**EVR 1001 Introduction to Environmental Science Honors**

**Valencia College West**

**Instructor:** Dr. Denise DeBusk

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**Email:** ddebusk@valenciacollege.edu or through Canvas email

**Modality:** Online

**Student Engagement Hours:**

* Monday-Wednesday 9:30am-12:30pm (online)
* Thursday 12-1:30pm (on campus)
* Friday 1-2:30pm (online)

**Credit Hours:** 3

**Prerequisites:** None

# **Welcome to the Course!**

# This is a designated Honors course. As an honors course, this course infuses higher-level elements such as critical thinking, problem solving, research, interdisciplinary approaches, and peer-to-peer interactions. This course does not contain significantly more work than a non-honors course, but the quality of your work is expected to be more in-depth and meaningful. This course features a variety of learner-centered teaching styles and provides you opportunities to discuss hot topics in environmental science, create materials that feature environmental solutions, and take a more active role in your learning. This course will place you in the role to plan your own sustainable community. Take your learning to another level by participating in co-curricular activities that focus on sustainability and environmental science and connect what you have learned to the experience.

# **Course Information**

## **Course Description**

This course is a general education credit, non-laboratory course that provides a survey of basic chemical, biological, and physical principles of environmental science and ecology, the application of these principles to current political, scientific, and economic issues and our responsibility for the environment.

## **Course Outcomes**

By the end of the course, you will:

1. Connect environmental principles to the management of natural resources.
2. Relate the reciprocal effects of human and nature within environmental systems.
3. Compare the effects of different types of pollution sources on the environment.
4. Review policies that have impacted various environmental systems.
5. Compare the roles of fundamental principles of science in the function of environmental systems.
6. Discuss social concerns regarding environmental issues.
7. Students will apply problem-solving skills creatively to address societal needs and challenges.
8. Students will integrate interdisciplinary perspectives to enhance course content.

## **Textbooks**

We will be using an open access book, [Environmental Biology](https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/envirobiology/front-matter/introduction/), to supplement this class. This book is free. You can move through the chapters using the dropdown menu on the left side of the website.

## **Valencia College Core Competencies**

Valencia’s Student Core Competencies are complex abilities that are essential to lifelong success. This course will help you to develop and demonstrate the abilities to:

1. THINK clearly, critically, and creatively;
2. COMMUNICATE with others verbally and in written form;
3. Make reasoned VALUE judgments and responsible commitments;
4. ACT purposefully, reflectively, and responsibly.

Due to the nature of these global competencies, many of the problems will be presented in the context of an application. These applications will require students to select appropriate information from the problem and communicate effectively in order to explain and/or describe how the student used the skills they are learning to arrive at an appropriate solution for the problem.

# **Our Inclusive Learning Environment**

Your success in this class is important to me. We all learn differently and bring different strengths and needs to the class. We expect everyone in this class to contribute to a respectful, welcoming, and inclusive environment to support the learning of all other members of the class. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in barriers to your inclusion or accurate assessment or achievement, please let me know as soon as possible.

If you have a disability and require accommodations, please let me know during the first two weeks of the semester. You will need to register with the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) (West Campus SSB 102, 407-582-1523). OSD determines accommodations based on appropriate documentation of disabilities and provides a letter to me with them.

# **What to Expect in this Class?**

## **Teacher Expectations**

I believe that anyone can succeed in the class if the right learning environment and strategies are used. I have structured this course to provide a variety of learning assessments with diverse learners in mind. I value your uniqueness and experience and want you to value your classmates as well. We are all learning together so please reach out to me if you have any questions or need extra assistance. I am here to help you learn. ☺

* I will follow the course outline as closely as possible and will notify you of modifications in the outline if they happen.
* I will attempt to create and maintain a classroom atmosphere in which you feel free to both listen to others and express your views and ask questions to increase your learning. I like to see the class as a community.
* Please email me or schedule a Zoom meeting if there is anything you want to discuss or about which you are unclear. I want to be supportive of your learning and growth.
* I will provide feedback/grades within a **week (7 days)**, often earlier, on the submitted assignment. It will be posted to the Canvas Gradebook.

## **Student Expectations**

Set goals for yourself for this course and plan/work to meet them. Value your classmate’s opinions and be open to learn new ways of thinking. Complete all assignments without sharing/copying other’s work or answers and be proud of your work.

* Please inform me by email if there is something that prevents you from turning in assignments.
* You are expected to check your Atlas email and Canvas inbox on a regular basis throughout the week.
* Since this is an online class, all of it is spent at the comfort of a computer, you can expect to devote **3-6 hours** each week to this course.
* Feel free to share feedback regarding how well the class is meeting your needs or if material is unclear. I make changes to the class based on feedback, either on the spot or in the future.
* It is also expected that you will treat classmates with respect and observe the rules of confidentiality regarding personal information shared in class.

# **How your Learning will be Assessed?**

**Case Studies:** A case study is an in-depth, detailed examination of a particular case within a real-world context. For example, you will learn about disappearing frogs, urban farming, and melting ice in Greenland. At the beginning of each chapter, you will have a case study to introduce the topic. This will consist of a short video (around 5 minutes) with 4 questions. You will have two attempts on the questions.

**Review Quizzes:** The lectures will consist of an excellent video series by Paul Andersen. There are between 2-3 videos per module, each around 10 minutes long. You will have associated video guides containing questions you can answer for extra credit, worth 0.5 pts per video guide. There will be an associated quiz to review the concepts you learned from the videos. The quiz questions for the videos will come from the video guides. You will have multiple-choice selected from a pool of questions. Additionally, you will have several questions for each module where you need to interpret data and apply it. You will have two attempts for each quiz.

**Discussions:** Since environmental science often includes conflicting viewpoints and ways that you can act to improve the environment, weekly online discussions will be included in the course. Online discussions will be open for two weeks following the module covered. The student must make an initial response (3 pts) then respond to at least two other students (2 pts). Discussions should demonstrate a thorough and complete understanding of material covered in the module and include sources cited for full credit.

Initial posts are expected to be thoughtful and substantial. Discussion posts need to have sources cited properly in APA format. See the [Lib Guide](https://libguides.valenciacollege.edu/Sarisley_EVR1001) for assistance. You should also review the [Sources Video](https://valenciacollege.zoom.us/rec/play/1wy7QYYYBzD2ksh4y109GClyklxt5t42SD7p4ZY5BgdAdx_3rtqzhqGeV8Wf4tZh_naIUPRuLSABImJr.dvW5_5sd7iQuQqdA?startTime=1628694584000&_x_zm_rtaid=D7R8yYK0RFKwjoZ1gvWfIQ.1628896496902.8d0136195d7a9c39f78ad946d933895f&_x_zm_rhtaid=160) from our Science Librarian, Ms. Cumberbath. A minimum of 5 sentences is required for the initial post. Peer replies are expected to offer feedback, comments, and suggestions, and require a minimum of 3 sentences. Editing/deleting of your discussion posts is not possible. Therefore, I highly recommend that you type your posts in a word processing software such as Microsoft Word. Thoroughly check it for spelling/ grammar, ensure you have answered all questions thoroughly, cited your source, and then copy/paste into the forum to submit. Blank initial posts will receive a score of a 0.

**Authentic Assessments:** An authentic assignment is one that requires application of what you have learned to a new situation, and demands judgment to determine what information and skills are relevant, and how they should be used. Individual authentic assessments will be assigned to demonstrate an understanding of the material. The products may include developing Powerpoints, videos, infographics, papers, etc. A rubric will be provided for grading the assignment. As in the discussions, sources should be cited.

**Sustainability Project:** Students will plan a sustainable community by selecting technologies to integrate into a small community that they believe will have the most impact. There will be opportunities throughout the semester to practice thinking critically and brainstorming solutions. Students will select six technologies, research them, analyze them, and present them through a PowerPoint or video. Students will also review their peers’ projects.

**Final Project:** As a culmination of the class, the final project will require you to annotate interactions between categories for three environmental topics. PowerPoint presentations will be exported from the interactive activity and combined into one final product. Additionally, you will reflect on your thoughts about the most important environmental topic to you.

**Extra Credit:** Extra credit on your quiz grade is available for each video guide you submit associated with your lecture videos. You also have the opportunity to earn extra credit by completing the Student Feedback at the end of the semester.

### **Late Work/Makeup Policy**

Since life sometimes gets in the way, there is a two-week grace period after assignments are due. During this time, late work is eligible for partial credit (2% deduction per day). For MindTap assignments, it is a total of 10% off each assignment if you submit your assignment during this grace period. If there are extenuating circumstances, please contact me as early as possible to discuss your options.

## **A pie chart with text  Description automatically generatedGrading Scale**

A = 89.5% - 100%, B = 79.5% - 89.49%, C = 69.5% - 79.49%, D = 59.5% - 69.49%, F = below 59.49%

1. Case Studies – 10%
2. Review Quizzes – 20%
3. Discussions – 20%
4. Authentic Assessments – 35%
5. Final Project – 15%

# **COURSE SCHEDULE**

| **Week**  | **Topic** | **Assignments** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Jan 8-14 | Orientation | Orientation QuizBe in the Know AssignmentIntroduction Discussion |
| Jan 15-21 | Brushing Up on the Basics | Review Quizzes: Scientific Method; Graphing and Data AnalysisAuthentic Assessment: Library Workshops |
| Jan 22-28 | Environmental Science | Case Study: BiomimicryReview Quiz: Overview of Environmental ScienceDiscussion: Scientific Argumentation of Environmental IssuesAuthentic Assessment: Ecological Footprint |
| Jan 29-Feb 4 | Ecosystems | Case Study: Tropical Rainforests are DisappearingReview Quiz: EcosystemsDiscussion: Florida Algae BloomsAuthentic Assessment: Your Species, Your Choice |
| Feb 5-11 | Biodiversity & Population Ecology | Case Study: The Southern Sea Otter – A Species in RecoveryReview Quiz: Population and Community EcologyDiscussion: How Wolves Change RiversAuthentic Assessment: Your Species, Your Choice Part 2 |
| Feb 12-18 | Loss of Biodiversity | Case Study: Why are Amphibians DisappearingReview Quiz: Loss of BiodiversityDiscussion: Burmese Python InvasionAuthentic Assessment: Endangered Species PSA |
| Feb 19-25 | Human Population | Case Study: Population 7.4 BillionReview Quiz: Human PopulationDiscussion: Population Growth DebateAuthentic Assessment: Human Population ComparisonProject: Community Sustainability Questions and Answers |
| Feb 26-Mar 3 | Agriculture | Case Study: Growing Power-An Urban Food OasisReview Quiz: AgricultureDiscussion: Overfishing Crisis DebateAuthentic Assessment: Organic Farming |
| Mar 4-10 | Water Availability and Solid Waste | Case Study: The Gulf of Mexico’s Annual Dead ZoneReview Quiz: Water Availability and Solid WasteDiscussion: Water-A Right or a Commodity?Authentic Assessment: Your Drinking Water |
| Mar 11-17 | Nonrenewable Energy | Case Study: Using Hydrofracking to Produce Oil and Natural GasReview Quiz: Nonrenewable EnergyDiscussion: Oil Drilling DebateAuthentic Assessment: Fossil Fuel Fact SheetProject: Brainstorming Sustainable Solutions, Part 1 |
| Mar 18-24 | ***Spring Break*** | ***No Assignments*** |
| Mar 25-Mar 31 | Air Pollution | Case Study: Mexico City’s SolutionsReview Quiz: Air PollutionDiscussion: Clean Air-Whose Responsibility is It?Authentic Assessment: Air Pollutant in Parramore |
| Apr 1-7 | Stratospheric Ozone & Climate Change | Case Study: Melting Ice in GreenlandReview Quiz: Stratospheric Ozone and Climate ChangeDiscussion: Carbon Tax DebateAuthentic Assessment: Climate Change Wedges |
| Apr 8-14 | Renewable Energy | Case Study: Rocky Mountain InstituteReview Quiz: Renewable EnergyDiscussion: Renewable Energy TransitionAuthentic Assessment: Renewable Energy Fact SheetProject: Brainstorming Sustainable Solutions, Part 2 |
| Apr 15-21 | Final Project | Project: Planning a Sustainable Community (Part 1 & 2) |
| Apr 22-24 | Final Project (late days) |  |

## **Vacations and other important dates**

* Jan 8 – Classes begin
* Jan 16 – Drop/Refund Deadline
* Mar 15 – Withdrawal deadline
* Mar 18-24 – Spring Break (no classes)
* Apr 28 – Term ends

# **How can you Contact Me?**

You may contact me in various ways during this semester.

* You may contact me through the [Canvas Inbox](https://online.valenciacollege.edu/conversations). This is probably the best and quickest method of communication. I will respond to your message within 48 hours, often much sooner, with the exception of days and times when the college is closed.
* For more complicated issues (e.g. walking you through an assignment), your best option is communication through the Zoom tool in Canvas. You can book a 30 minute appointment using this [link](https://outlook.office365.com/owa/calendar/StudentEngagement%40valenciacollege.edu/bookings/).
* You may email me at ddebusk@valenciacollege.edu. In your messages (if not using the Canvas Inbox), please indicate your course number so that I may better assist you.
* You may schedule to meet me in my office when I’m on campus.
* If you prefer to speak to me directly, my **Valencia phone number** is (407) 582-5100, and I will be happy to make an appointment with you.

# **What Policies are in the Course?**

**No Show Policy**

Since this is an online class, attendance is counted as assignments submitted. The Orientation Quiz is the required attendance activity for the first week. You need to complete the activity to show that you are attending the course. If you do not complete that activity by the end of the week, you will be withdrawn from the class as a “no show.” You will still be financially responsible for the class and a final grade of “WN” will appear on your transcript for the course. If you are unable to complete the Orientation Quiz during the first week, notify me as early as possible and we can discuss your options. If you are not planning to continue the class, make an effort to drop the course before the deadline.

## **Attendance Policy**

This is an online course, available 24/7, managed through Canvas. You must have access to the Internet (available on all Valencia campuses) to complete the course requirements. Your online attendance will be checked based on your participation in the course and submission of coursework. In the event of an extended absence, you should contact me so that we can discuss your options. If you do not submit any assignments for two weeks, I will email you about your absence. If I don’t get an email back within a week explaining your absence, I will withdraw you from the class. If you contact me but do not begin completing work, you will be withdrawn after another week. After the withdraw deadline, students with an absence of more than 2 weeks will receive the final grade that is earned according to the course grading policy.

**Withdrawal**

The deadline for Drop/Refund is **Jan 16th** and for Withdrawal is **Mar 15th**. Per [Valencia policy](http://catalog.valenciacollege.edu/academicpoliciesprocedures/courseattemptscoursewithdrawal/) a student who withdraws from class before the established deadline for a particular term will receive a grade of “W. A student is not permitted to withdraw after the withdrawal deadline.

Since I have an attendance policy, I can withdraw you for violation of that policy, but I strive to work with you so that you can complete the class. If you are withdrawn, you will receive a grade of “W”. This can affect you financially and cause problems with any future financial aid you receive. After the withdrawal deadline, I will not withdraw you and you will receive the grade earned at the end of the course. If you withdraw or is withdrawn from a class during a third or subsequent attempt in the same course, you will automatically be assigned a grade of “F.” If you do not intend to complete the course, you must withdraw yourself prior to the withdrawal date. Prior to withdrawing, please reach out to me to discuss your situation.

**Academic Integrity**

Valencia College is a community of scholars committed to the values of integrity. In this community, all members including faculty, staff, and students alike are responsible for maintaining the highest standards of academic honesty and quality of academic work. As a student and member of the Valencia College community, you are expected to demonstrate integrity in all of your academic endeavors. Unacceptable behavior include cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, using unauthorized study aids, or facilitating academic misconduct. Please review our campus policy on [academic integrity](https://valenciacollege.edu/about/general-counsel/policy/documents/volume8/8-11-academic-dishonesty.pdf).

All work submitted by you is expected to be the result of your individual thoughts, research, and self-expression. Whenever you use ideas, wording, or organization from another source, the source shall be appropriately acknowledged. Copying and pasting from an online source without paraphrasing the information first, even if providing a reference, is still considered plagiarism. Since writing can be difficult, I will provide you resources to assist your efforts. I use a program called Unicheck to check for similiarities with online sources. Any score on Unicheck above 15% is reviewed for plagiarism. You can see your score a few minutes you submit it (under Grades it will have a green, yellow, or red flag that you can click). If too much of your work is similar, I will allow a rewrite for up to 50% of the assignment score for the first offense. A second offense will result in a zero score on the assignment and a third offense will result in a class grade of F. Take advantage of the project check-ins to receive feedback on your writing. As an alternative to the 50% rewrite, you can resubmit your work within the grace period with the partial point deduction.

**College Student Conduct Policy**

Valencia is dedicated not only to the advancement of knowledge and learning but also to the development of responsible personal and social conduct. As a registered student, you assume the responsibility for conducting yourself in a manner that contributes positively to Valencia’s learning community and that does not impair, interfere with, or obstruct the orderly conduct, processes, and functions of the college as described in the [Student Code of Conduct](https://valenciacollege.edu/about/general-counsel/policy/documents/Volume8/8-03-Student-Code-of-Conduct.pdf).

## **Netiquette**

It is important to be aware of your behavior in an online learning environment to ensure positive interactions with your instructor and peers. This requires you to follow some guidelines for behaviors.

All students are expected to:

* Show respect for the instructor and for other students in the course
* Respect the privacy of other students
* Express differences of opinion in a polite and rational way
* Maintain an environment of constructive criticism when commenting on the work of other students
* Remain focused on the learning topics during discussions and activities

## **Third Party Software & FERPA Policy**

Valencia College has a firm commitment to protecting the privacy rights of its students. Under no circumstances will your test scores, total points, or final grades be discussed on the telephone or over e-mail.  FERPA rights to privacy prevent the divulging of scores or related materials by these means. Access your scores through the Canvas gradebook.

# **Student Resources for Support and Learning**

As a Valencia College student, you may experience challenges such as struggles with academics, finances, or your personal well-being. Valencia College has a multitude of resources available to all students. Many of these resources are listed below and we encourage all students to explore them as needed. **If you are experiencing a mental health emergency please contact 9-1-1 or BayCare Behavioral Health at (800) 878-5470.**

* **Student Assistance Program:** Valencia students can get immediate help with issues dealing with stress, anxiety, depression, adjustment difficulties, substance abuse, time management as well as relationship problems dealing with school, home or work. [BayCare Behavioral Health Student Assistance Program](https://baycare.org/services/behavioral-health/assistance-programs/student-assistance-program/valencia-college) services are free to all Valencia students and available 24 hours a day by calling (800) 878-5470. Free face-to-face counseling is also available.
* **Valencia Counselors:** Valencia counselors care about your emotional well-being so they offer both virtual and in-person options to connect with students. Connect to counselors through the [student support form](https://valenciacc.ut1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_40fCWDqhRBjrNrv).
* **Pooky’s Pantry:** It is a free resource that offers non-perishable food items, hygiene items, socks, outside resource information, and local housing information. There are [locations](https://valenciacollege.campuslabs.com/engage/organization/pookyspantry) on each campus.
* **Learning Support:** Learning Support Services provides students with academic support through distance tutoring, face to face tutoring at the campuses, writing consultations, library services, and resources. Tutoring is offered in most academic disciplines including math, science, foreign languages, English for academic purposes (EAP), computer programming and writing assistance for any course. For more information on how to access tutoring and library research assistance, please visit the college-wide [Learning Support Services LibGuide](https://libguides.valenciacollege.edu/distancetutoring).
* **Skillshops:** [Skillshops](https://valenciacollege.edu/students/student-services/skillshops.php) are free workshops, or mini courses that provide real-life solutions to common student issues.
* **Career Center:** Don’t wait until your last year – visit the [career center](https://valenciacollege.edu/students/career-center/) today!
* **Library**: At each campus library, librarians and other qualified staff can assist students with searching and finding items and information, MLA and APA citations, and technologies. The library provides a variety of books, eBooks, online articles, textbooks, DVDs and streaming videos to support course-related research and other learning needs. View the [Library website](http://valenciacollege.edu/library/) for more information.

# **How to Succeed in this Course?**

There are many ways for you to show us what and how you are learning, through your effort, interaction and class participation, application of scientific thinking to solve real world problems, and performance on assignments and quizzes. This class has been structured to help all students get the support and guidance needed to succeed in your learning. The below graphic is how the class is structured to best facilitate learning. If you skip ahead, such as missing an authentic assessment or discussion because it will take too long, this breaks the chain in understanding. The following tips will help you be successful in this class and in other classes throughout your career at Valencia College.

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* “LEARNING” IS AN ACTION VERB!!Most students need to do more than just watch lectures and reread their notes.  **Spend 1-2 hour blocks of time several days a week** actively writing or discussing concepts to make them a part of your memory. Use the words you learn often, they will sink in better.
* **Check Canvas every other day**and **change your settings** so you are getting the notifications for announcements and submission comments in your email. You don’t want to miss an important announcement or extra credit opportunity.
* **Do the extra credit activities!** Although if the video guides take longer to do, you will understand the material more which will make doing the other assignments quicker and easier.
* **Progress through the modules** rather than relying on the to-do list on Canvas.The module is set-up to guide you through material and increase mastery of the information.
* **Make to-do lists and prioritize tasks.**Record all the things you need to accomplish then focus on completing one task at a time. Prioritize your task based on the most critical and time-sensitive ones. You can use paper to-do lists or an app. Don’t forget to reward yourself for a job well done once tasks have been successfully completed.
* **Eliminate distractions**so your attention is on the task-at-hand. You will finish tasks and move on to the next ones more quickly while paying more attention to details. Turn off the TV, put your phone on silent, and keep your study area organized.
* **Take good notes.**Record the key points of the video or lecture without writing down too much extraneous information.
* **Take a break.** Take a 10-15 minute break each hour or a 5-minute break after every 20 minutes of studying. This will prevent you from burning out too soon and you are more likely to retain the material compared to studying 3 hours straight. Good break options include listening and singing to a song, taking a walk, or getting a snack.
* **Ask questions.**Make lists of confusing topics from your studying and ask questions (as many as you can!). Talking to your professor helps you as well your professor to refocus on the topic again.