

Un-Common Read: Health, Chemicals & Environment  
Reading Book: **ContamiNation** by McKay Jenkins  
IDH 2930 (1 Credit; Section 0176; Course No. 26246) – Fall 2020

**Syllabus Version 2**

**Instructor:** Joseph J. Delfino, PhD, BCES  
Professor Emeritus, Environmental Engineering Sciences  
Adjunct Lecturer, Honors Program

**Contact Information:**

- Contact the Instructor via E-mail to [delfino@ufl.edu](mailto:delfino@ufl.edu)
- Can arrange telephone call or one-on-one Zoom meeting

**Class Time and Location:**

- Wednesday, 11:45 AM – 12:35 PM (5<sup>th</sup> Period) by **Zoom: on-line only**
- Can join Zoom meeting 5 minutes before start time with video and mic **on**;  
Please do not use Gator ID or other such static photos in place of video.

**Course Narrative:**

Ever since Rachel Carson published ***Silent Spring*** in 1962, there has been a heightened awareness of the presence of toxic chemicals in the environment. While Carson emphasized the excessive use of pesticides in her book, advances in environmental analytical chemistry led to the discovery of a diverse mix of chemicals in air, water and soil, many of which are toxic to humans and other living organisms. This class, in seminar and discussion format, will cover topics from the reading book **ContamiNation** which presents material in a highly readable fashion. One does not need to be a chemist to understand the problems that these chemicals create for life on earth.

**Course Details:**

- This is a one credit seminar discussion course and will formally meet for one class period on Wednesday each week from 11:45 AM to 12:35 PM [5th Period] by Zoom.
- Each student will be responsible for completing **reading assignments** prior to class meetings and participating in discussions covering the readings from the book, **ContamiNation**. During each Zoom meeting, assigned students will be discussion leaders, but all students will be expected to participate in the discussions and discussion contributions will be assessed accordingly.

- **Written assignments** will be related to topics in the *ContamiNation* book and will be due to the Instructor on assigned dates via a WORD or PDF file attached to email. Details will be provided in class.

**Course Objectives:** To:

- Learn about chemicals in our daily lives and in the environment
- Encourage students to check ingredients in consumer products used daily
- Discover the various ways that contaminants enter and react in the environment
- Learn about public health effects of contaminants

**Course Grading:**

- **Grades will be based on a student's:**
  - (a) Preparation and discussion leadership;
  - (b) Attendance and participation in Zoom class discussions;
  - (c) Written assignments based on text and web-based research; and
- **Points will be assigned** based on the following distribution of effort:
  - (a) Individual discussion leadership during a Zoom scheduled class (25 pts);
  - (b) Required attendance on Zoom each week (15 pts);
  - (c) Active participation in classroom discussions (30 pts);
  - (d) Written assignments (Homework and 5-page paper; Total = 30 pts; individual assignment pts vary).
- **Final Letter grades** will be assigned according to the total points earned, (100 points are the maximum earnable points) and the ranges given below:
  - A, A- (100 – 90 pts)
  - B+, B (89 – 80 pts)
  - B-, C+, C (79 – 70 pts)
  - C-, D+, D (69 – 60 Pts)
  - E (< 60 pts).
- **Attendance in class sessions using Zoom and Absences.** Weekly attendance in classes by Zooming is required since there are limited class meetings during the semester. Unexcused absences will be reflected in the attendance portion of the course grade with each such absence resulting in a 5-pt. grading penalty. After three unexcused Zoom absences, no points will be allowed for class attendance and the Honors Office will be informed.

- Students in the course and the Instructor are jointly responsible for satisfying all academic objectives as defined by the Instructor in the Syllabus. Absences count beginning with the 2nd class meeting [Week 2].
- Acceptable reasons for absence or failure to participate in class include: (a) illness, serious family emergencies, special curricular requirements for other courses (e.g. field trips, professional conferences), military obligations, severe weather conditions, religious holidays, and participation in official university activities (e.g. playing in music performances, athletic competition or debate). (b) Absences from class for court-imposed legal obligations (e.g., jury duty or subpoena) can be excused in advance. (c) Other reasons may also be approved but must be requested prior to the scheduled class to be missed. (d) Send email to the Instructor as soon as an absence issue arises; documentation will generally be required.
- Students should discuss with the instructor any optional assignment required to make up the material or activities covered in any class that was missed.
- Students cannot participate in Zoom classes unless they are officially registered. The Office of the University Registrar provides the official class rolls to instructors.
- If a student does not attend at least one of the first two Zoom class meetings of the course in which they are registered, **and** he or she has not contacted the Honors Program or Instructor to indicate his or her intent to remain in the course, the student may be automatically dropped from the course. If a student has any questions about this, contact the Honors Program office or the Instructor.
- The university recognizes the right of the individual professor to make attendance mandatory. After unexcused absences and due warning, professors can prohibit further attendance and subsequently assign a failing grade for unexcused absences.

**Course Reading Book:**

***ContamiNation*** by McKay Jenkins, Avery Press [Penguin Random House], paper cover, 2011; ISBN 978-0-399-57340-8. The book has been ordered at the UF Bookstore or students can order it from on-line sources. List Price should be under \$20 new and perhaps less as a used book.

### **Academic Honesty:**

Students at UF commit themselves to uphold the Honor Code, and have accepted the pledge: *“We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code.”*

All homework, reports, and papers must represent a student’s own individual work unless otherwise directed by the instructor. Plagiarism in writing assignments is not acceptable and violates the Honor Code. Such violations will receive severe grading penalties and will be reported to the Dean of Students as well as the student’s College Dean and the Honors Program Director. Students have the responsibility to know and comply with all university policies and procedures regarding academic integrity and the Student Honor Code. Full details are available on the Honor Code website:

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/resources/shca>

### **Online course with recorded materials - informing students of privacy related issues [important information – read during first week of classes]:**

Our class sessions **may** be recorded [audio and visual] so that students in the class can review them and also for the benefit of enrolled students who are unable to attend a live Zoom class due to an excused absence.

Students are required to participate in this Zoom course with their camera [video] and microphone [mic] engaged at all times and are therefore agreeing to have their video image and voice recorded if they remain in the course. If a student does not want to have their video image or voice recorded, it is best that he or she drop this course during the drop/add period in the first week of classes. Unauthorized recording beyond that done in the Zoom protocol for class purposes and unauthorized sharing of recorded materials is prohibited.

**Class Schedule:**

| <u>Week</u> | <u>Wed 2020</u> | <u>Topic Based on <i>Contamination</i></u>                    | <u>Leader(s)*</u>                            |
|-------------|-----------------|---|--|
| 1           | Sep 2           | Introduction and Covid-19                                     | Dr. D.                                       |
| 2           | Sep 9           | Overview of Contaminants                                      | Dr. D.                                       |
|             |                 | <b><u>HW#1 due - BioSketch</u></b>                            |  |
| 3           | Sep 16          | Contaminants - Case Study                                     | Dr. D.                                       |
|             |                 | <b><u>HW#2 due – Contact with Chemicals</u></b>               |  |
| 4           | Sep 23          | Environmental Laws  | Dr. D.                                       |
|             |                 | <b><u>HW#3 due – Law summaries and 3 – 5 paper Topics</u></b> |  |
| 5           | Sep 30          | Book – Prologue   | p. 1-12 Kat G.<br>p. 13-24 Kat G.            |
| 6           | Oct 7           | Book – Ch. 1  | p. 25-35 Mark F.<br>p. 36-46 Devon N.        |
| 7           | Oct 14          | Book – Ch. 2  | p. 47-62 Thomas J.<br>p. 63-77 Madison M.    |
| 8           | Oct 21          | Book – Ch. 3  | p. 79-106 Willy S.<br>p. 107-134 Nicholas J. |
| 9           | Oct 28          | Book – Ch. 4  | p.135-148 Sami H.<br>p. 148-161 Yanna L.     |
| 10          | Nov 4           | Book – Ch. 5  | p.163-180 Felicia Z.<br>p.181-197 Justin P.  |
| 11          | Nov 11          | No Class - Veteran's Day                                      |  |
| 12          | Nov 18          | Book – Epilogue   | p. 199-224 Dr. D.                            |
|             |                 | <b><u>5-page written paper due</u></b>                        |  |
|             | Nov 24 [Tu]     | Course evaluations open                                       | All Students                                 |
| 13          | Nov 25          | No Class – Thanksgiving Break                                 | Drive Safely                                 |
| 14          | Dec 2           | Emerging Contaminants   | Dr. D.                                       |
| 15          | Dec 9           | Last Class  | TBA  |
|             | Dec 11 [Fri]    | Course evaluations close                                      | All Students                                 |

### **Software Use:**

- All faculty, staff and students of the university are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against university policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate.

### **Campus Help Resources:**

- Students experiencing crises or personal problems that interfere with their general well-being are encouraged to utilize the university's counseling resources. The Counseling & Wellness Center provides confidential counseling services at no cost for currently enrolled students. Recourses are available on campus for students having personal problems or lacking clear career or academic goals, which interfere with their academic performance:
  - *University Counseling and Wellness Center, 3190 Radio Road, 352-392-1601, [www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/](http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/) Counseling Services, Groups and Workshops, Outreach and Consultation, Self-Help Library, Training Programs, Community Provider Database. Career Resource Center, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, J. Wayne Reitz Union, 392-1601, [www.crc.ufl.edu](http://www.crc.ufl.edu).*

### **Students with Disabilities Act:**

- Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resources Center (352-392-8565) or [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter, which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

### **Course Evaluations:**

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

### **Religious Observations:**

- Request for excused absences from class to allow participation in religious observations should be made to the instructor as a courtesy in advance of the absence. If a student requesting this absence is scheduled to be leading a discussion on that day, it is the student's responsibility to arrange with another student in the class to switch the dates and topics of their previously established requirements. Please inform the instructor of this "trade" in advance of the day in which it is to occur.

### **Cell Phone Management:**

- Please silence your cell phones during the Zoom class meetings and try to minimize other distractions that might occur while the Zoom class meeting is in session. All students are expected to have both their microphones and video in the ON position to validate their continued presence during the entire Zoom class session and to be able to provide input during discussions.

**Communication between Instructor and Classmates:**

• **Email will be the primary communication mode for this course.** There is no course website, and minimal use will be made of Canvas. Check your email account periodically each week for any information related to this class. This is a course requirement; all students are expected to abide by this rule.

**Summary of Course Deliverables & Special Events; see Class Schedule above; listed here are specific activities that are part of the Syllabus schedule; alternative Class Zoom Meeting dates/times are Possible (TBA):**

**August 12 through September 16, 2020 [action date in brackets]**

- + Obtain the reading book *ContamiNation* and start reading it [do this now]
- + Email Submission of Bio-Sketches – HW #1 [Sept. 9]
- + Discussion leaders assigned for student-led discussions [> Sept. 4]
- + Email submission of HW #2 [Sept. 11]

**September 30 and subsequent dates [see Class Schedule, above]**

- + Student presentations begin based on chapter readings in the book
- + Submission of 5-page word-processed paper [as Word or PDF file].

| <b><u>Assignment</u></b> | <b><u>Topic</u></b>   | <b><u>2020 Due Date</u></b> |
|--------------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| HW #1                    | <u>Bio-Sketch</u><br>One-Page; one paragraph to summarize “before UF” Schools, activities, travels, etc.; one-paragraph to discuss UF planned major, activities; one-paragraph to discuss plans and goals after UF graduation   | Sept 9                      |
| HW #2                    | <u>Chemicals in Personal Use Products</u><br><b>Two-pages max.</b> Determine ingredients in everyday products that you use for (1) cosmetics; (2) sunscreens; <b>or</b> (3) cleaning agents. Select one product; <b>list</b> the ingredients; go to <b><u>ewg.org</u></b> to find ingredient lists of same or similar products; from ewg, identify the safety [or not] of each ingredient; discuss overall safety of your selected product. | Sept 16                     |

HW #3

Environmental Laws

Sept 23

Go to [www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov) and look for information on chemicals that are regulated by (1) The Safe Drinking Water Act; (2) The Clean Water Act; and (3) The Toxic Substances Control Act. Prepare no more than, in total, a two (2) page summary highlighting the information you discover concerning these three laws that regulate some or many chemicals that pose troubles for human health or the health of the environment.

5-page paper

Five-page paper

Nov 18

When reading the book, try to scan the various chapters and find topics that might be of interest to you to use as subject matter for your paper. Send a list of 3 – 5 proposed topics to the instructor by the deadline listed below. A separate set of instructions for the 5-page paper will be provided separately.

Topics for paper

Select 3 – 5 topics

Sept 23

Send your list of topics to the instructor.

Published: Sept 7, 2020



