

San José State University
College of Social Science/Department of Environmental Studies
ENVS 198 (44457), Senior Seminar, Fall 2024

Course and Contact Information

Instructor:	Rachel Lazzeri-Aerts
Class Days/Times/Location:	Mon/Wed 12:00-1:15pm; DMH 164 Access all class Modules, materials, assignments through Canvas LMS
Contact Me:	Canvas Messages/Inbox (preferred) or rachel.lazzeriaerts@sjsu.edu
Office Hours:	Mon/Wed 9:30-10:15am and by appointment
Prerequisites:	Must have filed for graduation and completed the core courses for Environmental Studies core, especially ENVS 110. Taken in final semester, or sometimes in the penultimate semester of a student's academic career.

Course Overview and Description

This course is designed to be the culmination of our interdisciplinary curriculum in environmental studies through integration and critical assessment of the field. The goal is to transition from an undergraduate experience to full professionalism. This course will reinforce the knowledge and skills you have gained with us, as well as provide you with an experience you can put on your resume.

This is a research/seminar/project class and it will require consistent attention and progress from you. You will have an opportunity to explore and conduct literature and data research on a topic of interest to you. Being able to recognize and use quality, reliable data, and then use those data to answer research or policy questions are transferable skills that will be valuable to you throughout your life and in whatever field your career takes you.

Learning Objectives

This course is designed to allow each student to probe more deeply into topics introduced in your undergraduate career until now. The course is run with a project-oriented approach. Each student will become an expert through primary research and data analysis for the topic they select for the course, and you will teach each other about this subject through a combination of readings, presentations and a written report.

This course also has the goal of reinforcing all five of the Department of Environmental Studies Program Learning Objectives. These objectives encompass the knowledge and skills all Environmental Studies students should have by graduation.

ENVS Program Learning Objectives (PLOs)

- 1) **Qualitative Environmental Literacy:** Students are able to write a logical analytical paper using good writing style and construction supported by appropriate research.
- 2) **Quantitative Environmental Literacy:** Students are able to determine, apply, and interpret appropriate basic statistical or other quantitative analyses to environmental data.
- 3) **Content Environmental Literacy:** Students will develop proficiency in the interdisciplinary sustainability principles that are the foundation of environmental studies; they will know the key environmental challenges facing the planet, know relevant interdisciplinary information about these challenges, and be able to develop or identify feasible solutions.

- 4) Professional Skills: Students are able to productively conduct group/team work to deliver professional quality presentations and reports and students demonstrate professional work skills.
- 5) Environmental Justice and Equity: Students will be able to provide actions that can promote environmental justice in all sustainability endeavors.

Information Literacy Learning Objectives (ILLOs)

- 1) An information literate student determines the nature and extent of the information needed. The information literate student defines and articulates the need for information, as well as identifies a variety of types and formats of potential sources for information.
- 2) An information literate student evaluates information and its sources critically and incorporates selected information into his/her knowledge base. Students summarize the main ideas to be extracted from the information gathered, articulates and applies criteria for evaluating both the information and its sources, and synthesizes main ideas to construct new concepts.
- 3) The information literate student understands the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information, and accesses and uses information ethically and legally.

Required Course Materials

Readings

All course readings and materials will be available on Canvas.

Technology

You will need consistent access to a computer with an Internet connection. You should be using the latest version of Chrome, Firefox, Edge, Respondus Lockdown Browser (as applicable), or Safari, and can view a complete list of [Supported Browsers through Canvas Guides](#). Zoom may be used for Office Hours or individual meetings. Additionally, we will sometimes be using video recordings to share thoughts and ideas as part of activities or discussions. Canvas has a built-in Media Recorder that is easy to use. You will need to bring your laptop to class; if you don't have one, I can help you check one out through the university.

Students are expected to have the following basic computer skills:

- Utilize Canvas LMS and associated tools/features
- Microsoft Office including Word, Excel, and PowerPoint
- File management including downloading, uploading, creating, editing, and saving
- Email including sending, receiving, and managing attachments
- University library searches
- Navigating internet searches, websites, and interactive components

Please note that I do not provide technical help beside instructions on how to access or utilize a particular application. If you need computer or technical help, please utilize the following resources:

- [Student Canvas Help Guide](#)
- [SJSU Information Technology](#)
 - itservicedesk@sjsu.edu
 - 408-924-1530
- In Canvas, click the “Help” button in the left-side menu for several options.

Library Liaison

Peggy Cabrera (peggy.cabrera@sjsu.edu or 408-808-2034) is the Library Liaison for the Department of Environmental Studies. She is a great resource. Email her for help via email or to set up a Zoom appointment.

Course Requirements and Assignments

Class Format

This course has in-person class meetings with occasional Zoom meetings for individual instructional time. We will also be utilizing Canvas, the Learning Management Systems used by SUSU. Some class content, readings, videos, and activity instructions and submissions will be available within Canvas and will be organized into Modules by topic. The course is designed to expand and grow with each Module, and many sections will refer back to previous Modules. Complete the tasks in the order presented to get the most out of the course. Class communications (outside of our meetings) will also be through Canvas.

While some of the material can be done at a time of your choosing (such as readings), there are specific due dates for activities, discussions, project work, and presentations. You must complete these components at the due date and time. Late work is not accepted. All meetings (in-person and occasional Zoom) will be during our scheduled class time. Exact dates are provided in the Course Schedule.

Student Responsibilities

Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally three hours per unit per week) for instruction, preparation/studying, or course related activities, including but not limited to internships, labs, and clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.

It is your responsibility to access the Canvas course, come prepared to class, engage thoroughly with each Module and associated components, carefully read directions, prepare thoughtful submissions for assignments, discussions, and activities, submit all assignments on-time, and make a commitment to quality work in this course. If you are in doubt about something in the course, ask! Utilize the Question Café Discussion board, send me a Canvas Message, or attend office hours.

Assignments

The class is centered around an individual project in one of two tracks: a Research Report or a Policy Analysis Report. There will be varying types of activities and assignments throughout the course. These assignments are aimed to help you design and complete the individual project, as well as hone skills in evaluating, analyzing, and communicating information about science and environmental issues.

Participation

Students will be expected to actively participate in their learning. This means that you must actively engage with the material presented in the Canvas Modules. Do the reading. Watch the videos. Think about the questions presented to you. Additionally, as much of this course is based on activities, presentations, and discussions, each student's participation is necessary for the class to function successfully. Discussions, video responses, in-person meeting assignments, and any other activities that come up during the semester may be used as participation points toward final course grade. **You must be present and prepared to receive participation points for activities; there are no makeup points for missed classes and activities.**

Formatting for Written Work

Please note that all assignments need to be formatted as follows: 12 point font, Times New Roman, 1 inch margins, doubled spaced, include a header with name and date, and use Turabian/Chicago, MLA, or APA author-year citation style where applicable. There will be a points deduction for not following these guidelines.

Grading Policy

Your grade will be based on your final project, activities and assignments, and class participation. All assignments are to be turned in through Canvas before the specified due date and time.

Grade Scale

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
A plus	97 to 100%
A	93 to 96%
A minus	90 to 92%
B plus	87 to 89 %
B	83 to 86%
B minus	80 to 82%
C plus	77 to 79%
C	73 to 76%
C minus	70 to 72%
D	60 to 69%
F	Less than 60%

Late Work

All graded work is **due BEFORE 11:59pm on the due date**. Late work is **NOT** accepted. Plan accordingly, and do not wait until the last minute to submit an assignment. Exceptions may be considered for legitimate and documented circumstances (ie. medical emergency, death in the family).

Extra Credit

Students are responsible for recording the details of any offered extra credit assignments.

Rubrics

Most assignments may be graded using a rubric. For assignments and discussions that utilize a rubric, you can review the rubric before submitting your work to ensure you have met all assignment guidelines and requirements.

- [How to view a rubric for an assignment?](#)
- [How to view a rubric for a discussion?](#)
- [How to view rubric results for my assignments?](#)

Grading Overview

Please note that points possible may change based on class progression.

Assignment	Points	Learning Objectives
Revised Project Idea	10	PLO 2; ILLO 1
Literature Review	25	PLO 3; ILLO 1, 2, 3
Methods Section	25	PLO 2; ILLO 1
Project Proposal	40	PLO 1, 2, 3; ILLO 1, 2, 3
Data Collection Report	25	PLO 2; ILLO 1
Data Analysis Summary	25	PLO 2; ILLO 2
Draft Project Report	40	PLO 1, 2, 3; ILLO 1, 2, 3
Project Poster and Presentation	75	PLO 2, 3, 4, 5
Final Report	100	PLO 1, 2, 3, 5; ILLO 1, 2, 3
Activities, Discussions, and Participation	200-300	PLO 4, 5; ILLO 1, 2, 3
TOTAL	~500	

University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' [Syllabus Information web page](#).

Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility

In accordance with San José State University's Policies, the Student Code of Conduct, and applicable state and federal laws, discrimination based on gender, gender identity, gender expression, race, nationality, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or disability is prohibited in any form. The [SJSU Diversity website](#) has information on campus policies and programs, the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and how to report instances of bias.

Students are expected to participate fully in all class activities. It is expected that students will be open-minded, participate fully in discussions in-class and online, and debate in a mature and respectful manner. Use of derogatory, condescending, or offensive language including profanity is prohibited. Expressing disagreement should always include an explanation of your reasoning and whenever possible, evidence to support your position.

The CSU and SJSU both mandate that all students, staff, faculty, and visitors have equal and inclusive access to information and educational materials and programs. Therefore, all instructional documents and materials, electronic materials and programs, and web based materials and programs must be created to be accessible by all. The [Accessibility at SJSU website](#) has information on the specific laws and policies regarding accessibility, as well as information on SJSU's programs to ensure accessibility. In this course, my goal is to have all materials, readings, videos, etc. created in an accessible format. If you find a course component that is not accessible to you, please let me know, so that I can make corrections.

Additionally, the accessibility statements and resources (as available) for websites, software, and tools that we will be using in the course can be found at the links below.

[Canvas](#): Learning Management System used by SJSU

[Canvas Studio](#): audio/video recording tool within Canvas LMS

[Google](#): SJSU email, calendar, and online tools

[Turnitin](#): plagiarism check tool used in Canvas LMS

[YouTube](#): video hosting/viewing

[Zoom](#): synchronous web conferencing

Academic Integrity

Please read the [Academic Integrity Policy](#). You should know and understand both plagiarism and cheating.

Your commitment, as a student, to learning is evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University. The University's [Academic Integrity Policy F15-7](#) requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The [Student Conduct and Ethical Development website](#) has more information. Instances of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. **Cheating or plagiarism (presenting the work of another as your own, or the use of another person's ideas without giving proper credit) will result in a failing grade and sanctions by the University.** For this class, all assignments are to be completed by the individual student unless otherwise specified. If you would like to include in your assignment any material you have already submitted, or plan to submit for another class, please note that SJSU's Academic Policy F15-7 requires approval of both instructors.

AI Tool Use

Generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools—software that creates new text, images, computer code, audio, video, and other content—have become widely available. Well-known examples include ChatGPT for text and DALL•E for images.

In this course, you may use generative AI tools only for assignments that include explicit permission in the assignment instructions. If you use generative AI tools on these assignments, you must properly document and credit the tools themselves. Cite the tool you used both in-text and in the Works Cited and include a brief description of how you used the tool. This description should be included at the end of your assignment as an Appendix.

If you choose to use generative AI tools, please remember that there are limitations to the content produced. The datasets used to train AI are limited, often out of date, include copyrighted material, and may include biased information. This has the potential to result in AI created content that is inaccurate, biased, and/or a copyright violation. It is your responsibility—not the AI tool’s—to assure the quality, integrity, and accuracy of work you submit in any college course.

As a reminder, all written work for the course will be submitted through Canvas and will be submitted to Turnitin. Turnitin also includes detection tools for AI-generated text. If you use generative AI tools to complete assignments in this course, in ways that have not been explicitly approved, the SJSU Academic Integrity Policy and this course’s plagiarism and cheating policy will apply.

Portions of this policy were created using the non-AI [“Generative AI Syllabus Statement Tool \(Seaver College\)”](#).

Consent for Recording of Class and Public Sharing of Instructor Material

Common courtesy and professional behavior dictate that you notify someone when you are recording him/her. You must obtain the instructor’s permission to make audio or video recordings in this class. See [University Policy S12-7](#).

Course material developed by the instructor is the intellectual property of the instructor and cannot be shared publicly without his/her approval. You may not publicly share or upload instructor generated material for this course such as exam questions, lecture notes, or homework solutions without instructor consent.

Resources for Students

There are many resources on campus available to you. Some examples include: SJSU Peer Connections Center, the College of Social Science Access Center, SJSU Writing Center, SJSU Counseling and Psychological Service, SJSU Student Health Center, the Academic Success Center, and many places to use or get help with technology. See the [Syllabus Information web page](#) for more info. If you are not sure where to get assistance, please email me/come see me. I can help you find the right campus resources and get you connected with them.

SJSU Cares

Students experiencing challenges meeting their basic needs including, but not limited to, access to food, shelter, and a safe space are encouraged to contact SJSU Cares. The SJSU Cares program can help connect students to both on and off campus resources. Contact information:

- [SJSU Cares Information website](#)
- sjsucares@sjsu.edu
- 408-924-1234
- Direct link to the [Request Assistance Form](#)

Accessible Education Center (AEC)

The Accessible Education Center is committed to redefining ability for students with disabilities by providing comprehensive services in support of the educational development and success of students with disabilities in a

student-centered and professional environment. To receive appropriate accommodations for temporary or permanent disabilities, you must register with the AEC. Additionally, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, so we can discuss the best ways to implement your accommodations to ensure your success in the course. AEC contact information:

- [AEC website](#)
- aec-info@sjsu.edu
- 408-924-6000

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

The SJSU Counseling and Psychological Services is located on the corner of 7th Street and San Carlos in the new Student Wellness Center, Room 300B. Professional psychologists, social workers, and counselors are available to provide confidential consultations on issues of student mental health, campus climate, or psychological and academic issues on an individual, couple, or group basis. Numerous workshops for students. Hours are Monday through Friday 8:30am to 4:30pm. For 24/7 crisis intervention help, call the number below. Contact information:

- [Counseling and Psychological Services website](#)
- counseling.services@sjsu.edu
- 408-924-5678

Course Schedule

Please note that this is a high-level course outline. A detailed schedule is available in Canvas.

Module and Dates	Weekly Topics	Major Assignments
M0: Aug 21-25	Introductions and Getting Started	
M1: Aug 26-Sept 1	The Project	Draft Project Idea
M2: Sept 2-8	Project Question Development	
M3: Sept 9-15	Individual Project Meetings: Refining the Project Idea and Question	Revised Project Idea and Background
M4: Sept 16-22	Literature Review + Credible Sources	
M5: Sept 23-29	Beyond Peer Reviewed Sources	Draft Literature Review
M6: Sept 30-Oct 6	Data Collection Methods	
M7: Oct 7-13	Individual Project Meetings: Data Collection	
M8: Oct 14-20	Data Analysis Methods	Project Proposal
M9: Oct 21-27	Individual Project Meetings: Editing the Proposal	
M10: Oct 28-Nov 3	Project Work	
M11: Nov 4-10	Interpreting Results and Drawing Conclusions	
M12: Nov 11-17	Individual Project Meetings: Project Progress	Data Collection Progress Check
M13: Nov 18-24	Communicating Your Project	Data Analysis Progress Check
M14: Nov 25-Dec 1	Project Work + Thanksgiving	
M15: Dec 2-8	Individual Project Meetings: Final Check-Ins	Draft Poster
M16: Dec 9-16	Practice Presentations + Senior Showcase	Final Poster
Finals Week		Final Written Report