

**Syllabus: EVS 6920, Environmental Sciences Colloquium**  
Fall 2011, 1 credit.

Environmental Sciences Program  
Florida Atlantic University

Fri. 3:00-4:20 in room DW 108 (Davie), MC 209 (HBOI), FL 427 (Boca).

**Instructor:** Erik G. Noonburg, DW332, Phone 954-236-1303, Email enoonbur@fau.edu.  
**Office hours:** Mon. 11:00-1:00, Tues. 9:00-11:00, Wed. 12:00-2:00. Additional times are available by appointment.

**Readings:** There is no required text, but journal articles may be assigned. These will be posted on Blackboard.

**Course Description:** Class will meet weekly to attend presentations by faculty, professional environmental scientists and advanced graduate students.

**Course objectives:** EVS6920 is designed to provide graduate students with knowledge of current research in the multidisciplinary field of environmental science.

Students will:

- Develop connections with the university community and other research professionals in the field of Environmental Science.
- Gain knowledge of current research and professional literature in Environmental Science.
- Gain practical skill in written and oral communication through student presentations, class discussions and critical writing assignments.

**Approach:** The course is organized around a series of seminars presented by FAU faculty, environmental science professionals from outside FAU, and advanced graduate students. Students will be actively engaged in critical and systematic thinking about current research in the multidisciplinary field of environmental science. Assigned reading will help students to expand their knowledge of the professional literature, and they will gain practical experience in written and oral communication through class discussion, writing assignments and student presentations.

**Prerequisite:** none.

**Course Structure & Policies:** the weekly one-hour classes are comprised of a biweekly colloquium series with meetings/lectures in between to discuss the research presented in the previous week as well as written and oral exercises designed to teach students about developing research questions, building solid arguments, etc.

1. **Written reports on the colloquium talks:** For each research seminar, students must submit a brief report (to be posted on Blackboard) addressing the following questions:

- ❖ What is the main research question?
  - ❖ What method was used to answer the research question, and what evidence did the speaker present to support the conclusions?
  - ❖ What are the implications and practical applications of the research findings for issues in the environmental sciences?
  - ❖ What additional questions would you like to ask the speaker?
  - ❖ What were the strengths and weaknesses of the speaker's presentation?
2. **Short presentation on a specific research topic:** each student will prepare a short talk on a topic in environmental science chosen by the student and approved by the instructor.
  3. **Class assignments/activities:** students will demonstrate systematic thinking and critical thinking through in-class discussions and activities, as well as online discussion of seminar reports.
  4. **Class participation:** students will attend all sessions and actively participate in class and group discussion.

**Attendance.** Class attendance is required. Exceptions may be granted on a case-by-case basis.

**Academic integrity:** Students at Florida Atlantic University are expected to maintain the highest ethical standards. Academic dishonesty is considered a serious breach of these ethical standards, because it interferes with the university mission to provide a high quality education in which no student enjoys an unfair advantage over any other. Academic dishonesty is also destructive of the university community, which is grounded in a system of mutual trust and places high value on personal integrity and individual responsibility. Harsh penalties are associated with academic dishonesty. For more information see *University Regulation 4.001*.

**Disability policy:** In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), students who require reasonable accommodations due to a disability to properly execute coursework must register with the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD)—in Boca Raton, SU 133 (561-297-3880); in Davie, LA 240 (954-236-1222); in Jupiter, SR 110 (561-799-8010); or at the Treasure Coast, CO 117 (772-873-3441)—and follow all OSD procedures.

**Grading:** There grading system for this course will be S (satisfactory)/U (unsatisfactory). A student who completes each of the obligations of the course at or above a satisfactory level as determined by the instructors will receive a grade of S. Satisfaction of each obligation is defined as follows:

- ❖ **Reports on the colloquium talks:** all reports must demonstrate an understanding of the research methods, the evidence presented, and the arguments used to support the conclusions.

- ❖ **Short presentation on a specific research topic:** the presentation must demonstrate a clear grasp of the concepts of a research question and logical arguments.
- ❖ **Class assignments/activities:** students must participate in all class assignments and activities.
- ❖ **Class discussion participation:** students must attend class meetings and participate regularly in class discussions.

All reports must be submitted within one week of the presentation. A grade of I (incomplete) will only be given for the reasons and under the conditions specified in the FAU catalog.