

IDS 090 - Winter 2008  
Global Issues Forum  
**Early Assignment!** (See Course Requirements 1 & 2)

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** Readings in contemporary global issues and events and weekly discussion in small seminar groups. Required of all International Studies minors. May be repeated. *1 credit (EL)*

**PREREQUISITES:** none

Welcome! Global Issues is a huge conceptual framework that can be approached from a number of non-exclusive standpoints - political, economic, environmental, sociological, 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 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 Global Issues](#) (4<sup>th</sup> edition) by James E. Harf and Mark O. Lombardi, a collection of several major global issues, each with pro and con arguments by experts in their respective fields, along with well-written summaries and postscripts by the authors. There will be time in this short term to examine about half of these issues, and within the Discussions section of the course website lies the opportunity to consider them.

## OBJECTIVES

After completing this 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 environmental impacts
- Realize that our everyday use of resources may have had prior impacts in other parts of the world
- Understand the major impacts (positive and negative) of information technology on these issues

## PARTLY PERSONAL

Well, like quite a few people here, I'm not a native Oregonian – I've only been here since 1972. That's when I came out here from a suburb of New York City (30 miles east – still much too close!) to go to Oregon State University. I graduated from there in 1977 with two B.S. degrees (zoology and

fisheries) and 2 years later with an M.S. degree (fisheries). Then it was down to the University of California at Davis for 4 more years and a Ph.D. (ecology) in 1985, where the summers were way too hot, and I couldn't wait to get back up here!

Since 1986 I've been teaching introductory biology laboratories at Reed College, covering quite a range of subjects each year.

I started teaching at Linfield on the McMinnville campus in 1992. I've been teaching environmental science there, and it's now up to three sections and over 150 students each year!

The DCE program advertised for an instructor on the Portland campus for the summer of 1994, and after filling that role, each year seems to bring more requests. Well, lately I think I've "settled" into five-six courses a year, one-two each term and a travel one each summer. So far, I've taught Human Ecosystems, General Ecology, Global Issues, Environmental Science, Environmental Problem Solving Seminar, Field Zoology, and Shoreline Ecology, at the Portland, Salem, and McMinnville campuses, plus the wonderful Oregon Coast in the summer! Plus recent online courses have included Introduction to Ecology, Human Ecology, Water Resources, and Environmental Issues and the Physical Sciences.

### 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 1, 2     | Wed. Jan 2                     | Sat. Jan 5          | Mon. Jan 7            |
| Read Issues 6, 7     | Wed. Jan 9                     | Sat. Jan 12         | Mon. Jan 14           |
| Read Issues 9, 11    | Wed. Jan 16                    | Sat. Jan 19         | Mon. Jan 21           |
| Read Issues 13, 17   | Wed. Jan 23                    | Sat. Jan 26         | Mon. Jan 28           |
| One <u>New</u> Issue | Wed. Jan 30                    | Sat. Feb 2          | Mon. Feb 4            |

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

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Early Assignment #1!** Profile: I'd like to get to know just a little bit about you. From the course home page, click on Discussions, then Brief Profile (subject = Your Info). Then click on the magnifying lens icon 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 Wednesday, January 2.
- Early Assignment #2!** Two passages to read before the class starts:
  - The Introduction in your text (Pages xvii-xxv).
  - A link to a recent press release on transitioning to more sustainable industries and jobs. Go to Discussions, then Early Assignment #2, then Two Short Readings, and open the attached file there.

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 page for the class to see (click on Reply to the particular Discussion Question you've chosen), all by the corresponding due dates above.

4. Within 2 days after each opinion due date, read all the posted opinions on the Discussions page (and don't forget to open both Discussion questions to see all the replies), and choose one to reply to (just one overall, to 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 Discussions 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 book 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 opinions!), no older than January 2003. Cite the source(s) 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 February 4) to another student's opinion, I'd like you to specifically reply to the student just below you in the alphabetical listing of student names in the course (in the e-mail function, click on "Compose Message," then "Browse"). 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 other person's contribution.

## MECHANICS

Let's go through some of the basics in the course functions, as they appear in the Course Tools menu:

1. Course Content - click on the down arrows to the right, and some subtopics open up:

a. Book - 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!

b. Welcome - just a brief intro...

c. Biography - if you can get past the blinding reflection of that bald guy there, you'll see what I've been up to (about 5'9") in the past 30 years.

2. Discussions - this is where most of the course will be conducted. Click once on each of the following:

Discussion --> 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 and upload it with Copy and Paste.

Also: Note there's a topic called Announcements, where I'll post occasional matters related to the course.

3. 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 My Settings (upper right after you first log in), then My Tool Options is an option to forward all incoming e-mails from here to your own.

Whenever you click on "Forward" to any posting in the Discussion, your message or response goes into this e-mail system, to that specific person (or persons) only.

4. My Grades - this will show you your progress in the course. I'll post numbers for each of your contributions, as one more form of feedback. Even though you'll see there's an option for me to add comments on each, the main feedback will be based directly on your Discussion contributions.

I'll be providing some feedback to each of your contributions, using the Forward button. However, that function sends it to you individually as an e-mail message (see above), so you'd best check the Mail function within a day or so after your postings.

Lastly, we're all among friends, so if you've discovered any other shortcuts, etc., 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 5 weeks, 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 on-line for opinions and replies. Then in the last week, you'll only have one issue to examine in detail, to allow for some extra 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 send-in of all the assignments above. So, even though more detailed course grades will not be 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 sent. My goal is to record all incoming assignments within 2 days of receiving. Credit where credit is due!

Lastly, I've set up the Gradebook to receive numbers for entries, so I'll score each submission from you as if it's part of a full grading 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 on-line 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 difficult 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!

### **ACADEMIC HONESTY**

It's unfortunate that a section on this is needed at all, and this should be abundantly clear, but cheating and/or plagiarism in any portion of the course will not be tolerated and will seriously jeopardize your grade. A very simple way to avoid this is to write your contributions in your own words, and cite your sources (when used) after specific details or examples.

### **QUESTIONS ?**

Something not working? Directions not clear? Two options: If it's a general question that you think may interest others, there's a Discussion topic called Main and you can ask there. Or... You can e-mail me at any time ([nknight@linfield.edu](mailto:nknight@linfield.edu)) and I'll respond within 24 hrs, if not sooner!

Or #2, if you're having difficulties logging in or navigating around the website, you can e-mail either Brett Hardee ([bhardee@linfield.edu](mailto:bhardee@linfield.edu)) in the DCE office, or the DCE computer consultant Peter Shultz ([pshultz@westerlook.com](mailto:pshultz@westerlook.com))

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.