ORAL EXAMINATION SYLLABUS  
ENSC 60021

Instructor: Oral Exam Committee (see below).

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Course Objective: The oral examination is the capstone of the Masters program and must be taken by all students during the final full semester. Oral exams must be taken during the academic year (September through May)* and you must be registered in the oral exam course during the semester in which you take your oral exam**. MS students would take orals in the first three weeks of their final semester. All other masters students would take orals before week 9 of the final semester (to allow for re-examination, if necessary).

Prerequisites: ENSC 60203 Environmental Issues and ENSC 60011 Literacy of Science Review.

Overview: Oral exams test the student's knowledge in three areas: 1) coursework, 2) selected readings, and 3) general environmental issues and global concerns. Typical environmental issues include:

- Environmental stewardship, ethics, history, and scientific uncertainty
- Human population growth
- Environmental impacts of energy
- Air pollution
- Stratospheric ozone
- Global warming / climate change
- Deforestation & timber industry
- Biodiversity / biodiversity loss
- Soil degradation
- Water Pollution & Water crisis
- Ecological footprint / carrying capacity / food production

The selected readings that each graduate student should complete include the following:

- Block, P. Flawless Consulting: A Guide to Getting Your Expertise Used
- Carson, Rachel. Silent Spring OR The Sea Around Us
- Diamond, J. Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies. (the DVD may be substituted with permission of the committee)
- Friedman, T. L. Hot, Flat, and Crowded.
- Pearce, Fred. When the Rivers Run Dry
- Reisner, Marc. Cadillac Desert
- Other selected/new readings as they become available
**Oral Exam Committee:** The exam is administered by a minimum of three and maximum of five full or adjunct professors from the student's advisory committee. For thesis students, your orals committee must consist of your thesis committee, and either the ENSC Department Chair, or the ENSC Graduate Advisor. For non-thesis students, your orals committee must consist of the ENSC Department Chair, the ENSC Graduate Advisor and up to three additional professors of your choice.

It is your responsibility to set a date and time for your oral exams that is agreeable to the entire committee. Further, it is your responsibility to reserve an appropriate classroom for the oral examination through the departmental administrative assistant.

You must provide a reminder to the entire committee one week prior to the examination that includes your name, your degree, your graduate transcript, and the date / time / location (classroom) of the exam.

**Oral Exam Procedures:** The examination lasts approximately 1-3 hours and covers current environmental issues, as well as the material covered in your coursework. While you are not expected to cover your coursework in detail, you should be able to discuss your coursework materials in a broad context.

You will be expected to provide a full listing of the coursework, with instructors, you have completed for your degree.

**Grading of Oral Exams:** The oral exam is graded using the following scale: $A = 90-100$ points or $B = 80-89$ points ($F =$ less than 80 points). A simple majority vote by the committee is required for the student to pass the examination.

A score of less than 80 points will result in a mandatory re-examination to be scheduled no later than 4 weeks after the initial exam. If the failure resulted primarily from weakness in a narrow area, the second examination may be designated to cover only that area of weakness. The examining committee will notify the student in writing of the scope of the next examination.

The examination may not be repeated more than once. A student who does not pass on the second attempt is thereby subject to disqualification from further work as a graduate student in this program. The results of all Masters oral examinations must be reported to Dean of Graduate Studies. The deadlines are available on the College website at [http://www.cse.tcu.edu/ThesisDissertation.html](http://www.cse.tcu.edu/ThesisDissertation.html). Note that even if you are not a thesis candidate (i.e., MA or MEM), you are required to sit the oral exam and have the results sent to the Dean by this date.

**We expect each student to uphold the highest academic standards of honor in accordance with TCU policy. Cheating, plagiarism and collusion will not be tolerated.**

**Statement on Disability Services at TCU:** Texas Christian University complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 regarding students with disabilities. Eligible students seeking accommodations should contact the Coordinator for Students with Disabilities in the Center for Academic Services located in Sadler Hall, 11. Accommodations are not retroactive, therefore, students should contact the Coordinator as soon as possible in the term for which they are seeking accommodations. Further information can be obtained from the Center for Academic Services, TCU Box 297710, Fort Worth, TX 76129, or at (817) 257-7486.
Academic Misconduct (Sec. 3.4 from the Student Handbook) – Any act that violates the academic integrity of the institution is considered academic misconduct. The procedures used to resolve suspected acts of academic misconduct are available in the offices of Academic Deans and the Office of Campus Life. Specific examples include, but are not limited to:

- Cheating: Copying from another student’s test paper, laboratory report, other report, or computer files and listings; Using, during any academic exercise, material and/or devices not authorized by the person in charge of the test; Collaborating with or seeking aid from another student during a test or laboratory without permission; Knowingly using, buying, selling, stealing, transporting, or soliciting in its entirety or in part, the contents of a test or other assignment unauthorized for release; Substituting for another student or permitting another student to substitute for oneself;
- Plagiarism: The appropriation, theft, purchase or obtaining by any means another’s work, and the unacknowledged submission or incorporation of that work as one’s own offered for credit. Appropriation includes the quoting or paraphrasing of another’s work without giving credit therefore.
- Collusion: The unauthorized collaboration with another in preparing work offered for credit.

* Although you may arrange to take oral exams during the summer, please know that faculty members have no obligation to serve on summer oral exam committees.

** If you take the orals during the summer, you must be registered the semester before or after.