

**Eastern Illinois University  
New Course Proposal  
University Senior Seminar  
EIU 4190G: Spaceship Earth: The Present State, Honors**

**1. Catalog description**

- a) EIU 4190G
- b) Spaceship Earth: The Present State, Honors
- c) (4-0-4)
- d) F, S, Su
- e) Spaceship Earth
- f) The course will be a science-based, holistic discussion of the Earth's problems, potentials, and limitations. Topics will include population and its control, resource management, pollution, the relationship of religions and rights on a multinational to individual scale, and other appropriate current global topics. Biological Sciences and Geology majors are excluded.
- g) 75 semester hours completed and admission to University Honors College.
- h) Spring 2005

**2. Student Learning Objectives and Evaluation**

- a) The philosophy behind the course is that as R. Buckminster Fuller wrote - "We are all astronauts on board a little spaceship called Earth" and even though we might only be one out of over 6.5 billion inhabitants, we can each make a difference and become, as his epitaph states, a "trim tab" for this spaceship. As such, students are required to have discussions and paper submissions each class period. In order to meet the general education goals of Eastern Illinois University:
  - EIU graduates will demonstrate the ability to write and speak effectively – students will be required to write position papers each week of between 2 and 3 pages in length. The nature of the papers will be library research and personal opinions, to be noted as such, in response to specific questions;
  - EIU graduates will demonstrate the ability to think critically – students will be required to defend their positions and to critically assess other proposals put forth during discussion; they will also take the Watson-Glazer Critical Thinking Test (a standardized test issued by the University);
  - EIU graduates will function as responsible citizens – students will be able to understand the United States' role in world affairs and will be able to understand other regions of the world and their perspectives. In some cases they will be asked to defend other countries' and groups' actions and policies; and
  - EIU graduates will demonstrate the ability to function as responsible global citizens – students will be required to take the on-line Global Citizenship Survey.

The course learning objectives for the students are to:

- 1) Gain an understanding of:
  - a) population issues (J-curve, S-curve, geometric growth, R-strategists; K-strategists),
  - b) pollution issues (air, water, land, noise, light),
  - c) climate change issues (paleoclimatology, climate influences, anthropogenic influences, natural change),
  - d) resource management issues (distribution, use, need),
  - e) religion (nature of religion, major religions, religious differences),
  - f) genetic modification (plant, animal, cloning),
  - g) rights (basic human rights, individual, women vs. men, animal, special group rights),
  - h) education (primary, secondary, vocational, regional, national),
- 2) understand the interrelationships between each of the primary objectives above taking into account local, regional, national, and multinational interests as well as economic influences,
- 3) understand our place/role in each of the previous objectives above.
- b) Grades will be based on writing (40%), discussion/debate (30%), two in-class essay examinations (20%), and a speech (10%). Writing will be critiqued each week and returned as feedback for subsequent assignments. One assignment, at the student's discretion, will be expanded into an 8 – 10 page paper for submission in partial fulfillment of the Electronic Writing Portfolio (EWP) requirements. In class discussions will be based on the written assignments that week. The last two weeks of the course will include a 10-minute speech on a topic to be chosen in consultation with the instructor.

Student assessment of the stated objectives and grades earned will be based on the following criteria:

	Weekly writing assignments (13 papers – 40%)	Weekly discussion/debate (12 discussions – 30%)	In-class essay examination (2 exams – 20%)	Speech (1 speech - 10%)
Ability to write effectively	✓		✓	
Ability to speak effectively		✓		✓
Exhibit critical thinking skills	✓	✓	✓	
Apply listening and structured feedback	✓	✓	✓	✓
Understand and apply U.S. citizenship skills	✓	✓	✓	✓
Understand and apply global citizenship skills	✓	✓	✓	✓
Objective 1, a-h	✓	✓	✓	
Objective 2	✓	✓	✓	✓
Objective 3	✓	✓	✓	✓

- c) This will be a Technology Enhanced (TE), Writing Intensive (WI) course. A multimedia computer system with projector is required in the classroom. Students will gather most of their current information from the Internet and are required to have a presentation in PowerPoint at the end of the course.
- d) Not applicable
- e) This will be a Writing Intensive (WI) course in that there will be thirteen (13) writing assignments (one each topic). Comments will be made on each assignment and returned to the student. One assignment, at the student's discretion, will be expanded into an 8 – 10 page paper for submission in partial fulfillment of the Electronic Writing Portfolio (EWP) requirements.

### 3. Outline of the Course

- a) Class will meet 4 hours each week for 15 weeks. Each class will end with a brief (15 – 20 minute) introduction to the following week's topic.
  - Topic 1: Introduction and overview of course; “*Earth: And the American Dream*” or “*Koyaanisqatsi*” movie used as motivation for subsequent topics.
  - Topic 2/3: Global population issues – growth curves; population pyramids and dynamics; global, regional, and local populations; population control; limits to population growth.
  - Topic 4: Pollution - do individuals, state, or nations have a right to pollute regardless of its impact on others; what constitutes pollution and what is too much; what are the costs associated with current trends in pollution and what are the remediation costs?
  - Topic 5: Global climate change - at issue will be the question of not whether or not the climate is changing, but in what direction it is changing, why it is changing, and what, if anything we can, or should, do about it; who, if anybody, is responsible for the change?
  - Topic 6: Resource management issues - a look at the requirements for current sustainable productions in natural resources, as well as agriculture, with a look towards trends in production and impacts from a changing environment and increasing population.
  - Topic 7: Religion - how various religions influenced individual, regional, and national cultural and governmental policies that may effect the rest of the world.
  - Topic 8: Genetic modification of foods and people - the implications of genetic modification and potential widespread cloning in animals.
  - Topic 9: Rights - a comparison of basic human rights to an individual's rights in various parts of the world; impacts of societal perspectives on global issues.
  - Topic 10: Animal rights - do animals have basic rights? Should their welfare be jeopardized for man's welfare or needs?
  - Topic 11: Education - is education a right or a privilege; to what extent should education be subsidized by local, state, and national governments?

Topic 12/13: Future perspectives - where do we want to go, how do we get there, and are we headed to a world in which economic and human progress is driven by the power of free markets and human initiative; a world in which unattended social and environmental problems diminish progress, dooming hundreds of millions to lives of rising conflict and violence; or a world in which human ingenuity and compassion succeed in offering a better life, not just a wealthier one, and in seeking to extend those benefits to all humanity? Assessment period using Watson-Glazer Critical Thinking Test (30 minutes) and completion of Global Citizenship Survey if not already completed.

Topic 14: first half of class gives 10-minute talks.

Topic 15: remainder of class gives 10-minute talks and final class summary.

- b) For technology-delivered or other nontraditional-delivered courses/sections, explain how the course content “units” are sufficiently equivalent to the traditional on-campus semester hour units of time described above. Not applicable.

#### **4. Rationale**

- a) This course offers a science-based senior seminar to Honors College students.
- b) Prerequisites: admission to the University Honors College and completion of at least 75 semester hours.
- c) This course is similar to EU4101G, yet does not duplicate it since Honors College students may not take that course. Non-Honors College students may not take this course, resulting in no course competition.
- d) This course will not be required by any major or program, but will satisfy the general education senior seminar requirement.

#### **5. Implementation**

- a) Initial instructor: John Stimac
- b) There is no course fee currently charged for this course.
- c) Text and supplementary materials to be used, including publication dates.

Required texts:

Critical Path, 1982, Fuller, R.B., St. Martin's Press, ISBN: 0312174918.

The Future of Life, 2003, Wilson, E.O., Vintage Press, ISBN: 0679768114.

Great Transition: The Promise and Lure of the Times Ahead, 2003, Global Scenario Group (free PDF download)

Class will make use of various web sites for additional information.

#### **6. Community College Transfer**

A community college course will not be judged equivalent to this course.

**7. Date approved by the Geology/Geography Department** 25 February 2004

**8. Date approved by the College of Sciences Curriculum Committee** 9 April 2004

**9. Date approved by the Honors Council** 6 May 2004

**10. Date approved by CAA** 2 September 2004