

## **BILD87 (Freshman Seminar) Earth's Fragile Biosphere**

(1 unit/2 hrs per week)

Tuesday, 1:00 PM-1:50 PM; Room 3880 AP&M 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:

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Times available: afternoons and early evenings

Office hours: Immediately following class, or by appointment

### Potential topics to be discussed

- |                              |                                           |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| (1) The Human Population     | (17) Assisted Suicide                     |
| (2) Global Warming           | (18) Microbes and regeneration            |
| (3) The Ozone Layer          | (19) Renewable Energy                     |
| (4) Our Oceans and Forests   | (20) Nutrition-McDonald's Society         |
| (5) Species Extinction       | (21) The Frozen Zoo                       |
| (6) Why Eat Vegetarian?      | (22) Population Dynamics                  |
| (7) Social Consciousness     | (23) Env. History                         |
| (8) World Ethics             | (24) Sustainability                       |
| (9) Governmental Policies    | (25) Pollution to air, water, earth, etc. |
| (10) Water We doing?         | (26) The human animal                     |
| (11) Agribusiness            | (27) Abortion                             |
| (12) Marine life and death   | (28) Contraception                        |
| (13) Organic Farming         | (29) Rapid Transit                        |
| (14) War and the environment | (30) Coral Reefs                          |
| (15) Rainforest destruction  | (31) The Meat Industry                    |
| (16) Bees-decline            |                                           |

### 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) Each student will write a "letter to the editor" or politician ( $\leq 200$  words) about some environmental/social issue of interest and importance to you, read it to the class, and submit it signed to Dr. Saier as well as to one or more newspaper(s) for publication or to one or more politicians.

- (2) Each student will present a short talk (<10 mins) (with slides if preferred) on an environmental issue of the student's choosing. You can do this with another student or alone, depending on your preference. The range of topics is almost unlimited, but over 30 such topics are listed above.
- (3) 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.

Tentative Class Outline (topics to be included)

1. The Population Bomb and the Solution
2. The Human Animal: Population Dynamics
3. Our Oil Addiction and Climate Change
4. Our Protective Stratospheric Ozone Layer
5. Why Vegetarian: The Harms of Eating Meat
6. Living in a McDonald's Society and its consequences
7. Water We Doing? Environmental Consequences
8. The Rape of our Forests and Oceans
9. Species Extinction and Conservation Efforts
10. Social Consciousness and World Ethics

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

|                         |                                                    |                                          |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| UCSD Guardian           | editor@ucsdguardian.org                            | [Must specify as UCSD student]           |
| Coast News              | editor@coastnewsgroup.com                          |                                          |
| San Diego Union-Tribune | letters@uniontrib.com                              |                                          |
| Los Angeles Times       | letters@latimes.com                                |                                          |
| San Francisco Chronicle | opinion@sfchronicle.com                            |                                          |
| San Jose Mercury        | dborenstein@bayareanewsgroup.com                   |                                          |
| Sacramento Bee          | http://www.sacbee.com/customer-service/contact-us/ | [Use this form to contact the Newspaper] |
| 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. 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 Kamala Harris  
 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 has been 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 Harris), 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, helping environmental teachers in high schools (through HERO), and demonstrations/protests can be useful for bringing the important issues to the attention of the general public and other students. Do your part!

The web address for BILD 18 is [bild18.wordpress.com](http://bild18.wordpress.com)