

## Course Syllabus

### PH 3301: Environmental Health

Spring 2022 (Mondays, 5:00 pm – 7:50 pm)/Jowers 206A

Instructor: Dr. Celeste Monforton, Dr.PH, MPH (she/her)  
Email: c\_m551@txstate.edu  
Office: My office hours are immediately after our class sessions (Mondays, 7:50 pm.)  
I am also available to meet students on weekdays for an in-person, phone, or Zoom meeting. Students should send me an email to schedule an appointment (at least 24 hours in advance.)

**Electronic Communication and Response Time:** Generally, I review my e-mail communications from students once per day. I will try my best to respond to an e-mail within 24 hours, except on weekends. In order to flag your email for my attention, please send e-mails in the following format:

To: c\_m551@txstate.edu  
Subject: PH 3301 and [Topic of your message]

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**Course Description:** This course provides students the opportunity to develop knowledge on the relationship between the environment and human health from a population perspective. This public health course will explore contemporary and historic events involving environmental hazards and be informed by epidemiological and toxicological evidence. Students will also examine sociopolitical decisions related to environment hazards and the resulting impact (negative or positive) on public health. Students will be guided to research, discuss, and interpret evidence-informed writing and data about environmental health issues facing local, state, national, and/or global communities.

**Prerequisites:** N/A

**Format:** This class meets in person on Mondays from 5:00 pm until 7:50 pm. As the semester progresses, it may be appropriate or necessary to schedule a class session on Zoom or as self-directed study. The instructor will notify students through an Announcement on Canvas if an in-person class session is being replaced with an alternative format.

**Instructional Objectives:** To provide students with the basic knowledge and understanding of environmental health issues from a public health perspective. Students will:

- a) Explore current and historic environmental determinants of human health;
- b) Examine the routes of exposure and health effects of toxic substances and other hazards that are relevant to environmental health;
- c) Examine the impact of economic, social, and political decisions on environmental health protection, including on disproportionately affected populations;

- d) Assess current sociopolitical events concerning the intersection of human health and the environment;
- e) Evaluate personal decisions that influence environmental health protections; and
- f) Demonstrate through writing assignments a mastery of fundamental concepts of environmental health from a public health perspective

### Required Readings

(1) A. Nadakavukaren and J. Caravanos. (2020). *Our Global Environment: A Health Perspective* (8th ed.). Waveland Press, Inc. A copy of the textbook is also on Reserve in the Alkek Library.

(2) Journal articles, government reports, media accounts and other required readings will be assigned and posted on Canvas.

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### Technical Requirements

- We will be using Canvas as our learning management system. For assistance using Canvas see: <https://doit.txstate.edu/services/canvas.html>
- You must have access to Microsoft Word or be able to convert documents to MS-Word
- You must have a reliable and secure broadband connection. (FYI: The computer labs on the Texas State University campus provides access to reliable, secure broadband connections.) Technological problem not associated with Canvas or the university servers are not the responsibility of the instructor.

**Announcements:** I will use the Announcement feature in Canvas to provide updates and/or changes to assignments, quizzes, or other matters about the course. In order to receive notifications about Announcements, you must adjust your settings in Canvas for PH3301. Canvas does not send Announcements to your email.

**Modules:** The class is organized into weekly modules. Each module has specific learning objectives and the activities assigned to achieve those objectives. The activities will include readings, lectures, videos, writing assignments, in-class activities, films, quizzes, and exams.

### ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING

A student's final grade is based on a scale of 1,000 possible points using the following assessment methods:

**(1) Exams (500 points):** There will be three exams comprised of short answer, multiple choice, and sort essay. The third exam will be held on the final exam date scheduled by the University (Friday, May 6 at 5:00 pm).

**(2) Quizzes (35 points):** There will be six open-book/open note quizzes. These are low-stakes quizzes to help students self-assess their mastery of learning objectives.

**(3) Writing Assignments (465 points).** There will be five writing assignment during the semester. They range in value from 30 points to 130 points. They will involve:

- a) Writing a letter to a Member of Congress (80 points).
- b) Conducting an interview with a family member (100 points).
- c) Assessing news reporting on environmental health topics with articles in peer-reviewed journals (130 points).
- b) Analyzing a stakeholder's point of view on climate change interventions (125 points).
- d) Evaluating an in-class role play activity (30 points).

With respect to writing assignments, you will be evaluated based on your ability to:

- a) Follow instructions for required components of assignments (or ask for clarification at least 72 hours in advance of the due date);
- b) Write in manner that does not require the reader to interpret your meaning.
- c) Write in complete sentences and use proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling;
- d) Submit work that is formatted in accordance with the assignment instructions, is legible, and has a professional appearance (e.g., using the same font throughout the document, using paragraph breaks);
- e) Proofread your work; and
- f) Take advantage of the University Writing Center to get expert assistance, in particular, following the instructor's recommendation to do so.

**Scoring Rubrics:** A scoring rubric will be posted on Canvas for every writing assignment. A student is expected to consult the rubric to understand how scores will be earned. Scoring rubrics are a great way to evaluate your completed assignment before you submit it for the instructor to score.

**Late Assignments:** Late assignments will not be accepted unless the instructor gives permission in advance to a student. The score earned for a pre-approved late assignment will be reduced for each 24-hour period it is late by the number of point equivalent to one grade.

**Extra Credit (10 points).** There will be one opportunity to earn extra credit. It will take place during National Public Health Week (April 4-10, 2022) and will involve outreach to your U.S. Senators.

**Grade Calculator.** The instructor provides a "Grade Calculator" to assist students in tracking their scores and projecting their final grade in the class. The instructor does not rely on Canvas to calculate or submit grades to the Office of the University Registrar.

### **University Writing Center**

If you have not had much writing experience at the university level, are not confident in your writing ability, or would like some writing tips, you should take advantage of the

University Writing Center. They offer their coaching on-line and in-person, and it is very easy to schedule an appointment. <https://www.writingcenter.txstate.edu/>

The best writers, from students and professors to Pulitzer Prize winners, approach writing the same way as athletes and musicians: practice, practice, and more practice. The more writing, proofreading, and editing you do, the better your writing will be.

**Scoring/Grading:** The score/grade you receive is the one that you earn. Students are urged to bring concerns about their grades to the instructor early in the semester. (For example, if you are earning a “D” and need a “C” in the class, or you are earning a “C” and want a “B,” you need to raise your concern with the instructor no later than **March 7, 2022.**) If a student waits until the mid-point of the semester, it will be difficult to develop and implement a plan to improve your performance.

### Interpretation of Grades

Letter Grade	Definition	Points (out of 1,000)	Scale
F	Does not meet expectations	<590	<59%
D	Needs improvement	600 - 690	60 - 69%
C	Meets expectations for the course	700-790	70 - 79%
B	<u>Exceeds</u> expectations for the course	80-890	80 - 89%
A	<b>Exemplary</b> throughout the course	900-1,000	90 - 100%

### COVID-19 Precautions

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic is the gravest infectious disease public health situation since 1918. If you have not had the opportunity to be vaccinated to be protected from COVID-19, the Texas State University Student Health Center [is administering vaccines](#) for free. A COVID-19 vaccine is the most effective way to protect against getting the disease, suffering severe health effects from it, AND from spreading the virus to other people.

An [Executive Order](#) issued in May 2021 by Texas Governor Greg Abbott, prohibits public educational institutions from requiring face coverings. The university's [12 Health and Safety Guidelines](#) recommend, however, vaccinated and unvaccinated people who are indoors on campus wear face coverings. Requirements and guidance about COVID-19 precautions may change during the semester.

### Classroom Civility

"Civility in the classroom is very important for the educational process and it is everyone's responsibility. If you have questions about appropriate behavior in a particular class, please address them with your instructor first. Disciplinary procedures

may be implemented for refusing to follow an instructor's directive, refusing to leave the classroom, not following the university's requirement to wear a cloth face covering, not complying with social distancing or sneeze and cough etiquette, and refusing to implement other health and safety measures as required by the university. Additionally, the instructor, in consultation with the department chair/school director, may refer the student to the Dean of Students Office for further disciplinary review. Such reviews may result in consequences ranging from warnings to sanctions from the university." (From: Texas State University, Policy and Procedure Statement. Section 03: Courteous and Civil Learning Environment in [AA/PPS No. 02.03.02 \(4.02\)](#) and [Codes of Student Conduct](#).)

**Students with Disabilities:** If you are a student with a disability who will require an accommodation to succeed in this course, please contact me within the first two weeks of the semester. You will be asked to provide documentation from the Office of Disability Services. Failure to contact me in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For more information, refer to the Office of Disability Service's Website: [www.ods.txstate.edu](http://www.ods.txstate.edu).

**Emergency Management and TXState Alert:** In the event of an emergency, students, faculty, and staff should monitor <http://safety.txstate.edu> for all safety and emergency communications. This page is updated with the latest information available to the university, in addition to providing links to information concerning safety resources and emergency procedures. Faculty, staff, and students are encouraged to sign up for the TXState Alert system.

Note: The first three students to send me an email to let me know their favorite meal will receive 5 points of extra credit. Put "meal" in the subject line of the email.

### **Texas State's Academic Honesty Policy**

From the Department of Health and Human Performance: "We expect students to do their own work on all graded material submitted for all departmental course requirements. The Department's policy states that students guilty of knowingly using, or attempting to use, another person's work as though that work were their own, and students guilty of knowingly permitting, or attempting to permit, another student to use their work, may receive a grade of "F" for the course. Students who are unfamiliar with the University's policy on plagiarism should consult the most recent edition of the *Texas State Student Handbook* <http://www.mrp.txstate.edu/studenthandbook/>.

Students who are uncertain regarding what actions constitute plagiarism should consult the instructor."

Please do not violate the Academic Honesty Policy because you are falling behind with your school work. If you are having difficulty completing an assignment, including understanding the instructions or meeting the deadline, you should discuss it with the instructor before it is too late to rectify the situation.

1. *Academic work* means the preparation of an essay, thesis, report, problem assignment, exam, or other project submitted for purposes of grade determination.

2. *Cheating* means:

- a. Copying from another student's test paper, laboratory report, other report or computer files, data listings, and/or programs;

- b. Using materials during a test unauthorized by person giving test;
  - c. Collaborating, without authorization, with another person during an examination or in preparing academic work;
  - d. Knowingly, and without authorization, using, buying, selling, stealing, transporting, soliciting copying, or possessing, in whole or part, the content of an un-administered test;
  - e. Substituting for another student, or permitting another person to substitute for oneself, in taking an exam or preparing academic work;
  - f. Bribing another person to obtain an un-administered test or information about an un-administered test.
3. *Plagiarism* means the appropriation of another's work (or ideas) and the unacknowledged incorporation of that work in one's own written work offered for credit.

NOTE: Cutting and pasting from an on-line article or website and failing to use quotations marks and an APA citation for the information are forms of plagiarism. Cutting and pasting from an on-line article/website and then changing a few words to pretend it is your own work (without providing an APA citation) is plagiarism.

NOTE: I regret to report that every semester I have taught at Texas State University, I have identified at least one student who has plagiarized. In every case, I have written up the offense on the University's Honor Code Review Form and met with the student to confront the dishonesty. I submit all Honor Code Review Forms to the University's Honor Code Council. If I have evidence of a student's violation of Texas State University's Academic Honesty Policy, I will not hesitate to give the student an F in the course. I have had students repeat my course because they plagiarized the first time they took my course.

- 4. *Collusion* means the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing written work offered for credit.
- 5. *Abuse of resource material* means the mutilation, destruction, concealment, theft, or alteration of materials provided to assist students in the mastery of course materials.

**Sexual Assault Resources and Sexual Misconduct (Title IX):** Anyone, of any sex, race, ability, gender, gender identity, and gender expression can experience sexual assault. Resources available to Texas State students who experience sexual assault are available at <http://www.healthcenter.txstate.edu/AFTER-HOURS/sexualassault-resources.html>.

Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 (Title IX) prohibits sexual discrimination in federally funded educational programs or activities. Under Title IX individuals are protected against discrimination based on sex. Individuals can file a report of sexual misconduct. Faculty who receive a report of sexual misconduct are required to report the incident to the Title IX Officer. The following types of incidents are included: Sexual Assault; Dating Violence; Stalking; Sexual Harassment; Domestic Violence; Sexual

Exploitation; Sexual Intimidation (Cyber-stalking, Indecent Exposure, etc.).  
For more information and/or to report sexual misconduct, visit  
<http://www.txstate.edu/oea/Sexual-Misconduct--Title-IX-.html>

Effective January 2, 2020, state law (SB 212) requires all university employees, acting in the course and scope of employment, who witness or receive information concerning an incident of sexual misconduct involving an enrolled student or employee to report all relevant information known about the incident to the university's Title IX Coordinator or Deputy Title IX coordinator. According to SB 212, employees who knowingly fail to report or knowingly file a false report shall be terminated in accordance with university policy and the Texas State University System Rules and Regulations.

### **FINANCIAL AID INFORMATION**

**Non-Attendance and Financial Aid:** If you are a Pell Grant, Iraq-Afghanistan Service Grant (IASG) or TEACH Grant recipient, federal regulations require you to have begun attending the courses for which you are enrolled and receiving these grants. If on the census date roster (e.g., 12th day of each fall and spring semester) you are reflected as not attending a course, you are assumed (for financial aid purposes) not to have begun attendance for that course. Your grant will then be adjusted or cancelled based on the courses you have actually begun attending.

**Unofficial Withdraws and Financial Aid:** If you fail to earn a passing grade in at least one of your courses (i.e., all U's, all I's or a combination of all U's, W's or I's) during a semester, you are considered to have, for purposes of federal Title IV funds, unofficially withdrawn from the university. As a result, a federal withdrawal calculation must be performed to determine the amount of Title IV funds that you must repay. Once the amount you must repay is determined, Financial Aid and Scholarships will mail you a letter with the repayment details.

Note: A grade of U (Unearned Failing) is awarded to students who do not officially withdraw from but fail to complete a course (i.e., did not take a final exam, stopped attending, etc.) and failed to achieve the course objectives.

**Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) and Financial Aid:** Federal regulations require you to meet certain minimum academic standards in order to remain eligible for financial assistance. The requirements are that you: 1) maintain a minimum cumulative Texas State GPA; 2) complete at least 70% of all your coursework; and 3) not exceed a maximum limit of attempted hours toward your degree or certificate program.

Additional program-specific requirements also exist (e.g., TEXAS Grant). You can view these SAP criteria in more detail at [www.finaid.txstate.edu](http://www.finaid.txstate.edu) by selecting Undergraduate Aid or Graduate Aid from the dropdown menu and then Maintain My Eligibility.