June 24	Fri, June 27	Sun, June 29
Read Issues 12, 14	Tues, July 1	Fri, July 11*	Sun, July 13*
Read Issues 16, 18	Tues, July 15	Fri, July 25**	Sun, July 27**
One <u>New</u> Issue	Tues, July 29	Fri, August 1	Sun, August 3

* Note a one-week "delay" here, so you can enjoy the Fourth of July weekend!

** Note the one-week "delay" here too. I'll be out-of-town (Shoreline Ecology class) from July 16-20

Note: For the above deadlines, consider it as sending (or posting) by the end of the day (= midnight)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. **Early Assignment #1!** I'd like to get to know just a little bit about you. From the Homepage Course Tools menu, click on Discussions, then Brief Profile (subject = Your Info). Then click on Your Info to view the message. You can click on Forward (to me), so it's not "out there." This can be done any time, but no later than Monday June 16.

2. **Early Assignment #2!** Before the class starts, read the Introduction in your text (pages xvii - xxix)

3. Two weekly issue readings (read the summary, both sides, and postscript for each). Then look at the two corresponding Discussion questions posted, and choose one only to respond to. Within your opinion (1-2 paragraphs is fine), I'm interested not only in your specific opinion but also in substantiation - why do you believe that way?

These should all be posted in the Discussions function for the class to see (click on Reply to the particular discussion question you've chosen), all by the particular due dates given above.

4. Within 2 days after each opinion due date, read all the posted opinions and don't forget to open both Discussion questions to see all the replies, and choose one to reply to (just one overall, either question, your choice, and click on Reply). Include the following in your reply:

- a. Their name
- b. Summarize their opinion (1-2 sentences)
- c. Your reply, and why? (i.e. don't just write "I agree")

5. In the last week, it's your choice! Choose any other new issue (but note just one issue this time, because see below) in the text you'd like to examine. The general format will be the same - choose one question from the Discussion message corresponding to that issue. By that time, I'll have Discussion questions posted for all the other issues in the text. BUT, here let's add one more element - updates to the issue. You probably noticed some of the sources in the text are up to 10 yrs old. So, for the particular issue you choose, incorporate some information from at least one (1) reputable internet source (i.e. not just someone's private website of opinions) no older than January 2004. Cite the sources in your text where appropriate [(Author, year), or if no author given, (Anonymous, year)], and include a complete listing of the source(s) at the end.

So, altogether, this contribution should be somewhat longer - up to a page is fine.

6. Lastly, for your final reply (due August 3) to another student's opinion, I'd like you to specifically reply to the student just below you in the alphabetical listing of people in the course. (within the E-mail function, [Outgoing -> Compose Message -> Browse] to see the class list). Rationale? I think it's important for each of you to get at least one reply from one of your peers (in addition to my comments), and in a short course like this, you may or may not have received any peer comments in the first month.

Note: Plan ahead a bit of extra time to complete this, because you may need to read a different issue than you've covered so far, in order to intelligently reply to the next person's contribution.

MECHANICS - items in the Course Tools menu

1. Most of the course will be conducted in the Discussions function, accessible in the Course Tools menu down the left column. Click once on each of the following:

Discussions -> specific topic -> specific subject -> Reply (then your contribution) -> Post

Note: You can compose your opinion (or reply) either directly in the Message box, or from your own word processor program and upload it with Copy and Paste. It's also possible to attach files, but some students in the past have had difficulties

in opening them.

2. Announcements - I'll post short ones directly on the Homepage. If there are any longer ones, I'll use this Course Menu link which takes you there
3. My Grades - this will show you your progress in the course. I'll post numbers for each of your contributions. Even though you'll see there's an option for me to add comments on each, I'll do that instead as replies in the Discussions function.
4. Web Links - this is an optional link directly to the publisher's website for this text. Of particular interest there is the Course Specific Headlines button that gets you to current articles on topics related to the issues, some published literally within the last week! Talk about up-to-date!
5. Mail - this software package has its own internal e-mail system which allows you to send and/or receive messages from others in the class, for example. It is separate from your own regular e-mail address, though if you like, under Message Settings is an option to forward all incoming e-mails from here to your own. Just click on Update when done.
6. Roster - just like what it sounds like, this is a list of everyone in the course
7. I'll be providing some feedback to each of your contributions, using the Forward button. Even though your postings will be in the Discussions, that button sends it to you individually as an incoming e-mail message, so you might want to check that regularly.
8. Lastly, we're all among friends, so if you've discovered any other shortcuts, etc., particularly in this new WebCT version, I'd love to hear about them and pass them along!

TIME COMMITMENT

A one-credit course such as this should have a time commitment of 15-16 hrs total. Over 6 weeks (yes, that's right - you'll be all done here in half the summer!), that means an average of 3 hrs per week. The readings each week should take one-half to two-thirds of that time, with the balance of the time for opinions and replies. Then in the last week, you'll have only one issue to examine in detail, to allow for some time for a bit of outside research, as described earlier.

OUTCOMES

This is a Pass/No-Pass course, and the minimum requirement to pass is completion and posting of all the assignments above. So, even though more detailed course grades will not be formally recorded, your best time and effort in each of the assignments, with corresponding feedback from me and your peers, will greatly enhance your enrichment from this course.

Along the way, you should review the My Grades function to make sure I've recorded everything

you've completed and posted. My goal is to record all incoming assignments within 2 days of receiving. Credit where credit is due!

Lastly, I've set up the My Grades function to receive numbers for entries, so I'll score each submission from you as if it's part of a fully graded system. That'll give you a bit more feedback, though recognize that any number at all for each entry means you've received credit for it!

PROMPTNESS

A successful interactive online course such as this requires a two-way commitment between the instructor and the students to discipline, diligence, and timeliness. Pay close attention to the tentative schedule deadlines, so you know what's expected and when. Missing a deadline is not only harder to make up, but also a hardship on others who are depending on your contribution.

If you're gone for a few days, such as an out-of-town business trip, one nice aspect about a web-based course like this is you can access it from anywhere!

QUESTIONS?

Something not working? Directions not clear? Two options: If it's a general question that you think may interest others, I've set up a Discussions topic called Office Hrs and you can ask there (yes, I'll check it often). Or...You can e-mail me at any time (nknight@linfield.edu) and I'll respond within 24hrs, if not sooner!

Or #2, if you're having difficulties logging in or navigating around the website, you can e-mail Brett Hardee (bhardee@linfield.edu), the computer guru in the DCE office.

Or #3, if you're having mechanical or technical difficulties with the software program, you can click on Access WebCT Online Support, which appears in the Institutional Bookmarks box on the very first page after you log in to the website.