

NFA 117 -- Issues and Opportunities
Fall 2006

Time: Tuesday, 2:00 – 2:50 p.m.

Location: 301 Winslow Hall

Instructor: Mark W. Anderson, Coordinator, Ecology & Environmental Sciences Program. Senior Instructor, Department of Resource Economics and Policy

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Office Hours: Tuesday, 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Wednesday 8:00 a.m. to noon.
Other times by chance or by appointment.

Course Purposes:

1. To introduce first year students to college life and help you develop your skills as a learner
2. To develop an understanding of processes, policies, and resources for students at the University of Maine
3. To develop a fuller understanding of Ecology and Environmental Sciences as a major.

Grading: The course is pass/fail. A passing grade will be awarded on the basis of consistent attendance, participation in discussions, and completion of all the journal writing assignments.

Writing: Due each week during the semester is a short writing assignment three to five pages. The weekly writing assignments are shown below. For one of these assignments (the one due November 7) you need to attend an event of your own choosing for which you are eligible for free tickets at the Maine Center for the Arts and write a review of the performance you see. All writing will be evaluated on its thoughtfulness and quality of expression. Writing assignments are due each week at class time. For your writing assignments, I wish you to purchase a “chemistry notebook” in the bookstore. To get your assignments back each week (you need the notebook to write the next week’s assignment) please pick the notebooks up in my office the morning after class.

Writing Assignments (due on the date listed):

September 12 --Tell me some things about your self that you are comfortable talking about. Do you have a nick name you like to be called? What are your hobbies? Describe the best class you ever took and what made it better than all the others. Do you know what your learning style is? In other words, have you ever thought about how you learn new things? How does that happen best? What makes you upset? Inspired? What else would you like people to know about you?

September 19 --Tell me about your expectations for the coming year. What do you expect from the University of Maine? From your instructors? From you peers? From yourself? What other expectations do you have?

September 26-- Describe the “space” where you typically do class work. What are its physical characteristics? What are its sights, sounds, smells, and touches? What about this place contributes to effective learning? What about gets in the way of effective learning? Are there any changes you should make to your study space?

October 3--How do you visualize yourself in five years time? What will you be doing? How will you have changed? Where will you be? What else?

Fall Break

October 17--Now that you have taken preliminary exams in many classes, what have you learned about yourself as a learner? How are you different from other students? How are you the same? Is the way you learn best different depending on the class you are in? What do you need to change about your approach to learning in different classes?

October 24--Look at the list of jobs that EES and similar majors have gone on to after graduation. <http://www.umaine.edu/nrc/career.htm> For today’s writing, describe the various skills and personal attributes that you think employers in these various areas expect their employees to demonstrate when they start work.

October 31-- Two kinds of students come to the university. Some students come to get an education, while others come to get a degree. What is the difference? Which one are you?

November 7-- By this time in the semester you should have attended one of the **free events at the Maine Center for the Arts**. Tell me all about the event and your reactions to it.

November 14--What activities, materials, or other factors help you to learn well. In other words, what are your strengths and weaknesses as a learner? What have you learned about yourself as a learner since September that you will be able to take into the next semester?

November 21--no class

November 28--Excluding books assigned by instructors for classes, write about the five books you think you should read during the next year for your development and discuss why each one is on the list.

December 5--Final exams are approaching. What do you need to do to be fully prepared for final exams? Does this vary by classes? As you think about getting ready for final exams this semester, are there any lessons from this semester that you can take into next semester? Are there things you need to do to change your approach to classes from the beginning? Are there things that you will keep the same in your approach?

December 12-- Now that we are close to the end of the semester, write about your experiences in this first semester. What was as you expected? What was different from what you had expected? What have you learned about yourself? Other thoughts?

Weekly Class Topics:

September 5 Topic: Introduction to the University of Maine and to the EES Program. The importance of the syllabus in classes.

September 12 Topic: Scavenger hunt results I; Study Skills — class notes and reading assignments; FirstClass and UMaine web sites.

September 19 Topic: Study Skills -- time management; more scavenger hunt results; wise choices for college success.

September 26	Topic: University of Maine library resources. Class will meet at the first-floor library classroom.
October 3	Topic: Learning Styles; Study Skills — Test Taking; advice from graduates.
Fall Break	
October 17	Topic: Study Skills — College Writing and Academic Honesty.
October 24	Topic: EES concentrations and EES careers.
October 31	Topic: Study Skills — Disaster Recovery.
November 7	Topic: Registration for spring classes.
November 14	Topic: Final Exam Preparation.
November 21	No class.
November 28	Topic: Books.
December 5	Topic: Grade Reports/GPA calculation.
December 12	Topic: Semester Review.