



THE
WORTHGATE SCHOOL
CANTERBURY

COURSE DESCRIPTOR

IBDP ENVIRONMENTAL SYSTEMS AND SOCIETIES

SUBJECT OVERVIEW

ESS is firmly grounded in both a scientific exploration of environmental systems in their structure and function, and in the exploration of cultural, economic, ethical, political and social interactions of societies with the environment. As a result of studying this course, students will become equipped with the ability to recognize and evaluate the impact of our complex system of societies on the natural world. By studying ESS, students develop thinking and research skills such as comprehension, text analysis, knowledge transfer and use of primary sources, and employ these skills to develop solutions at the personal, community and global levels.

PRIOR LEARNING REQUIRED

The interdisciplinary nature of the DP course requires a broad skill set from students, including the ability to perform research and investigations, participation in philosophical discussion and problem-solving. The course requires a systems approach to environmental understanding and promotes holistic thinking about environmental issues.

GCSE or equivalent

IELTS 5.5 or equivalent

EXAM BOARD

IBDP

COURSE CONTENT

Year 1	Year 2
Topic 1 – Foundations of environmental systems and societies	Topic 5 – Soil systems and terrestrial food production systems and societies

Topic 2 – Ecosystems and ecology	Topic 6 – Atmospheric systems and societies
Topic 3 – Biodiversity and conservation	Topic 7 – Climate change and energy production
Topic 4 – Water and aquatic food production systems and societies	Topic 8 – Human systems and resource use

ASSESSMENT

Formal internal assessments take place regularly about once every half term and homework is set on a regular basis.

Grades are determined by three components: two external assessments and an internal assessment. Final examinations for components 1-2 take place in May at the end of the 2-year course.

An end of year exam must be passed for entry to year 2 and a mock exam must be passed for entry into the public exams.

Paper	Length of paper	Weighting
1. Case Study	40 marks 1 hour written paper	25% of the final grade
2. Short Answers and Structured essays	65 marks 2 hours written paper	50% of the final grade
Individual investigation	30 marks Max 2250 (non-exam assessment)	25% of the final grade

TEXTBOOKS/REVISION GUIDES

Title	ISBN	Author
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Environmental Systems and Societies (Oxford IB Diploma Programme)	978-0198332565	Jill Rutherford and Gillian Williams
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Summaries of each unit, your notes and past examination papers will be your major source of revision.

HIGHER EDUCATION PATHWAYS

ESS will enhance your skills in critical thinking and analysis, which are highly valued by universities and employers. ESS is popular with students who wish to study Multiple subjects and pathways from fashion to law as well as the obvious environmental sciences and development studies at university and/or enter careers in government and charity work.

Previous students have gained acceptance in undergraduate courses in social sciences.

CURRICULUM DIRECTOR

Dr Francesco Sacco