COURSE TITLE: Environmental Sociology

COURSE NUMBER: SOC 353

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Daily news reports discuss threats of rising sea levels, climate change, and resource scarcity. Human existence and human health is directly dependent on how humans interact as stewards with their environments. This course will provide students with a broad understanding of the environmental issues facing societies and how societal attitudes toward the environment shape human existence.

II. RATIONALE:

This course focuses on developing awareness of environmental problems. Class discussions will be used to investigate the relationship between social institutions, politics, science and technology. Topics covered will include: the history and construction of the environment, ideology and politics, globalization and consumerism, international efforts to address the environment, environmental justice, sustainable development, toxic exposures and health, natural resource scarcity and energy, and social responses to abate pollution/climate change.

III. INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS:

GOAL A: Students will demonstrate an understanding of the environmental problems facing society.

Learning Outcomes: The student will:

A-1 Define major topics in environmental sociology – e.g., environmental justice, urbanization, sustainability.
A-2 Describe the major environmental problems facing society – e.g., climate change, pollution, resource scarcity, inequality.
A-3 Research environmental issues of concern in the local community.
A-4 Explain underlying causes of environmental problems.
A-5 Evaluate the impact of the environment on human health.

GOAL B: Students will learn about the social construction of the environment and ideological differences that prevent more robust responses to environmental issues.

Learning Outcomes: The student will:
B-1 Develop an understanding of how and when the modern concept of the environment evolved.
B-2 Analyze social and political differences that account for differing views on how to deal with climate change and other environmental problems.
B-3 Learn to apply major paradigms (e.g., managerial, conservative) to address environmental problems.
B-4 Evaluate what types of responses would be most effective in specific cases (e.g., citizen advocacy, international agreements, federal civil or criminal enforcement).

GOAL C: Students will learn how environmental practitioners work together to address environmental issues.

Learning Outcomes: The student will:

C-1 Discuss how different practitioners work together to address environmental issues.
C-2 Evaluate specific environmental issues to glean insights on how practitioners problem solve in specific environmental situations.
C-3 Analyze limitations to practitioners acting to address environmental issues.

GOAL D: Students will examine the social mechanisms that cause environmental harm and prevent solutions from being implemented.

Learning Outcomes: The student will:

D-1 Develop an understanding of behavioral theories that account for the collective action and cooperation problems that account for environmental harms.
D-2 Analyze the impact of globalization, inequality and resource scarcity on environmental problems.
D-3 Evaluate the role of government, industry and community organizations in addressing environmental issues.
D-4 Become aware of how the built environment and social narrative can influence individual decision-making.

GOAL E: Students will develop an understanding of the role of sustainable development, demographics, technology and incentives in addressing environmental and resource problems.

Learning Outcomes: Students will:

E-1 Develop an understanding of sustainability and other movements that are changing how society approaches the environment and resource use.
E-2 Analyze how population shifts impact resource availability.
E-3 Evaluate how incentives and technology can be used in the sustainability movement.

GOAL F: Students will use appropriate written and oral communication skills.
Learning Outcomes: The student will:

F-1 Write clearly, concisely, and appropriately using correct English grammar, punctuation, usage, mechanics, sentence structure, and vocabulary.
F-2 Use appropriate APA format for scholarly writings.
F-3 Speak with confidence, clarity, and conciseness.
F-4 Research, prepare, and deliver professional presentations.