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Course Description:

AP Environmental Science (A.P.E.S.) is interdisciplinary; it embraces a wide variety of topics from different areas of study. The goal of the course is to provide students with the scientific principles, concepts, and methodologies required to understand the interrelationships of the natural world, to identify and analyze environmental problems both natural and human-made, to evaluate the relative risks associated with these problems, and to examine alternative solutions for resolving and/or preventing them.

Because it is designed to be a course in environmental *science* rather than environmental studies, the A.P.E.S. course includes a laboratory and field investigation component. The goal of this component is to compliment the classroom portion of the course by allowing students to learn about the environment through firsthand observation.

General Course Objectives:

(For a detailed syllabus, go to www.mrthaler.net.)

The content of this course has been established by the College Board, and the major topics covered in AP Environmental Science include:

- 1. Science is a process.**
 - a. Science is a method of learning about the world.
 - b. Science constantly changes the way we understand the world.
- 2. Energy conversions underlie all ecological processes.**
 - a. Energy cannot be created; it must come from somewhere.
 - b. As energy flows through systems, at each step more of it becomes unusable.
- 3. The Earth itself is one interconnected system.**
 - a. Natural systems change over time and space.
 - b. Biogeochemical systems vary in ability to recover from disturbances.
- 4. Humans alter natural systems.**
 - a. Humans have had an impact on the environment for millions of years.
 - b. Technology and population growth have enabled humans to increase both the rate and scale of their impact on the environment.
- 5. Environmental problems have a cultural and social context.**
 - a. Understanding the role of cultural, social, and economic factors is vital to the development of solutions.
 - b. As environmental issues become politicized, it is important to verify the science and source of information.
- 6. Human survival depends on developing practices that will achieve sustainable systems.**
 - a. A suitable combination of conservation and development is required.
 - b. Management of common resources is essential.

Grading Policy:

I *estimate* 1000 points available per semester. Cumulative available points equal 100 percent. A test point is weighted no more nor less than any other point. The following scale will be used for assigning letter grades:

A = 100 - 90% B = 89 - 80% C = 79 - 70% D = 69 - 60% F = 59% or less.

A *C minus* (70-73%) is considered in danger of failing, as is anything in the *D* range. An *F* is, of course, failing.

Bonus points may be available on rare occasion at teacher's discretion.

Methods of Evaluation:

Students will be evaluated by using, but not limited to, the following:

- Teacher-constructed examinations and quizzes
- Homework and class work
- Independent projects
- Laboratory and field exercises and reports
- AP exam in May

Classroom Rules:

I expect students to be studious and courteous at all times in my class:

1. OUR PRIMARY GOAL IN THIS CLASS IS TO LEARN ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE. Students will respect the rights of others to learn in a safe, enlightening, and productive environment.
2. BE ON TIME! Otherwise, consequences will not be pleasant. For example, I may hold your work for the days you are tardy in the make-up folder until such time as I see fit to grade it.

Classroom Rules continued:

3. COME TO CLASS WITH YOUR TEXTBOOK, A PEN AND/OR A PENCIL, A NOTEBOOK—standard equipment—plus any necessary supplementary materials, and be prepared to work.
4. BE PREPARED TO PARTICIPATE in class discussions, which will be based on the reading and/or homework.
5. RAISE YOUR HAND if you wish to add something to lectures or discussions. Otherwise, when I am addressing the class—for example, lecturing—DON'T TALK.
6. NO LATE WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED, other than makeup work for a justified absence on the day it was due. You will have one day for every day an assignment or due date was missed, beginning with the day you return to school from an excused absence, to hand in homework or make up quizzes and tests for credit. So, if you are absent the day that something is due, you hand it in the day you return. **LAB EXERCISES MAY NOT BE MADE UP.** I have measures in place for genuinely unavoidable absences, however.
7. **NO CELL PHONES, HEADPHONES, ELECTRONIC DEVICES OF ANY SORT, BOOKS OTHER THAN CHEMISTRY, ETC. ARE ALLOWED**—If I see one of these items out in class, I will take it away. This goes for using a phone's calculator, too. Use a calculator.
8. **IT IS STRONGLY RECOMMENDED THAT YOU GET A SCIENTIFIC CALCULATOR.** You'll need one. (They typically range from \$10 to \$15.) Graphing calculators are fine, too.
9. **PLAGIARISM** is defined as the practice of taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as your own. There will be zero tolerance for plagiarism or cheating in this class, in accordance with SVUSD policy. Lab reports are to be written independently, unless otherwise directed.

Laboratory Rules:

Same as classroom rules, plus:

IMPORTANT: There will be zero tolerance for behavior by any student that infringes upon the right of other students to learn and experience science. This especially applies to the laboratory, where bad behavior can endanger other students. I will take any measures necessary to eliminate disruptive elements from my classroom or laboratory.

Students and their parents will be required to sign a laboratory safety contract before students will be allowed to do lab work.

Assignments and Points:

All assignments will be announced in class as they come up, and they will be posted on mrthaler.net and/or Aeries. If you do not have internet access, then you had better pay close attention when I am giving out homework. (By the way, everyone on the SSSH campus should have internet access, for example, the library.)

Homework assignments and essays will typically be worth 10 points each. Lab reports will be worth 10-20 points each. Points available for extended assignments TBA.

There will be frequent quizzes on most topics (20-30 points, each), exams on every unit (50-100 points each), and a semester-cumulative final exam at the end of each semester (100-150 points).

IT IS UNLIKELY THAT YOU WILL PASS THE CLASS IF YOU FAIL TO CONSISTANTLY DO THE HOMEWORK AND LAB REPORTS. (However, you might still pass the AP exam.)

TEXTBOOK:

Miller, G.T. and Spoolman, S. (2012). *Living in the Environment: Principles, Connections, and Solutions*, 17th ed. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.

LAB MANUAL:

Molnar, W. (2005). *Laboratory Investigations for Environmental Science*. Saddle Brook, NJ: People's Publishing Group.

I have read, understand, and agree to abide by the rules and regulations detailed above.

Student _____ Date _____
 Sign and print.

Parent/Guardian _____ Date _____
 Sign and print.

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