

Environmental Issues Syllabus

Semester 1 Fall 2025

Mrs. Conlin

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WRHS Mission Statement: *The mission of the Wachusett Regional High School is commitment to an educational process that fosters independence and responsibility in our students. By offering diverse, challenging, academic programs and rich co-curricular activities, WRHS strives to provide students with the skills and knowledge to achieve their potential as life-long learners.*

Department Philosophy: *The Science department of Wachusett Regional High School strives for excellence in the science education of all its graduates. We recognize the fact that science is a human endeavor designed to achieve an increasingly comprehensive and reliable understanding of the human species and its environment. Scientific literacy is an important key to a functioning, technology-based society. The WRHS Science Curriculum is designed to provide all students the opportunity to meet the stated objectives in a logical, sequential, comprehensive and varied manner.*

WRHS Student Learning Expectations

Students will . . . ❖ exercise responsible citizenship ❖ communicate effectively ❖ think critically & solve problems
❖ think creatively ❖ collaborate and learn actively use technology effectively

Overview: We will explore a variety of topics from the field of Environmental Science, focusing on problems that affect the environment and people around the world as well as closer to home. Some major topics include:

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|--------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| - Invasive species | - Biodiversity loss | - Solid Waste/Trash |
| - Water Resources | - Toxicology & Pollution | - Climate Change |

Expectations:

1. Mutual respect for myself, other students and property.
2. Attend class on time and be prepared to take notes and participate in lab and outside activities.
3. **NO Cheating.** If caught cheating you will receive a zero, and I will call home. Cheating is considered receiving and giving answers. Cheating is also considered having the exact same answers in lab or any group work.
4. Check Google classroom and your email daily, do your homework and class assignments, and go to the bathroom before class if possible. Repeated and extended trips to the bathroom will result in a discussion with your administrator.
5. Follow the student handbook and all lab safety rules. **Do not damage lab equipment.** If unsafe practices are disobeyed you will be removed from the lab and given an alternate assignment. **Especially Outside!**
6. **Outside Rules: You are in an Environmental based course so you will be asked to go out in the Environment. When in the building, you will be informed at least one day before we go outside. I ask that if you have any issues (allergies, injuries, etc.) let me know BEFORE going outside. Being in nature means that unplanned incidents can occur. The school, science dept. nor Mrs. Conlin is liable for uncontrollable occurrences such as tick bites, change in weather, etc**

Course Evaluation:

1. Homework is to be completed by the due date unless other arrangements have been made. Homework is due at the beginning of class; partial credit will be given for late work as long as the work has not been gone over in class. Late work will have 20% deducted for up to the first week and 50% off after that.
2. No late work is accepted or graded after the unit test. Projects will be -10% for every day late. If there are questions on homework they should be asked and addressed in class. Extra help is always available; just make an appointment with me.
3. Tests will always be announced and study guides posted on Google Classroom. Quizzes may or may not be announced. Labs/activities will also be an integral part of the course.

Grading Policy:

Grades are based on a total points system. This system also allows you to keep track of your own grades. Below are typical point values.

Tests- 100 points each

Quizzes- 40-60 points each

Activities/Labs- 10-70 points

Projects- 40-100 points

Homework/Classwork- 5-50 points

I expect you to keep track of your own grades and be responsible for tracking missing assignments in PowerSchool. If you'd like to know your grade or you have a question about them, please ask before class begins.

Absences:

All work that was due on the day you were absent should be passed in according to the student handbook. This means, if you were absent the day an assignment was due; I expect to see it upon your return to school. If you were absent on the day of a test, you will be expected to make up the test in class immediately upon your return. See me for special circumstances.

- Lab Make-ups: If you **MUST** miss a lab you will have **two calendar weeks** to make up the lab. Arrangements should be made with me to make up the lab after school. See me for special circumstances.
- HW/Classwork Make-ups: Homework not handed in because of legitimate absences is subject to the same rules as missed tests. It is **your** responsibility to get missed assignments, handouts and worksheets distributed in your absence. I will keep a folder of worksheets in the room for you to have access to what you missed.

Extra help: If you need any help please let me know so I can make sure I'm here to help you. I am usually in the classroom before and after school for drop in help but it is best to make an appointment with me so I can be sure to be there.

*Once you have read this syllabus, sign and initial the lab acknowledgement form with your parent/guardian to indicate that you are aware of all of the information contained within it, and therefore also responsible for all information.
Keep this syllabus to refer to throughout the course.*



WRHS Science Department Lab Safety Rules

The safety of the individual while participating in science laboratory sessions is of prime importance. It is the policy of the Science Department of Wachusett Regional High School to require safe attire and behavior for participation in classrooms where laboratory procedures are in progress. These rules are required of students, teachers, and visitors to the lab.

1. Prepare for the lab activity by reading and discussing the lab first. Be sure to ask any questions necessary for your full understanding. Make note of any changes to the procedure and safety warnings given by your teacher.
2. Do not perform any experiment in the lab without the supervision of the teacher.
3. Laboratory behavior must be of a serious nature, and students are expected to work only with their lab partner.
4. Report any accident to the teacher immediately. Do not try to clean up any broken equipment, glassware, or spilled chemicals by yourself!
5. Do not eat or drink anything in the laboratory. Consider any chemical used in the laboratory as dangerous.
6. Dress appropriately for the lab. Avoid wearing bulky, loose clothing or dangling jewelry. Hats are forbidden, long hair is to be tied back, and lab aprons should be worn.
7. Massachusetts State Law requires the wearing of approved safety eyewear (even if you wear glasses) when working with flames, dangerous chemicals, heated liquids or glassware. Failure to follow this rule will result in immediate expulsion from the laboratory.
8. Keep the work area free of any books and materials not needed during the lab.
9. Make sure to inspect all equipment prior to use, and report any damaged equipment to the teacher.
10. Handle all glassware and lab equipment with care and only as instructed by the teacher.
11. Do not touch anything that may be hot, including Bunsen burners, hot plates, ring stands, beakers, etc. Use a damp towel or safety holder.
12. When using knives and other sharp instruments, always carry by the handle with the points pointing down and away. Always cut away from your body, and never try to catch a falling sharp instrument.

13. Never put your face near the mouth of a container that is holding chemicals or is being heated. When testing for odors, use a wafting motion to direct the odors to your nose.

14. Follow all rules outlined by your teacher when using specialized equipment such as soil sieves and increment borers. Failure to follow the rules may result in removal from the lab.

15. Clean all work areas and equipment at the end of the lab. This includes benchtops/desktops and sinks. Wash your hands when you are done.

16. This class involves outdoor labs. It is expected that you conduct yourself in an appropriate manner, respect the outside environment and not be destructive or disrespectful. You will stay with the class at all times and participate in each outdoor activity. Let me know in advance if you need accommodations to help you participate in outdoor activities.

Depending on the nature of the infraction, failure to follow these rules may result in loss of credit or a zero for the lab, alternative assignment, detention, suspension, or removal from the course.

Please sign below and return to your teacher

**I acknowledge having received and understand the terms outlined in the
Environmental Science Syllabus, as well as, the Laboratory Safety Rules and will
abide by all rules and expectations as set forth.**

Student Name (print) : _____

Student Signature: _____ Date _____

Parent Name (print): _____

Parent Signature: _____ Date _____