WELCOME TO ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES 101 Winter 2024-2025

Hello Students,

I am looking forward to our on-line class, *Introduction to Environmental Issues*. I'll publish our course and syllabus on iLearn on Friday December 13, with the course officially starting on Saturday December 14 and running through Friday January 17. If you look through the iLearn page and don't see material of all eight units listed, don't be alarmed! I only post material one unit at a time to avoid confusion.

The course will be divided into eight "units", each a different topic, but you'll find many of the topics overlap. I'll post a new "unit" every Tuesday *and* Saturday. Our first unit is meant to take it slow and get everyone used to several iLearn tools as well as a course introduction. There will be a new assignment with most of our units, so it is very important to schedule plenty of time throughout every half-week to cover material and assignments. There is a lot of ground to cover over four weeks, and it will be very easy to fall behind if you let too many days go by. I'll publish a full syllabus on Dec 14, the first day of the course, which will include a bit of a "break" at the end of December for the Holidays.

This course will incorporate many documents and your own research. We'll be delving onto a wide array of topics, including population dynamics, renewable energies, and climate change. We'll rely heavily on the iLearn platform to communicate, so please familiarize yourself with logging on to iLearn if you haven't already. Marist's Help Desk can be a great asset if this is your first online course. I recommend setting aside time every day to check in or do some work, especially since some of our assignments will involve conversing and responding to fellow students.

There is no required textbook for this course. If you live in the tri-state area, I'd like you to purchase "The Hudson, An Illustrated History of the Living River" by Stanne, Panetta and Forist (Rutgers Press). I like this book because its relatively inexpensive, and covers many environmental concepts clearly and concisely. Only buy this book if you live in the general Hudson area, including New York , New Jersey, or Connecticut. The course itself is NOT a "Hudson River" course, and I use any local materials to illustrate larger concepts of changes in ecology and management. Many people in the class live nowhere near the Hudson. If that's you, do not bother buying the Hudson textbook. I'd like to talk with you via email about other texts that will be appropriate to your region, rather than try to shoe-horn you into a book that isn't appropriate. I do not rely heavily on textbooks, and if you are mail-ordering books, that's no worry for our first units since I'll provide a scanned copy of our readings.

If you would like to have an optional supplemental text, I recommend *Environmental Science for a Changing World* by Houtman, Karr, and Interlandi. You do not need the most recent edition. In fact, any of the past few editions are fine, even a digital version. Again, this is not a required text and there will not be any assignments from it.

Most units will include several powerpoint presentations with recorded lecture clips and occasional "video field trips". Assignments will include both individual assignments as well as class-wide Forum groups. Some of these assignments may include videos from a Netflix or similar subscription service I'll let you know ahead of time on this in case you need to subscribe for a short trial period. There will also be a longer project on a topic of your choice at the end of the course.

In the meantime, if you have the time I would like to know a few things about you. Where are you living now (Poughkeepsie, Portland, Peking, etc.)? What environmental issues are you personally interested in (or not)? This information will help me fine tune the course.

The best way to reach me is via email at chbowser@gmail.com, or through this course's iLearn "Message" tool after December 14. During our course, it's very likely that I will be online and responding to questions and assignments every day from 7pm to 8pm, USA Eastern Standard Time. I'll be on iLearn at other times as well, but consistently at those hours.

A little about myself:
I am the Science Education Specialist for the NYSDEC Hudson River Estuary Program and Hudson River Research Reserve, in partnership with the Water Resource Institute of Cornell University. My professional experience includes working as a Peace Corps forestry volunteer in Mauritania, serving as Education Director for the Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, mapping river shorelines for the Research Reserve, and teaching at Marist College in the Environmental Science department. I am a founding board member of the Bronx-based Rocking the Boat, where teenagers build traditional boats by hand and use them to study the Bronx River. I earned a Masters degree in Environmental Science and Policy from Clark University, and a Bachelors degree in Biology from Rutgers University. I volunteer as an EMT and Covid vaccinator in Ulster County.

My current work with the NYSDEC focuses on environmental education and community science in the Hudson River Valley. I coordinate an annual estuary-wide monitoring day involving 5000 students at over 90 shoreline sites, and lead teacher training workshops on incorporating Hudson River topics into existing curriculum. I also design education programs for the Norrie Point Environmental Center, and implement a community-science project where high school students and teachers, and Marist interns study migrating juvenile American eels in several Hudson River tributaries:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZlvMaQemKwU

I am looking forward to working and learning together!

Chris Bowser (he, his)
Marist College School of Professional Programs and School of Science