

# ISS310: People & the Environment

## Syllabus

Spring 2017  
M/W, 12:40 – 2:30 pm  
105 Bessey Hall

### Instructor

Dr. Kyla M. Dahlin,  
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### Contact

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### Office Location & Hours

Geography Building Rm 122  
*Office hours:*  
Weds 10 am – 12 pm  
or by appointment

TA:

Department of Geography,  
Environment, & Spatial Sciences

Geography Building Rm ##  
*Office hours:* Mon 9:30 – 11:30am  
or by appointment

## 1 General Information

### 1.1 Description

From the registrar: Contemporary issues related to the interaction of socio-cultural and ecological systems. Global, regional, national and local environmental problems and responses.

The Integrative Social Science (ISS) core curriculum provides an interdisciplinary introduction to the body of knowledge, theory, practice and methods that the social sciences bring to an understanding of the human condition. ISS courses are designed to help students learn to better acquire, analyze, and evaluate information from multiple social science sources; synthesize and apply information within and across the social science disciplines; demonstrate awareness of how diversity emerges within and across cultures; understand the structures of local, national, and global governance systems; and, use a variety of inquiry strategies incorporating multiple views to make value judgments, solve problems, answer questions, and generate new understanding.

This class will be a broad survey of environmental issues around the world and how they impact and are impacted by people. Dr. Dahlin is a plant ecologist by training and now spends most of her time looking at and analyzing airborne and satellite imagery to better understand how plants are impacted by people directly and indirectly. As such, this class will tend to have a plant focus, and we will look at lots and lots of maps.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Evaluation:** Students will be evaluated by three non-cumulative exams, 13 online quizzes, and attendance.

**On D2L:** SS17-IS-310-007 – People and the Environment

## 1.2 Course Objectives

Analytical Thinking: The student uses ways of knowing from the social sciences to access information and critically analyzes complex material in order to evaluate evidence, construct reasoned arguments, and communicate inferences and conclusions. There are two dimensions of analytical thinking in ISS:

- Acquires, analyzes, and evaluates information from multiple social science sources.
- Synthesizes and applies the information within and across multiple social science disciplines.

Effective Citizenship: The student participates as a member of local, national, and global communities and has the capacity to lead in an increasingly interdependent world. There is one dimension of effective citizenship in ISS:

- Understands the structures of local, national, and global governance systems and acts effectively within those structures in both individual and collaborative ways.

Integrated Reasoning: The student integrates discipline-based knowledge to make informed decisions that reflect humane social values. There is one dimension of integrated reasoning:

- Uses a variety of social science inquiry strategies incorporating multiple views to make value judgments, solve problems, answer questions, and generate new understandings.

## 1.3 Keys to Course Success

- 1.3.1 Plan ahead and avoid procrastination.
- 1.3.2 Read the required material before class and re-read important points after class.
- 1.3.3 Make a list of concepts you do not understand.
- 1.3.4 Ask questions if you don't understand something!
- 1.3.5 Attend office hours to ask questions if you still do not understand class material.
- 1.3.6 Complete all assignments in advance of the deadline! Starting quizzes with only a few hours until the deadline is not recommended, and technical difficulties will not be viewed as a valid excuse for missing an assignment (barring a catastrophic D2L crash or something, obviously).
- 1.3.7 Maintain due dates in a calendar.
- 1.3.8 Be proactive! I am here to help – don't wait until you are way behind to ask for help.

## 2 Course Materials

### 2.1 Required Reading

Withgott & Laposata (2015) *Essential Environment: the science behind the stories* 5<sup>th</sup> Edition. Pearson.\*

OR

Withgott & Laposata (2012) *Essential Environment: the science behind the stories* 4<sup>th</sup> Edition. Pearson. (this version is on reserve in the Main Library)

\* The newer version of this book is the official class version and you will be responsible for the information in it. There do not, however, appear to be dramatic differences between version 4 and version 5, based on a quick spot-check.

Other readings provided in class or via D2L - readings on D2L will be numbered by their class meeting day.

### **3 Course Policies**

#### **3.1 Email**

If you have questions or issues, please contact me! Students should not expect immediate responses to email messages, however, if you don't receive a response within 48 hours please email again or talk to me before or after class or at office hours. Please include "ISS 310" in the subject line of your email for a faster response.

#### **3.2 Electronics in Class**

Laptops and cellphones are permitted in class, however, if they become a distraction to other students the instructor may ask you to put them away. If you are working on a laptop during class the instructor reserves the right to ask you to look up concepts/definitions and share them with the class as relevant.

#### **3.3 Academic Honesty**

Article 2.3.3 of the Academic Freedom Report states that "The student shares with the faculty the responsibility for maintaining the integrity of scholarship, grades, and professional standards." In addition, Dr. Dahlin adheres to the policies on academic honesty as specified in General Student Regulations 1.0, Protection of Scholarship and Grades; the all-University Policy on Integrity of Scholarship and Grades; and Ordinance 17.00, Examinations. (See Spartan Life: Student Handbook and Resource Guide) Therefore, unless authorized by your instructor, you are expected to complete all course assignments, including homework, lab work, quizzes, tests and exams, without assistance from any source. You are expected to develop original work for this course; therefore, you may not submit course work you completed for another course to satisfy the requirements for this course. Also, you are not authorized to use the [www.allmsu.com](http://www.allmsu.com) web site or similar websites to complete any course work in this course. Commercialization of lecture notes and university-provided course materials is not permitted in this course. Students who violate MSU academic integrity rules may receive a penalty grade, including a failing grade on the assignment or in the course. Contact your instructor if you are unsure about the appropriateness of your course work. (See also the Academic Integrity webpage.)

Faculty are required to report all instances in which a penalty grade is given for academic dishonesty. Students reported for academic dishonesty are required to take an online course about the integrity of scholarship and grades. A hold will be placed on the student's account until such a time as the student completes the course. This course is overseen by the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education.

#### **3.4 Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

MSU is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services and activities. Requests for accommodations by persons with disabilities may be made by contacting the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities at 517-884-RCPD or on the web at [rcpd.msu.edu](http://rcpd.msu.edu). Once your eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, you will be issued a Verified Individual Services Accommodation ("VISA") form. Please present this form to me at the start of the

term and/or two weeks prior to the accommodation date (test, project, etc.). Requests received after this date may not be honored.

If you have any challenges or issues related to your ability to succeed in this class, please let me know as soon as possible.

### 3.5 Diversity

In order to learn, we must be open to the views of people different than ourselves. Each and every voice in the classroom is important and brings with it a wealth of experiences, values and beliefs. In this time we share together over the semester, please honor the uniqueness of your fellow classmates, and appreciate the opportunity we have to learn from each other. Please respect your fellow students' opinions and refrain from personal attacks or demeaning comments of any kind. Finally, remember to keep confidential all issues of a personal or professional nature that are discussed in class.

### 3.6 Attendance & Participation

Students are expected to attend the majority of class meetings, to show up on time, and to contribute intellectually to the class by asking questions and sharing thoughts and opinions. There are a total of 60 points possible in the 'attendance' category. 2 are bonus points. We will have a sign in sheet for each class and you will receive 2 points for each class attended (29 meetings total). It is your responsibility to make sure to sign in – any discrepancies in signing in (unreadable signature, evidence that someone signed in for you, etc) will be treated as a zero for that day. You can receive an additional 10 points by coming to Dr. Dahlin's office hours once **BEFORE THE FIRST EXAM (2/20)**. If you attend all classes and come to office hours before the first exam you will receive 70 attendance points, 10 of which are, therefore, 'extra credit'.

Excused absences are only those related to medical issues, emergencies, religious observance, or a university scheduled event you are required to attend. If you would like to have an absence excused (to get your 2 points for the day you missed) you must provide credible documentation of the absence. Students have a maximum of one week to provide documentation for an absence. If you are absent you should review the posted lecture slides/videos/readings for the day and come to office hours if you have any questions.

Attendance points will be deducted for each instance of disruptive behavior in class. Sleeping in class is not acceptable and will result in lost attendance points for each instance of sleeping in class.

**Tardiness/Leaving Early:** While it is certainly understandable that you may, on occasion, arrive late to class, persistent and excessive tardiness will be noted, and in extreme situations, result in the reduction of points for class attendance. Students will be notified in person and in writing if this situation arises. Unless advance notice is provided and the reason for missing class is related to a medical issue, emergency, or religious observance: Leaving class early will result in the loss of attendance points on that particular day. Please do not schedule any other appointments, meetings, etc for the time period this class meets.

Students whose names do not appear on the official class list for this course may not attend this class without permission of the instructor. Students who fail to attend the first four class sessions or class by the fifth day of the semester, whichever occurs first, may be dropped from the course. If you anticipate that you will have to miss class for any reason, please discuss this absence with the instructor at least a week in advance. If you miss an exam you will be expected to provide proof of a

legitimate emergency before a makeup is allowed. Students seeking a grief absence go to the Grief Absence Request Form found on the RO home page (<https://reg.msu.edu/>) under 'Student Services - Grief Absence Request Form' OR to StuInfo (<https://stuinfo.msu.edu/>) under 'Academics - Enrollment Information and Services - Grief Absence Request Form.' If a grief absence is approved, accommodations will be made.

### 3.7 Collaboration

Collaboration **IN CLASS** outside of exams is encouraged. We will do a number of activities in class where your active participation and interaction with others will, in fact, be required. However, all work done outside of the classroom should be your own. Assignments and exams should represent your own independent work. If you need help on an assignment, contact the instructor or the TA, not your fellow classmates.

### 3.8 Social Media

Yep, I'm on twitter (@bristleweed & @ERSAM\_Lab), LinkedIn, ResearchGate, and a few other social media type things. You're welcome to follow me, of course (I tweet 90% work/science related stuff), but with very few exceptions I will not follow/friend/link back to you. Please do not take this personally, I just don't want to know what you had for dinner, how hard your other classes are, or whatever other personal stuff is going on in your life that isn't related to plants, the environment, or geography.

### 3.9 Emergencies

In the event of an emergency, our primary goal will be to stay safe. There is a wide variety of situations we could potentially face as a class, so please be prepared to stay calm, and never hesitate to interrupt the instructor if something seems awry.

## 4 Course Schedule

The following lecture schedule remains subject to change and last minute modifications. If significant changes do occur, students will be notified and an updated syllabus will be posted on D2L.

**All quizzes will be posted on D2L on Wednesday morning and will close at midnight on Friday.**

Class #	Date	Topic/Activity	Reading	Quiz Day
1	1/9/2017	Syllabus review, Introductions, Sustainability	Ch 1	
2	1/11/2017	Environmental Systems & Quant Analysis	Ch 2 + Appendix B (A in 2012)	Q1
	1/16/2017	<b>MLK day - NO CLASS</b>		
3	1/18/2017	Environmental Systems & Maps	article on D2L	Q2
4	1/23/2017	Biodiversity & Ecology	Ch 3	
5	1/25/2017	Biogeography	article on D2L	Q3
6	1/30/2017	Guest Lecture - Ryan Nagelkirk - People & Parks in Africa	article on D2L	

<b>Class #</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic/Activity</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Quiz Day</b>
7	2/1/2017	Community Ecology	Ch 4	Q4
8	2/6/2017	Species Interactions	article on D2L	
9	2/8/2017	Economics	Ch 5	Q5
10	2/13/2017	Sustainable Development	article on D2L	
11	2/15/2017	Human Population + Exam Review	Ch 6	Q6
12	2/20/2017	<b>EXAM 1</b>		
13	2/22/2017	Movie Day! - The End of Poverty (youtube)	article on D2L	
14	2/27/2017	Guest Lecture - Lisa-Marie Pierre - Entrepreneurship	article on D2L	
15	3/1/2017	Food Systems	Ch 7	Q7
	3/6/2017	<b>SPRING BREAK!</b>		
	3/8/2017	<b>SPRING BREAK!</b>		
16	3/13/2017	Movie Day! - King Corn (MSU Library, also Netflix, Amazon, & iTunes but not free)	article on D2L	
17	3/15/2017	Food & the Environment	article on D2L	Q8
18	3/20/2017	Food & Health	article on D2L	
19	3/22/2017	Biodiversity	Ch 8	Q9
20	3/27/2017	Biodiversity + Ecosystem Services	article on D2L	
21	3/29/2017	Movie Day - More than Honey (online via MSU Library) + Exam Review		Q10
22	4/3/2017	<b>EXAM 2</b>		
23	4/5/2017	Forests & Protected Areas	Ch 9	
24	4/10/2017	Deforestation	article on D2L	
25	4/12/2017	Ecotoxicology	Ch 10	Q11
26	4/17/2017	Mining	Ch 11	
27	4/19/2017	The Ocean	Ch 12	Q12
28	4/24/2017	Climate Change	Ch 14	
29	4/26/2017	Renewable Energy + Exam Review	Ch 16	Q13
<b>FINAL</b>	5/4/2017	<b>FINAL EXAM 12:45-2:45 in 105 Bessey</b>		

## 5 Evaluation

### 5.1 Exams

Three exams (including the final) will be administered throughout the semester. The first exam will be worth 100 points, the second and third (final) will be worth 120 points. Exams are designed to reinforce the understanding of key course terms and concepts from the readings, lecture, and in-class exercises.

Exams will use scantrons and will be a combination of True/False and multiple choice. Exams will be given during class time, as indicated in the "Course Schedule" (Section 4) portion of this syllabus.

You will have the entire class time to complete these. No extra time will be provided to complete the exam so please be sure to arrive on time (or early!).

Please bring your MSU ID to the exam, your identity will be verified at the time the exam is submitted. Students that do not have an MSU ID will be required to take an essay makeup exam. Students may not have any supplementary materials available during exam (no 'study guides' etc).

Exam Proctoring - Exams will be proctored in the following manner:

You must place all items, except for test materials, on the floor for the duration of the exam. Only 3 test materials should be present on the desktop: the exam questions, a scantron, and a pencil. No cell phones or mobile devices may be used at any time. Hats with any type of brim must be removed during the exam. Students entering the exam more than 15 minutes late will not be permitted to take the exam. Students arriving to the exam late (but <15 min late), will not be given extra time to complete the exam. Students that talk or exhibit any other behavior which suggests an effort to receive assistance during the examination period will have their exam taken. They will have to take an essay make-up exam within two-weeks of the original test date to receive points for the exam. See policies for taking make-up exams below.

Original exam questions must be submitted as part of the exam. If you do not submit exam questions, you will receive a failing grade for the exam.

#### Make-Up Exams

Students with an excused absence (documented medical issue, emergency, university event or religious observance) may be permitted to take a make-up exam.

Documentation for an absence will be requested. See the policies section on excused absences for more information. The student must contact Dr. Dahlin within one week of the missed exam to schedule a date for the make-up exam.

Students will have up to two weeks after the initial exam date to take a make-up test. After this two-week period, it will not be possible to schedule make-up exams.

All make-up exams will be in essay format. Essays will be written by hand during the examination period with a pen or pencil. No extra time will be given for make-up exams.

#### **Additional Final Exam Policies:**

No student will be required to take more than two examinations during any one day of the final examination period. Students who have more than two examinations scheduled during one calendar day during the final examination period may take their class schedules to the Academic

Student Affairs Office in their colleges for assistance in arranging for an alternative time for one of the three examinations.

A student absent from a final examination without a satisfactory explanation will receive a grade of 0.0 on the numerical system, NC on the CR-NC system, or N in the case of a course authorized for grading on the P-N system. *Students unable to take a final examination because of illness or other reason over which they have no control should notify Dr. Dahlin and the associate deans of their colleges immediately.*

## 5.2 Quizzes

There will be a total of 13 quizzes possible throughout this course, each one coming online on D2L on Wednesday morning and closing Friday at midnight. Each quiz will have 10 questions and be worth 10 points, yet there are only 100 points listed in the 'quiz' category below, meaning if you get 100% on every quiz you will receive 30 points of extra credit. A substantial fraction of the exam questions are also likely to come from the quizzes, so they are worth paying attention to! Each quiz can be re-taken up to three times during the open quiz period. There are no make-up quizzes - if you miss a quiz you simply receive a zero for that week.

## 6 Grading

Given the ample opportunities for extra credit in this course (up to 40 points) the grade scale below will be strictly adhered to, with no opportunities for a last minute 'bump' to your grade. So do all the work and come to class! Grades will be kept up to date on D2L to the greatest extent possible.

Grades are due to MSU on May 9, 2017. If you have concerns about your grade you must contact Dr. Dahlin by May 5, 2017 so as not to delay grade reporting for the entire class.

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>Final Grade Scale</b>	
Participation	60	460 - 500	4.0
Exam 1	100	435 - 459	3.5
Exam 2	120	410 - 434	3.0
Exam 3	120	385 - 409	2.5
Quizzes	100	360 - 384	2.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>500</b>	335 - 359	1.5
		300 - 334	1.0
		< 300	0