

# Syllabus Natural Science Inquiry Spring 2000

Professor: Dr. Todd Duncan  
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*What does it mean to teach? It is to create opportunities for students to make their own discoveries.*

-- George Polya

The goal of Natural Science Inquiry is to help you make connections between your thinking and the field of study we label as "science." We'll explore a variety of different ways of looking at science and of applying it to address real problems, to see how its methods and insights can apply to your life.

Schedule: The following is a tentative schedule of the major activities this term.

**Week 1 (March 28, 30):**

- Introduction to the course and to the "scientific method"
- Survey of ideas and attitudes about science

**Week 2 (April 4, 6):**

- Discussion about the value of science to society and to you as an individual
- Distinguishing science and pseudo-science

**Week 3 (April 11, 13):**

- Discussions on pseudo-science (continued)
- Data analysis and interpretation; weighing risks

**Week 4 (April 18, 20):**

- Introduction to the project on global warming
- Discussion about the use of resources and references

**Week 5 (April 25, 28):**

- Introduction to the final project: How do we get Portlanders to drive less, and reduce traffic congestion?

**Week 6 (May 2, 4):**

- Guest speakers related to final project

**Week 7 (May 9, 11):**

- Work days/discussion for final project

**Week 8 (May 16, 18):**

- Work days for final project

**Week 9 (May 23, 25):**

- Work days for final project

**Week 10 (May 30, June 1):**

- Presentations on final projects
- End of class survey

**Final Exam Week (10:15, June 6):**

- Presentations on final projects (if necessary)

Grading: There will be no formal exams in this course. Instead, you will investigate questions and write reports describing what you find, much as you would do for a policy issue that comes up in real life. Your final course grade will be determined from the following elements:

Attendance & participation	15%
Journal writing:	20%
Pseudo-science paper	10%
Global warming project	20%
Final project	35%

Assignment Due Dates:

Note: Although I don't anticipate any changes to these due dates, they may be changed slightly if necessary. **Check the assignment sheets (for major projects) and in-class announcements for the latest due dates.**

Journals will be collected on the following dates:

Thurs., April 13th  
Thurs., May 4  
Thurs., May 25

Pseudo-science paper due Thurs., April 20.

Global warming paper due Thurs., May 4.

Final project: Papers are due Thurs., June 1.