

BILD87 (Freshman Seminar) The Earth and Its Biosphere

(1 unit/2 hrs per week)

Tuesdays, 1:00-1:50; 2:00-2:50; Room 1129 Muir Biology Building

Description: The human population has caused documented global warming, polluted the environment, and caused extensive species extinction. We face an environmental crisis of unprecedented magnitude. This seminar class will focus on these issues in the context of our complex human society.

Contact information:

Prof. Milton Saier

Division of Biological Sciences

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Times available: afternoons and early evenings

Office hours: Immediately preceding and following class, or by appointment

Topics to be discussed

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|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| (1) The Human Population | (6) Why Eat Vegetarian? |
| (2) Global Warming | (7) Social Consciousness |
| (3) The Ozone Layer | (8) World Ethics |
| (4) Our Oceans and Forests | (9) Governmental Policies |
| (5) Species Extinction | |

Grading policy

- There will be no exams or quizzes. Active participation is **STRONGLY** encouraged.
- Grading will be based on attendance and participation as follows:

- (1) During the quarter, each student should attend at least two environmental seminars.

All will be announced in advance. Students will briefly report back to the class on the contents of each event attended and provide a personal critique of the material covered.

- (2) Each student will write a "letter to the editor" (≤ 200 words) about some environmental/social issue of interest and importance to her/him, read it to the class, and submit it signed to Dr. Saier as well as to one or more newspaper(s) for publication.
- (3) Each student will write a letter to one or more of our governmental official(s) on an environmental/social/political issue, read it to the class, and submit it to Dr. Saier as well as the politician(s).
- (4) All students who are eligible to vote in the U.S. should have registered to vote. It is the responsibility of every citizen in a democratic country to become informed and vote. Only then can we hope to inspire the maintenance of a democratic way of life.

Suggested California newspapers for submission (with e-mail addresses):

UCSD Guardian	editor@ucsdguardian.org	[Must specify as UCSD student]
UCSD New Frontier	prsingh@ucsd.edu	[Must specify as UCSD student]
Coast News	letters@thecoastnews.com	
North County Times	letters@nctimes.com	
San Diego Union-Tribune	letters@uniontrib.com	
Los Angeles Times	letters@latimes.com	
San Francisco Chronicle	letters@sfnchronicle.com	
San Jose Mercury	letters@mercurynews.com	
Sacramento Bee	opinion@sacbee.com	
Orange County Register	letters@ocregister.com	

Note: Submissions must include full name, status (e.g., freshman student at UCSD), full address, telephone number and e-mail address. They may contact you to verify your identity. Any other newspapers that you may prefer are equally acceptable.

Most newspapers and magazine provide e-mail addresses for submission of editorials in each issue. They often pay for these if accepted for publication, providing incentive. They also provide directive concerning length, style, content, etc., when required. It's exciting to see your own thoughts and efforts in print; you just need to overcome the activation energy required to do it. I'm merely trying to help you with this by providing additional incentive.

Suggested California politicians to contact:

Senator Barbara Boxer
Senator Dianne Feinstein
Etc., etc., depending on your district

The link is <http://capwiz.com/mygov/home/>. If you enter your zip code, you get a list of your specific elected officials. You can select an official and then the website will let you type in a message to them. Unfortunately, there is no obvious way to send to a bunch of officials all at once, but that may be okay because it is noted that politicians often ignore emails that were sent to a bunch of people all at once. If the email is addressed just to them they are more likely to read it. Also, if the email greets them by name (i.e., Dear Senator Boxer), they are more likely to read it.

Members of the class are also encouraged to join environmentally concerned student or community groups on and/or off campus. Participation in outreach programs, Earth days, and protests can be useful for bringing the important issues to the attention of the general public and other students. Do your part!