

WELCOME TO ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES 101 (ENSC101-L721) Summer 2025

Hello Students!

I am looking forward to our on-line class, Introduction to Environmental Issues. I appreciate your decision to keep learning and I'm honored you chose this class. If you have any challenges to learning online, including internet access and family issues, please reach out to me individually to discuss your situation.

The course will open and officially start on Monday, June 2 and run for eight weeks through Friday July 25. After our first week, I'll post new weekly material on Tuesdays, so there will be enough time for me to look things over after each weekend. Our first week is meant to take it slow and get everyone used to several Brightspace tools as well as a course introduction. Although I've run this course on several different online platforms in the past, including Brightspace, so we will all be learning together!

This course will incorporate many other documents and your own research. We'll be delving onto a wide array of topics, including population dynamics, renewable energies, and climate change. We'll rely heavily on the Brightspace platform to communicate, so please familiarize yourself with logging on to Brightspace if you haven't already. Marist's Help Desk can be a great asset if this is your first online course.

If you live in the tri-state area, OR if you are attending class on campus at Marist during the regular semester, I would like you to purchase "The Hudson, An Illustrated History of the Living River" by Stanne, Panetta and Forist (Rutgers Press). I like this book because it's relatively inexpensive, and covers many environmental concepts clearly and concisely. Only buy this book if you live in the general Hudson area, including New York, New Jersey, or Connecticut, or if you will be attending on-campus classes at Marist in Poughkeepsie. The course itself is NOT a "Hudson River" course, and I use any local materials to illustrate larger concepts of changes in ecology and management. Many people in the class live nowhere near the Hudson. If that's you, do not bother buying the Hudson textbook. I'd like to talk with you via email about other texts that will be appropriate to your region, rather than try to shoe-horn you into a book that isn't appropriate. I do not rely heavily on textbooks, and if you are mail-ordering books, that's no worry for our first week since I'll provide a scanned copy of our first readings.

If you would like to have an optional supplemental text, I recommend *Environmental Science for a Changing World* by Houtman, Karr, and Interlandi. You do not need the most recent edition. In fact, any of the past few editions are fine, even a digital version. Again, this is not a required text.

Most weeks will include several powerpoint presentations with recorded lecture clips and occasional "video field trips". Weekly assignments will include individual assignments, class-wide Forum groups, and short multiple choice quizzes. There will also be a longer project on a topic of your choice at the end of the course.

In the meantime, if you have the time I would like to know a few things about you. Where are you living now (Poughkeepsie, Nebraska, Beijing, etc.)? What science courses have you had in the past (none, biology in high school, undergraduate organic chemistry, etc.)? This information will help me fine tune the course.

The best way to reach me is via email at chbrowser@gmail.com, or through this course's Brightspace page after June 2.

A little about myself:

I am the Science Education Specialist for the NYSDEC Hudson River Estuary Program and Hudson River Research Reserve, in partnership with the Water Resource Institute of Cornell University. My professional experience includes working as a Peace Corps forestry volunteer in Mauritania, serving as Education Director for the Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, mapping river shorelines for the Research Reserve, and teaching at Marist University in the Environmental Science department. I am a founding board member of the Bronx-based Rocking the Boat, where teenagers build traditional boats by hand and use them to study the Bronx River. I earned a Masters degree in Environmental Science and Policy from Clark University, and a Bachelors degree in Biology from Rutgers University.

My current work with the NYSDEC focuses on environmental education and community science in the Hudson River Valley. I coordinate an annual estuary-wide monitoring day involving 5000 students at over 90 shoreline sites, and lead teacher training workshops on incorporating Hudson River topics into existing curriculum. I also implement education programs for the Norrie Point Environmental Center, including a community-science project where high school students and teachers, and Marist interns study migrating juvenile American eels in several Hudson River tributaries:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZlvMaQemKwU>

More to follow in the upcoming weeks.

Chris Bowser

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