



PONTIFICIA UNIVERSIDAD CATÓLICA DE VALPARAÍSO
International Program of Student Exchange

NAME OF COURSE: Environment Issues in Chile

HOURS: 60 class hours

CREDITS: 04

COURSE CODE: PIIE 436-1

Course description

The course aims at studying and analyzing global environmental problems of modern society. Students will discuss the causes of such problems and analyze their possible solutions.

In modern trends of higher education, professor traditional teaching approach is substituted by the concept of student learning. Accordingly, the course will have a few lecture classes by the professor. The course will focus on interactive discussions about global environmental issues. During the discussions in class, every student will have the opportunity of expressing their opinions and discussing (or strengthening) their classmate opinions. The professor will select appropriate cases, articles and videos for the discussions.

Students will complete their learning by the following field trips:

- 1) Environmental impact of the Ventanas copper smelter (Puchuncaví valley). During the field trip, students will understand and discuss the historical effects of the smelter on ecosystems and agriculture. Students will also visit experimental plots of different soil remediation techniques.
- 2) Environmental impact of avocado orchards on ridges along steep-hillslopes (Quillota). During the field trip, students will observe and

discuss soil erosion in these avocado orchards. Students will also visit experimental plots of different techniques to decrease the soil erosion.

Main objective

The course will encourage students to obtain global environmental awareness and an informed personal opinion regarding global environmental issues. Interactive discussions will contribute to the development of oral communication, reflection capability, critical analysis of information, and respectful attitude towards different ideas and opinions. In order to incentive development of teamwork capacity, the course will be divided in groups.

Specific requirement of the course:

Students whose attendance to class will be below 80% because of certain problems (personal or health-related) will automatically fail the course.

Evaluation

The academic work will be evaluated on the basis of 3 group compositions. Grades of composition will consider the quality of the writing and teamwork under the following criteria:

Writing quality

Special attention will be given to the following aspects:

Rigorous systematic and formal language

Structure (problem, possible solutions)

Writing (clarity and consistency of ideas, well-structured paragraphs, short sentences)

Orthography and syntax

Strength of the proposal

Teamwork

This aspect will be evaluated based on the random selection of a representative of each group to present the composition. The student who will be absent at the moment of the presentation of the composition because of certain problems (personal and health related) will not have right to be evaluated.

Course units

Thematic unit 1: Introduction

Humans and nature: The world of complex interconnections

Concept of sustainable development: Environmental, social, and economic aspects

Thematic unit 2: Social and economic aspects

Population growth and urbanization. Globalization. Global inequality: the rich versus the poor. Food production and water availability

Thematic unit 3: Environmental aspects

Main environmental problems

Loss of natural resources: Natural habitats, natural supply sources, biological diversity, soils

Intrinsic limits of natural resources: energy, fresh water, photosynthetic capacity

Detrimental elements: toxic chemical products, alien species, atmospheric gases

Thematic unit 4: Over-consumption and the ecological crisis

Does consumption mean happiness? From consumerism to balanced consumption. The advantages of balanced consumption

Thematic unit 5: Solutions for global environmental problems

The New Century: decisions and challenges. Optimism or pessimism? Where to start? A change: education, information, and social influence.

Examples of the bibliography to be selected

Diamond, J., 2011. Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed. Revised Edition, Penguin Group. (Chapter of interest: The World as a Polder: What Does It All Mean to Us Today? Available as PDF).

Isaac, G., Levy, J., and Ognits, A., 2012. The Benefits of the New Economy. ARI Publishers, Toronto, ON, Canada. (Chapter of interest: Toward Balanced Consumerism in the New Economy. Available as PDF).

Laitman, M., and Ulianov, A., 2012. A Guide to the New World. ARI Publishers, Toronto, ON, Canada. (Chapters of interest: Nature and Us; Natural Development. Available as PDF).

Laszlo, E., 2006. The Chaos Point: The World at the Crossroads. Hampton Roads Publishing Company, Charlottesville, VA, USA.

Websites

ARI Institute, www.ariresearch.org

Crossroads: Labor Pains of a New Worldview, www.crossroadsfilm.com

Friends of the Earth Europe, www.foeeurope.org

Mutual Responsibility, www.mutualresponsibility.org

Sustainable Europe Research Institute, www.seri.at/en

World Economic Forum, www.weforum.org

World Wildlife Fund, www.wwf.org

World Wisdom Council, www.clubofbudapest.org/wwc.php

Worldwatch Institute, www.worldwatch.org