



## Course Information

**Course Title:** Environmental Biology

**Course Number:** BSCI279E-YS41

**Term:** *Summer II/2024*

**Credits:** 3

**Course Dates:** From July 8, 2024 - July 26, 2024

**Lecture Time:** M-F 9:30 am - 12:00pm

**Lab Time:** TTH 2:00-4:30pm

**Professor:** Virginia Weeks

**Pronouns:** She/her

**Email:** VWeeks1@terpmail.umd.edu

**Office Hours:** By appointment only

**Lecture Classroom:** HJP 2217

**Lab Classroom:** HJP 3237

**Teaching Assistant:** Sam Whitlock

**TA Email:** swhitloc@terpmail.umd.edu

## Course Description

The environment is in the news almost daily- global warming, toxic waste, oil spills, loss of biodiversity. How can you understand these complex topics? What is the basis for your own behaviors and decisions regarding the environment? The science of environmental biology can help you make sense of the natural world around you and the impact you have on it. BSCI279E will explore adaptation and natural selection; organismic, population, community, and ecosystem ecology; and human impact on natural systems. Each week will feature organized learning activities that spotlight ideas and information crucial to course topics.

## Required Resources

- Course Website: [elms.umd.edu](https://elms.umd.edu)

**Book:** The Environment and You, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition by Christensen, Leege, & Juliana (ISBN 9780134818764)

## Course Structure

This course consists of 15 lectures and 6 lab sessions. Attendance requires access to a full-screen computer or tablet with audio and typing capabilities for each session. The learning approach is predominantly paperless, emphasizing active participation. Students will engage in collaborative learning with peers and the instructor through class activities, group work, and discussions.

Expect to dedicate at least 5 hours nightly to readings, quizzes, and written assignments, with additional weekend commitments. This workload aligns with typical college course expectations, requiring roughly 2 hours of independent study for every hour of class time.

In-class time will also be utilized for completing many individual and group assignments; missed classes result in zeros for the assignments, barring serious medical or family emergencies which should be communicated promptly via email.

Please check the ELMS course website regularly as all announcements, discussions, quizzes, readings, rubrics, and assignments will be posted there.

### Tips for Success in this Course

1. **Participate.** Discussions and group work are a critical part of the course. You can learn a great deal from discussing ideas and perspectives with your peers and professor. Participation can also help you articulate your thoughts and develop critical thinking skills.
2. **Manage your time.** Make time for your learning and participate in discussions each day. Give yourself plenty of time to complete assignments including extra time to handle any technology related problems.
3. **Login regularly.** Log in to ELMS-Canvas several times a day to view announcements, modules, discussion posts, readings, lecture notes, and replies to your posts, especially when group submissions are due.
4. **Do not fall behind.** This class moves at a quick pace and each day and week builds on the previous. It will be hard to keep up with the course content if you fall behind in the pre-work or post-work.
5. **Use ELMS-Canvas notification settings.** ELMS-Canvas can ensure you receive timely notifications in your email or via text. Be sure to enable announcements to be sent instantly so you will always know when something is changed or posted.
6. **Ask for help if needed.** If you need help with ELMS-Canvas or other technology, contact [IT Support](#). If you are struggling with a course concept, reach out to me, our TA, and/or your classmates for support. Also, like most things in life, Google is your friend. I encourage you to Google terms, concepts, and techniques with which you are unfamiliar.

### Campus Policies

It is our shared responsibility to know and abide by the University of Maryland's policies that relate to all courses, which include topics like:

- Academic integrity
- Student and instructor conduct
- Accessibility and accommodations
- Attendance and excused absences
- Grades and appeals
- Copyright and intellectual property

Please visit the [Office of Undergraduate Studies](#) webpage for a full list of campus-wide policies and follow up with me if you have questions.

## Course-Specific Policies

### Academic Integrity

For this course, some of your assignments will be collected via Turnitin on our course ELMS page. I have chosen to use this tool because it can help you improve your scholarly writing and help me verify the integrity of your work. For information about Turnitin, how it works, and the feedback reports you may have access, visit [Turnitin Originality Checker for Students](#).

### Names/Pronouns and Self-Identifications

The University of Maryland recognizes the importance of a diverse student body, and we are committed to fostering inclusive and equitable classroom environments. I invite you, if you wish, to tell us how you want to be referred to both in terms of your name and your pronouns (he/him, she/her, they/them, etc.). The pronouns someone indicates are not necessarily indicative of their gender identity. Visit [lgbtq.umd.edu](http://lgbtq.umd.edu) to learn more.

Additionally, how you identify in terms of your gender, race, class, sexuality, religion, and dis/ability, among all aspects of your identity, is your choice whether to disclose and should be self-identified, not presumed or imposed. I will do my best to address and refer to all students accordingly, and I ask you to do the same for all of your fellow Terps.

### Communication with Instructor:

**Email:** If you need to reach out, communicate with me, please email me at [vweeks1@terpmail.umd.edu](mailto:vweeks1@terpmail.umd.edu). Please DO NOT email me with questions that are easily found in the syllabus or on ELMS (i.e. When is this assignment due? How much is it worth? etc.) but please DO reach out about personal, academic, and intellectual concerns/questions. I will do my best to respond to emails within 12 hours of receipt.

**ELMS:** I will send IMPORTANT announcements via ELMS messaging. You must make sure that your email & announcement notifications (including changes in assignments and/or due dates) are enabled in ELMS so you do not miss any messages. You are responsible for checking your email and Canvas/ELMS inbox with regular frequency. All communications must be through the UMD email given to you through the program.

### Communication with Peers:

With a diversity of perspectives and experience, we may find ourselves in disagreement and/or debate with one another. As such, it is important that we agree to conduct ourselves in a professional manner and that we work together to foster and preserve a classroom environment in which we can respectfully discuss and deliberate controversial questions.

I encourage you to confidently exercise your right to free speech—bearing in mind, of course, that you will be expected to craft and defend arguments that support your position. Please remember that free

speech has its limit, and this course is NOT the space for hate speech, harassment, nor derogatory language. I will make every reasonable attempt to create an atmosphere in which each student feels comfortable voicing their argument without fear of being personally attacked, mocked, demeaned, or devalued.

Any behavior (including harassment, sexual harassment, and racially and/or culturally derogatory language) that threatens this atmosphere will not be tolerated. Please alert me immediately if you feel threatened, dismissed, or silenced at any point during our semester together and/or if your engagement in discussion has been in some way hindered by the learning environment.

### **Participation**

- Given the interactive style of this class, attendance will be crucial to note-taking and thus your performance in this class. Attendance is particularly important because class discussion will be a critical component for your learning.
- You are expected to make substantive contributions to the learning experience.
- If you have a legitimate reason to miss a session you should communicate as far in advance as is possible.
- Students who miss a live session are responsible for learning what they miss from that session on their own.

### **Academic Integrity**

The University's [\*\*Code of Academic Integrity\*\*](#) is designed to ensure that the principles of academic honesty and integrity are upheld. In accordance with this code, the Smith School does not tolerate academic dishonesty. Please ensure that you fully understand this code and its implications because all acts of academic dishonesty will be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of this code. All students are expected to adhere to this code. It is your responsibility to read it and know what it says, so you can start your professional life on the right path. **As future professionals, your commitment to high ethical standards and honesty begins with your time at the Smith School.**

It is important to note that course assistance websites, such as CourseHero, are not permitted sources. Material taken or copied from these sites can be deemed unauthorized material and a violation of academic integrity. These sites offer information that might not be accurate and that shortcut the learning process, particularly the critical thinking steps necessary for college-level assignments.

Additionally, it is understandable that students may use a variety of online or virtual forums for course-wide discussion (e.g., GroupME or WeChat). Collaboration in this way regarding concepts discussed in this course is permissible; however, collaboration on graded assignments is strictly prohibited unless otherwise stated. Examples of prohibited collaboration include: asking classmates for answers on quizzes or exams, asking for answers on individual assignments/evaluations, etc.

Finally, on each exam you must write out and sign the following pledge:

***"I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this exam/assignment."***

Please visit the [\*\*Office of Undergraduate Studies' full list of campus-wide policies\*\*](#) and follow up with me if you have questions. If you ever feel pressured to comply with someone else's academic integrity

violation, please reach out to me straight away. Also, *if you are ever unclear* about acceptable levels of collaboration, *please ask!*

## Grades

All assessment scores will be posted on the course ELMS page, you can access them in the Gradebook section. If you would like to review any of your grades, or have questions about how something was graded, please email me to schedule a time for us to meet and discuss.

Students may submit assignments up to 24 hours after the due date and time, after that period no submission will be accepted. The penalty for late assignments will be an automatic 50% point reduction. Due to the fast nature of the course it is imperative that students stay on top of the material and that assignments are graded and returned quickly. Please plan to have assignments submitted well before the scheduled deadline. I am happy to discuss any of your grades with you, and if I have made a mistake, I will immediately correct it. Any formal grade disputes must be submitted in writing and within one week of receiving the grade.

Final letter grades are assigned based on the percentage of total assessment points earned. To be fair to everyone I have to establish clear standards and apply them consistently, so please understand that being close to a cutoff is not the same as making the cut (89.99  $\neq$  90.00). It would be unethical to make exceptions for some and not others.

Final Grade Break-down									
+	96 – 100%	+	86 - 88.9%	+	76 – 78.9%	+	66 – 68.9 %	+	
A	92- 95.9%	B	81 – 85.9%	C	71 – 75.9%	D	61 – 65.9 %	F	<60.0%
-	89 - 91.9%	-	79 – 80.9%	-	69 – 70.9	-	60.0 – 60.9	-	

## Resources & Accommodations

### Accessibility and Disability Services

The University of Maryland is committed to creating and maintaining a welcoming and inclusive educational, working, and living environment for people of all abilities. The University of Maryland is also committed to the principle that no qualified individual with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of the University, or be subjected to discrimination. The [Accessibility & Disability Service \(ADS\)](#) provides reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals to provide equal access to services, programs and activities. ADS cannot assist retroactively, so it is generally best to request accommodations several weeks before the semester begins or as soon as a disability becomes known.

Any student who needs accommodations should contact me as soon as possible so that I have sufficient time to make arrangements.

For assistance in obtaining an accommodation, contact Accessibility and Disability Service at 301-314-7682, or email them at [adsfrontdesk@umd.edu](mailto:adsfrontdesk@umd.edu). Information about [sharing your accommodations with instructors, note taking assistance](#) and more is available from the Accessibility and Disability Service website.

## **Student Resources and Services**

Taking personal responsibility for your own learning means acknowledging when your performance does not match your goals and doing something about it. I hope you will come talk to me so that I can help you find the right approach to success in this course, and I encourage you to visit [UMD's Student Academic Support Services website](#) to learn more about the wide range of campus resources available to you.

In particular, everyone could benefit from some help to sharpen their communication skills (and improving their grade) by visiting [UMD's Writing Center](#).

You should also know there are a wide range of resources to support you with whatever you might need ([UMD's Student Resources and Services website](#) may help). If you feel it would be helpful to talk with someone, visit [UMD's Counseling Center](#) or [one of the many other mental health resources on campus](#).

## **Basic Needs Security**

If you have difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or lack a safe and stable place to live, please visit [UMD's Division of Student Affairs website](#) for information about resources the campus offers and let me know if I can help in any way.

## **Course Evaluation**

Please submit a course evaluation through CourseEvalUM in order to help faculty and administrators improve teaching and learning at University of Maryland. All information submitted to CourseEvalUM is confidential. The University will notify you when CourseEvalUM is open for you to complete your evaluations for courses. Please go directly to the [Course Eval UM website](#) to complete your evaluations.

## **Copyright Notice**

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