**What is this course about?**

\*Where do **you** fit in to the Houston ecosystem? What is your role? How do you depend on the natural environment for living?

\*How can you and other Houstonians make choices and design our lives in a way that preserves natural resources?

\*How do our planet’s systems function – the water, air, soil, animals, plants, nutrient cycles?

\*Preparation to earn a passing score on AP Environmental Science exam

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| **Topic Sequence**  Fall Semester:  Scientific Method  Ecology  Biodiversity and endangered species               Population               Eating: Food production  Breathing: -Air Pollution Issues | Spring Semester:               Fossil Fuel Use               Global Climate Change                Alternative Energy and Efficiency  Waste Management and Recycling  Water Supply and Pollution Issues |

**Advanced Placement credit**

This course is accredited by the College Board AP program as a half-year college credit.  The AP exam for credit eligibility will be given on Tuesday, May 13, 2025 at 12:00 PM. Each college or university sets its own standards for granting college credit to students who take the AP test. Research shows that students who take AP classes AND take the exam have statistically higher college GPAs than students who take the class but don’t take the exam.

**Going Outside and Participation**

This course involves extensive activity and much of it will take place outside in the school-yard garden, the campus habitat (Wolf Prairie) as well as off-campus for field classes and volunteer events. Your responsibility is to wear/bring appropriate clothing for outdoor activities as well as practice a willingness to participate and assist in all classroom activities.

**Supplies and Equipment for Class Everyday**

* Laptop AND charger
* Three ring-binder with loose-leaf paper spiral notebook
* Appropriate clothing for outdoor activity depending on weather and conditions

**Classroom expectations:**

* Respect yourself, your peers, your instructors and our environment
* Arrive on time each day ready to participate
* Be prepared with charged laptop, charger, completed work and appropriate clothing
* All mobile phones (and other similar devices) must be out of sight at all times
* Clean-up after yourself and no food permitted in the science lab (except by invitation)
* Be an active participant in your education and utilize a growth mind-set

**Grading System**

Tests, projects, participation and labs are major grades worth 70% of the grade average. Expect at least three major grades each grading cycle. Daily grades are worth 30%. Each semester, complete a minimum of 1.75 hours of service-learning on-campus after dismissal on Wolf Prairie and/or in the school garden. The other option is to complete 3 hours of service in a teacher-approved off-campus location taking place outside of the school day. Academic credit for service-learning is major grade is awarded in Cycle 3 and Cycle 6. A list of dates and registration to attend events on-campus are available in our course on the Canvas.

## Absences and Make-up Work

It is your responsibility to find out what you have missed. Use Canvas to track assignments and due dates. When absent from class, you have the same number of days to complete missing work without a loss of points. If you are absent only on a known test day, you must attempt the test when you return unless you did not have access to new material on the test. If you are feeling ill, stay home. You are allowed to be absent! Manage and use your absences wisely and as needed.

**Electronics in Class and During Assessments**

Per the Westside Way handbook, all electronics devices must be turned-off during class hours and put-away. The exception is by invitation of the teacher or during lunch and passing periods). If an electronic device is seen during instructional time, it can be confiscated by school personnel and submitted to the associate principal. See Westside Student Code of Conduct for details on retrieving your device.

If your device is visible during an assessment (test or quiz), it is assumed that test security is compromised and you will receive a zero for that assessment with no retake opportunity. The device will be confiscated.

**Re-take/Re-do policy**

If you earn less than 70% on a major grade (test, project or lab) you may be eligible to retake that major grade for a maximum grade of 70% IF

* You attend at least one tutorial and make adequate corrections to the assessment
* The tutorial **and** retake or reattempt must be completed within one week of the assignment being assessed digitally or physically returned to you.

**Office Hours and Tutorials:**

Office hours and tutorials take place Mondays and Wednesdays during the first half of lunch.

**Late Work Policy**

Late work is accepted under the following conditions:

* Daily work—not accepted unless you were absent. Lowest daily-grade is dropped
* Major grade assignments (labs, projects) lose 20% after one day, no credit after 4 days.
* Assignments may be stamped to denote timely completion. Stamps can earn bonus credit. Stamps are never given to late work. If you are absent, a stamp on any work will be given the day you return, but YOU must ask for it.

**Conference Period and Contact Information**

Coach Mister Spence’s conference time is third period which is 9:30 AM to 10:15 AM Mon, Tue, Friday and 9:30 AM-11:05 PM on Wednesdays and can take occur in-person or virtually on Teams, but an appointment is necessary. Conferences needing to take place before 7:40 AM or after 3:25 PM can also be available by appointment via email at [LSPENCE@houstonisd.org](mailto:LSPENCE@houstonisd.org).

“There are no problems, only solutions.” “You are brilliant and the Earth is hiring!”

-John Lennon, musician and philosopher -Paul Hawken, environmental economist

“Where there is no vision, there is no hope.” “If you love it enough, everything will talk to you.”

-George Washington Carver, inventor, scientist