

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/ecocon/ecoconsyllabus.htm>)*

PAPERS AND HOMEWORK: Comment on the value of books, homework, and papers (if any) in this course.

We didn't use the workbook at all, which was disappointing. At least not that I'm aware of. Book was good. I had a hard time with the discussion board, in fact I did quite poorly in that area. I just never got the understanding of what he wanted. Participation wasn't enough.

The D&F book was a great book, especially for those who don't have a strong economics background. Some of the other materials, journal articles and studies were difficult to understand. The two things I enjoyed most about the class was the powerpoint presentation and the essay portion of exam #1. Both gave the student a chance to use knowledge gained of concepts from the course work and apply that in a unique/personalized way. I felt both exercises were extremely beneficial to my understanding the subject.

not very difficult, but require creativeness and original opinion.

Excellent book and other materials. Felt like it was top notch. Overbearing at times. Information overload.

Some notes and papers get tossed after the class is done. This is one of the classes that the papers will stick around in a bookshelf as a 'reference' once in a while. The book is a beginning. As an introduction, it was very good, but maybe not as deep as it might have been. On the other hand, had it covered more depth, we'd never be done. The additional readings were priceless... they're sitting in a very thick report binder to be kept on that bookshelf with the other notes and homework!

A lot!!!

The textbook was confusing, and a little boring. The homework didn't seem to relate at times to what was being discussed in class. Papers

were fine. I do not know, however, how the people taking this course from a distance could have managed. This class should not be offered in distance ed., given the difficulty of the material and requirements of the course.

Some were a bit difficult reading, and an extreme amount.

Sometimes more than I was able to handle but very useful. I am reading again some documents because are related to my work.

The textbook for this course was good but very broad and philosophical. The overall content for this course was too philosophical. As applied to real world situations, Ecological Economics may have more value than as a philosophy. As a graduate level course this should be more involved with real world applications and less involved with philosophical underpinnings. The philosophy is good for building an initial understanding and base but it kept coming up and became the focus for most of the course which eventually determined to be the outline for the semester. This is not a philosophy course but rather and ecological economics course. Some students may have enjoyed this aspect, as they seemed to, but I was more interested in the applications.

Comment by Instructor(s):

Consistent with our recommendations regarding the backgrounding in economics, we chose the Daly and Farley book exactly for this reason: Most of it requires only a rudimentary understanding of basic economic ideas, albeit there are parts of it that are not easily understandable to most PhD trained economists (those trained in the traditional ways): It is in the latter domain that we spend the most time interpreting, explaining, which perhaps also explains the concern over the course being too advanced. Regarding information overload: The eco-eco approach is inherently a large topic, due to its transdisciplinary nature. Perhaps most importantly, students can take or leave what they want out of the course. It is our general sense it is easier to delete what one does not consider important rather than to not have enough material to facilitate the choice process. Also, yes, the course (and the book on which we draw) is a bit philosophical: This is where we must start, if the world's economies, businesses, industries and communities (and governments) are going to manage real change through the eco-eco approach. Applications always have implicit in them an underlying economic philosophy: We must understand it, lest we choose the inappropriate application. Yet, at the same time, we will work at bringing more applications into the class as it evolves over time, which is becoming easier due to real world cases of the eco-eco approach being ever more prevalent. In fact, we encourage students to help in this endeavor, especially in the last assignment for the Semester, in which students are asked to bring in exactly this kind of material for joint consideration. We also hope to draw more out of the workbook in subsequent offerings in the class (we only managed one part, that pertaining to the Genuine Progress Indicator, due in the main to the Instructors never having used the D&F textbook before: We now have experience with it, so workbook type applications can be more readily incorporated into the course).