



Current Topics in Science

ENV 2210 Course Syllabus – Fall 2017

Instructor: Leslie Kanat, Ph.D.

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Course web pages: <http://kanat.jsc.vsc.edu> (numerous resources)

<http://kanat.jsc.vsc.edu/env2210> (class notes)

<http://www.jsc.edu/EHSseminars> (current list of speakers)

Office hours: Scheduled office hours are from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. on Monday through Thursday, otherwise, stop in anytime or schedule an appointment. Office location: 332 Bentley.

Seminar: Wednesday, 4:00 - 5:15, Bentley 207

Course Objectives

This course provides the student with opportunities to learn more about what other people are doing in the broad fields of biology, health science, and environmental science. The student will hear about current issues and engage the speakers in lively dialogue. It is also an opportunity to make personal contacts with individuals who represent agencies where future employment may be found.

Expectations

The primary expectation in this course is for you to grow as an individual and as a scientist. I want you to learn how to extract the significant concepts presented in each seminar and develop the courage to ask questions. I encourage you to be critical of the ideas expressed and products created by others, yet be thoughtful in how you respond to, and critique, their work. I hope that you will build the skills associated with critical thinking, insightful critiques, and always do your best and most creative work as you prepare for a career in the sciences or graduate school. Furthermore, I expect you to demonstrate respect for your classmates and the invited speakers. Be prepared for class, be professional, and recognize that all assignments should represent your best work. Punctuality and participation in class is crucial and expected of all students in this course.

Course Requirements

This is a pass/fail class. The grade you receive in this course is based on participation, short papers, and attendance. Each of these is described below.

Participation: Each speaker should give a 45-minute presentation and leave ample time for questions from the class. Your participation is expected and encouraged. It is your challenge to ask good questions – research the topic **prior** to coming to class. Begin each question by **identifying** yourself – I will keep track of the number and quality of questions that you ask the speakers.

Short Papers: A paper must be developed for five of the thirteen invited presentations given during the semester. The papers will be collected at the beginning of the subsequent class period – late papers, or emailed submissions, will not be accepted unless there are extraordinary circumstances. A minimum of five successful papers must be submitted (and receive a passing grade) as part of the requirements to pass the course.

Attendance: You are expected to attend each class throughout the term. If you are unable to attend, please see me prior to the scheduled class. An attendance sheet will be circulated during each class. Failure to sign the attendance sheet counts as one absence. You must participate in at least ten presentations as part of the requirements to pass the course. If you bring two or more people (not other faculty members) to class, then you can gain back one missed attendance. You can bring two or more people to any class (except Creative Audience events) to receive this benefit. You, and your colleagues, must be engaged and present for the entire class period. Please introduce your guests to me before the class begins.

Pass or Fail: A minimum of five successful papers, and attendance for at least ten presentations, are required to pass this course. You may not submit a paper for a presentation that you missed.

Additional Comments

Please arrive a bit early to get organized and submit your paper from the previous presentation – all papers are due at the beginning of class. Late papers will not be accepted.

Each class will begin with general announcements. If you have announcements relevant to the Environmental and Health Science program at JSC then please use this forum to make an announcement.

Students at JSC are expected to be honest in all their academic work. You are responsible for knowing what specific acts constitute plagiarism. If you are unsure, then consult me, or read the Undergraduate Catalogue. Academic dishonesty in any form is prohibited – you can fail this course if you plagiarize.

You can pass this class (and learn a lot about the fields of health science, biology and environmental science) if you ask good questions, participate in class discussions, and submit clear and concise reviews of the presentations.

Guidelines for Short Papers

Each paper must be limited to one cover page and no more than two pages of discussion. Use one staple in the upper left hand corner to hold the three sheets together. The cover page should have the following information and format:

<p>Title of Presentation</p> <p>name of speaker</p> <p>speaker's affiliation</p> <p>date of presentation</p> <p><i>written by:</i></p> <p>your name</p> <p>name of this class</p>

Subsequent pages should address the following areas – use and include the five emboldened subheadings below:

1. **Identity of Speaker:** Include background, training, history, and current position.
2. **Major Focus:** Summarize the material presented by the speaker; be sure to include breadth and depth. Use as many paragraphs as needed to describe the content of the presentation.
3. **Strengths and Weaknesses:** Did the presenter cover the topic appropriately? Did the presenter leave gaps in the arguments? What worked well? What could have been improved? What could be done in future presentations in order to be a more effective speaker? Was the presentation too focused or too vague?
4. **Use of Media:** If media or visual aids were used (including PowerPoint), were they well done, uncluttered, clear, informative, and used appropriately? Did the media enhance the presentation?
5. **Summary:** A paragraph that summarizes what was written in response to the previous four subheadings.

Please note

- All material submitted for a grade must be typed – handwritten entries will not be accepted. Use 1.5 line spacing (single-spaced text leaves little room for comments), 10-12 point font, one-inch margins, and one carefully-placed staple to hold the pages together.
- Paginate properly – the cover page should not be numbered; subsequent pages start with page number 1.
- The papers are easier to write (and revise) soon after the presentation was made; reviews of presentations become more difficult to write as time passes – please write your review immediately.
- The papers should be well-written, clear, and concise; writing style, spelling, and grammatical structure will be evaluated. Use the required subheadings and use “white space” effectively.
- We will not meet during Final Exam week.