

Nebraska

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-LINCOLN

General

Instructor Note: *The following are the actual, unedited evaluations of AECN/NRES 883 Ecological Economics (it was numbered as 896 at that time) provided by the Spring, 2006, class which involved 14-students... with about one-half of these students in each group (on-campus and off-campus/distance ed). We have added a "Comment" at the end of each section to help in understanding the Evaluations. We will do our best to address the concerns expressed herein, as well as offered by you during the time you take the class. As you will learn when you see our "metaeconomics," the notion of empathy... walking-in-your-shoes and modifying instructor behavior accordingly... is prominent in the economics and the approach in this class. If you have specific questions/concerns after reading these materials, please feel free to contact me directly (Gary Lynne, glynne1@unl.edu; the approach of the course is described at <http://agecon.unl.edu/lynne/ecolecon/ecoleconsyllabus.htm>)*

GENERAL

What improvements would you suggest for this course?

I think the course needs to be thinned out more. I felt like I was learning too many concepts at once and often felt overwhelmed. I think that was detrimental to my comprehension of the materials. I feel that the inclass students and off-campus students were at a disadvantage to one another. The inclass students can better follow the curriculum since they have a more scheduled/disciplined routine than off-campus students who due to their lifestyle (often working fulltime, having families, etc) may have a less stringent schedule. So, maybe there should be a separate course for both inclass and off-campus, so that both groups are getting the most out of the course that they can.

Expectations should be adjusted for an online course.

A more practical experience

Clarity of the discussion board.

Probably a couple more short essays. They challenge you to know.

I would suggest that the course be either fully on-line formatted or fully class-time oriented. As an on campus student I was under the impression that when signing up for the course it would be an online format. However the course was made to be both online and met on Mondays. This is unfair to the students on campus who are required to meet. While the professor seemed to have sympathy for those off-campus students, most of whom worked full-time, he neglected to recognize the possibility that on-campus students also work. Further, on-campus students are more likely to have other classes which also require time

commitments. The overall work load for this course was too high. Overloading students with work, class, and assignments ultimately produces lower quality work.

Comment by Instructor(s):

First, we will have to say that the broad base of material chosen to be covered in the course was intentional: The course is not designed to transform a student into an ecological economist, but rather to give a good sense for the field, and position a student to continue studies and conversations over the issues and approaches we introduce. Second, we currently see the benefits of off-campus and on-campus students interacting during the course as exceeding the costs of doing so: off-campus students generally bring a depth of experience about what is actually on-going in this very complex world; on-campus students generally bring a depth of understanding coming out of formal course training, and their contemporary, more full-time attention to it. The two complement each other. We have also clarified in the On-Line syllabus describing the Fall, 2006 offering that on-campus students need to attend class, unless they register as distance ed students. Finally, we will work at thinning out the course a bit while keeping the standard high for both on-campus and off-campus students, commensurate with this being a course given for graduate credit.