

Roanoke Valley Governor's School for Science and Technology
AP Environmental Science
Syllabus 2017-2018
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I. Course Information

a. Course Description

AP Environmental Science is an interdisciplinary course equivalent to an introductory college course for science majors. There is an emphasis on data collection and analysis both outdoors and in the lab. The major themes include the connection between living organisms and their environment, the flow of energy and matter through ecosystems, and human impact on the environment. Students are expected to obtain a qualifying score of 3, 4, or 5 on the AP environmental science exam at the end of this course.

b. Gifted Education Strategies

Technology use is integrated throughout the course, including the use of Vernier probes and sensors, ArcGIS, and Microsoft Excel in the laboratory. Collaborative learning, laboratory experiments, Socratic seminars, and field experiences will enhance the learning environment of this course.

c. Text, Printed Resources and Media Resources

- i.** *Environment Science for AP*, 2nd Edition, Friedland and Relyea, 2015, W.H. Freeman & Co
- ii.** *Cracking the AP Environmental Science Exam*. 2015, Princeton Review, Princeton, NJ.

II. Grading Policy

a. Grading Scale

100-90% **A**
89-80% **B**
79-70% **C**
69-60% **D**
59-50% **F**

b. Types of Evaluations

- i. Labs/Projects** The lab grade will be based on lab reports, class presentations, and field work. Students are expected to follow all safety rules when working in the lab or in the field. Students will work individually or in small cooperative groups on projects throughout the year.
- ii. Homework** It is expected that each student will read all assigned chapters and supplementary readings. Homework assignments will include problem sets, short essays, current events, and case studies.
- iii. Quizzes** Quizzes will be given regularly. Most quizzes will reflect AP-type free-response questions to prepare students for AP exam in May, 2018.

- iv. **Tests** Tests will be given at the end of each of unit to assess work covered over an extended period of time. Material included on a given test includes lecture notes and all readings for that unit. Tests will reflect AP-type multiple choice questions and free-response questions.
- v. **Semester Exams** These will include both multiple choice questions and free response questions in a manner similar to the AP exam.

c. Semester Grade Determination

Category	Weight
Labs/Projects	25%
Homework	10%
Quizzes	20%
Tests	30%
Semester Exam	15%

d. Final Grade Determination

The final grade is the average of the two semester grades. Students who fail to maintain a B average or above will be subject to the RVGS probationary policy.

III. Class Policies and Procedures

- a. **Absences and tardies** The policy in the RVGS student handbook will be followed. Regular attendance is necessary for success and expected.
- b. **Make-up Work** It is the responsibility of the student to determine missed classwork, homework, quizzes, labs, and tests during absences. Arrangements should be made immediately upon the return to school to make-up any work before or after school.
- c. **Late Work Policy** Work turned in late will have points deducted from it according to the following schedule: Late homework will NOT be accepted. Labs and projects turned in late will receive a 50% penalty.
- d. **Cheating** The policy in the RCPS student code of conduct will be followed.
- e. **Technology Policy** The RCPS Acceptable Use Policy and the RVGS student handbook policy will be followed.

- f. **Extra help:** It is important for you to quickly obtain help whenever you are having difficulty. Your instructor will be available both before and after school. To ensure availability, send an email to set an appointment. Drop-in extra help sessions are also available.

- g. **Home Access Center** Grades are available at all times through Home Access Center.
 - i. A blank in the grade book means that the assignment has not yet been graded. Teachers will have all assignments graded within 5 school days of the due date (with the exception of very long assignments which will be graded within 10 school days). You may have a blank because the teacher has not graded the class set or because your assignment was turned in after the due date. Blanks do not count as zeros in your average.
 - ii. A zero in the grade book means that you have earned a zero on the assignment.
 - iii. An excused (EX) in the grade book means that you are excused from the assignment without penalty.

- h. **Interim Reports:** A hard-copy of your current grade will be given to you to take home three times during each semester (see dates on the school calendar). The interim report is a snapshot of the current class average. Please feel free to discuss your report with your instructor.

- i. **Student Performance Strategy:** A student improvement plan will be implemented at the teacher's discretion or in the event that the student's grade falls below an 80.0%.

- j. **General Classroom Procedures**
 - i. Food and drinks are allowed in the classroom, but not the lab areas.
 - ii. The cell phone policy in the student handbook will be followed. If parents need to contact a student during class, they should call the front office.
Electronic devices of any sort that are visible during a quiz or a test without the teacher's permission will automatically be viewed as evidence of cheating, which will result in a grade of zero for the assessment and possible dismissal from RVGS.
 - iii. Field trips are an essential part of studying environmental science and are therefore mandatory. Absence from any field experience, for any reason, requires that the student complete a research project of comparable time commitment.