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Foundations of Environmental Physics is designed to focus students on the current energy and environmental problems facing society, and to give them the critical thinking and computational skills needed to sort out potential solutions. From its pedagogical approach, students learn that a simple calculation based on first principles can often reveal the plausibility (or implausibility) of a proposed solution or new technology.

Throughout its chapters, the text asks students to apply key concepts to current data (which they are required to locate using the Internet and other sources) to get a clearer picture of the most pressing issues in environmental science. The text begins by exploring how changes in world population impact all aspects of the environment, particularly with respect to energy use. It then discusses what the first and second laws of thermodynamics tell us about renewable and nonrenewable energy; how current energy use is changing the global climate; and how alternative technologies can be evaluated through scientific risk assessment. In approaching real-world problems, students come to understand the physical principles that underlie scientific findings.

This informative and engaging textbook offers what prospective scientists, managers, and policymakers need most: the knowledge to understand environmental threats and the skills to find solutions.