



AP Environmental Science

Army Leslie, Nikola Tesla STEM High School



Course Overview

In a word, AP Environmental Science (APES) is interdisciplinary, involving the fields of ecology, biology, ocean and atmospheric sciences, climatology, chemistry, geology, physics, toxicology, geography, economics, politics, and ethics, to name a few. Because of this interplay of disciplines, you will notice right from the start that APES is different than any other course you have ever taken. APES is designed to be the equivalent of a college introductory environmental science course, both in the range of topics studied, and in the depth, specificity and detail of course material. The goals of this course are 1.) to provide students with the scientific principles, concepts, and methodologies required to understand complex interrelationships in the natural world, 2.) to identify and analyze environmental problems or challenges, both natural and human-made, 3.) to evaluate the relative risks associated with these problems, and 4.) to examine alternative solutions for resolving or preventing them.

While this course explores many different topic areas, the following themes serve as a foundation for the course:

1. **Interconnectedness:** The Earth itself is one very large interconnected system.
2. **Sustainability:** The notion that the Earth's natural systems should function indefinitely over time without decline due to human impacts.
3. **Energy Conversions:** These underlie all ecological processes.
4. **Social and Cultural Context:** Environmental problems or challenges always have one.
5. **Human Impacts:** We are the primary organisms that alter or affect the Earth's natural systems.
6. **Environmental Science as a Process:** The scientific method and experimental design are at the heart of environmental science.

Expectations for Learning

Grading Scale

The grading scale at STEM is different from the traditional high school model in two of key ways. First of all, there is no rounding of grades. This keeps things clean and simple and helps prevent the kind of "grade-grubbing" behavior on the part of students that drives us teachers crazy. Second is the use of the "NC" grade. This grade allows students who are not at standard to relearn essential skills and content and to move forward with confidence, rather than earning sub-C grades and having gaps in their understanding. An NC does not impact your GPA in either a positive or negative way; think of it as a gift of time to improve learning.

A	100.0–90.0%	B+	89.9–87.0%	C+	79.9–77.0%	NC (No Credit)	≥69.9%
		B	86.9–83.0%	C	76.9–73.0%		
		B-	82.9–80.0%	C-	72.9–70.0%		

What Your Grade is Based On

<i>Class Notes</i>	Given the amount of material we have to cover in this demanding course, lectures and discussions comprise most of our time together. You will turn in your class notes along with your assignment sheet at the end of each unit and they will count as part of your homework grade.
<i>Homework</i>	This includes reading your Friedland text, watching Habitable Planet videos, and a variety of other assignments.
<i>Labs</i>	Lab write-ups, some formal and some informal, will be turned in for points. Points will be assigned based on the difficulty of the lab and the formality of the write-up
<i>Tests</i>	Tests are 100 points each, 35 points multiple choice and 65 points short answer and essay.
<i>Semester Finals</i>	Count for 200 points or about 10% of your semester grade.

The Limitations of Skyward

Since I only grade your homework once during each unit, you will not be able to use Skyward to check up on daily homework completion. On the other hand, you can always check your assignment sheet to make sure you are keeping up. You can also check all our APES assignments on my Haiku site.

Helping vs. Copying

During this school year, some of the best help you will get in APES will come from your classmates. I applaud the cooperative spirit in which you help each other be successful in my class. You provide an invaluable service to each other! But you must never copy a classmate's work. When I give you an individual assignment (i.e. anytime you write an original answer or summary for homework or hand in a paper with just your name on it) then it must be your own original work. If a classmate does provide you with insights and explanations on homework and projects, you must still write all your own responses.

If you ever turn in a paper that is identical or nearly identical to a classmate's on open-ended assignments, you and the person with the identical work will both get zeros on the assignment. If someone ever copies your work without your permission, let me know immediately so the appropriate discipline can take place.

Late Work

You can check Haiku at any time to see if you are missing work in my class. You are responsible for scheduling make-up labs, quizzes, or tests that you miss. **Do not be absent on test days! If you are absent for more than one unit test, you must bring a doctor's note before you are allowed to make up the test.** You have the same number of days to make work up as the number of days you were absent. With the exception of excused absences, the deadline for other late assignments is the end of each unit. Late work without an excused absence can receive a maximum grade of "B".

Office Hours

Before and after school are great times to get individual help with something you do not understand in my class or to do make-up work! I am available every day from 7:00-7:30 AM and 2:30-3:45 PM on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Let me know ahead of time and I will be sure to be in my room.

Keeping Lines of Communication Open

Communication between parents and teachers can be instrumental in helping students be successful in all facets of school life. Please contact me anytime at aleslie@lwsd.org with questions or to schedule an appointment. I *do not* use our building voicemail system.