Faculty Committee on Graduate and Continuing Education

Proposal for a New Graduate Course

Department: Master of Environmental Studies (MES) Graduate Program
Graduate Program: Master of Environmental Studies (MES) Graduate Program

Course Number & Title: EVSS 632 Social Science Methods in Environmental Studies
Total hours/week: 3  Number of Credits 3  Lectures: 3  Lab: 0

Will this course be cross-listed with an undergraduate or other graduate course? ☐ YES  ☒ NO
If yes, please complete an attach to this proposal a Permission to Cross-List a Graduate Course form.

Course will first be offered Fall 2011

Catalog description (Please limit to 50 words):

This course will introduce students to social science methodologies used to understand humans’ relationships to the environment. The course will provide a basic understanding of the practice of collecting both quantitative and qualitative social science data, developing mixed-methods or interdisciplinary projects, and train students on how to interpret such data.

Prerequisites (or other restrictions)

None

Rationale/justification for course (consider the following issues):

a. What are the goals and objectives of the course?

To provide a basic understanding of the practice of collecting social science data on environmental issues and problems, to train students on how to interpret such data, and to assist students when applicable to apply such methods in their independent capstone research project (internship or thesis).

b. How does the course support the mission statement of the department and the organizing principles of the graduate program?

The mission of the MES Program is to provide the students with the scholarly background of environmental studies, with an emphasis on applied research. The program emphasizes interdisciplinary, integrative science and policy and how scientific data informs (or should inform) environmental policies. This social science methods course will expose students to the approach of collecting social science data with respect to environmental studies which they may apply to their independent project.

Are other departments affected by this course? ☒ YES  ☐ NO
(Please attach letters of support from the chairs of each department indicating the Department has discussed and supports the proposal.) See attached.

Is this course part of a joint program? ☐ YES  ☒ NO
If yes, at what institution?

Method of teaching: Research Seminars / Lectures

If more space is needed for any section, please attach additional sheets to this form.

November 2007
Proposal for a New Graduate Course Cont’d

Expected changes

a. Address potential enrollment pattern shifts in the Department or University-wide as it relates to the offering of this course.
   This course will complement the other core courses; students will take this course in their first year.

b. Address potential shifts in staffing of the departments as it relates to the offering of this course.
   No shifts are expected. At least two faculty in Political Science will be available to teach this course at a once per year basis; they are currently engaged with students in social science methodology in an ad-hoc basis (numerous independent study courses).

Requirements for additional resources made necessary by this course. (Note: course requiring additional resources will need special justification.)

a. Staff
   None
b. Budget
   None
c. Library
   Potential use of library scholarly databases, but not significantly more than currently required for Independent Study activities.

Attach course syllabus, reading list, or any additional documentation that can help the committee evaluate this proposal. A syllabus is mandatory.

Signature of Program Director: ___________________________ Date: 2/8/11
Signature of Department Chair: __________________________ Date: 2/8/11
Additional Chair’s Signature*: __________________________ Date: ___________
Signature of Schools’ Dean: __________________________ Date: 2/9/11
Additional Schools’ Dean Signature*: __________________________ Date: ___________
Signature of the Provost: __________________________ Date: 2/16/11
Signature of Budget Director**: __________________________ Date: ___________

*For interdisciplinary courses. **Business Affairs Office

Return form to the Graduate School Office for Further Processing

Signature of Chair of the Faculty Committee on Graduate and Continuing Education __________________________ Date: 2/23/2011
Signature of Chair of Grad Council: __________________________ Date: 3/3/11
Signature of the Faculty Secretary: __________________________ Date: ___________

If more space is needed for any section, please attach additional sheets to this form.

November 2007
[Example syllabus]

**EVSS 632 Social Science Methods for Environmental Studies**

**Goal:**
To provide a foundation in mixed-methodology science regarding human-environment research methodologies and their applications.

**Main Topic:**
Interdisciplinary methodologies for understanding human-environment interaction. This will include methods that involve fieldwork, lab work, theory-building, and the unique problems of integrating quantitative and qualitative data in mixed-methods projects.

Note: material in weeks 10-15 will vary each semester depending on applied research topic.

**Learning Objectives:**
- Expose students to global and local dimensions of human-environment interaction
- Expose students to the scope of human-environment research and employment fields
- Develop student skills in asking interdisciplinary research questions
- Expose students to the scope of interdisciplinary methods of data collection and analysis
- Develop skills in identifying a literature and writing analytically about that field of inquiry
- Produce a tentative graduate research plan (coursework, specialties to develop)
- Produce a literature review on a methodology or topic they want to pursue for their thesis or internship, to use as part of their proposal.

**Method of Presentation**
Class meetings will be in lecture format at the beginning of each module, followed by guest speakers, site visits, public hearing visits, and class discussion. The term “instructor” is entirely a misnomer in this case; “facilitator” is much more accurate. We are here to help guide you during your case study investigations and we definitely will not have all the answers. Class will not be a rehashing of the information you are accessing on your own. On many occasions, you will be leading discussion portions of class sessions based on work you have completed outside of class. Oral presentations of case study findings will take place in group format. Our goal is to operate most of the time in a professional meeting format.

**Student Responsibilities**

**Reports:** Short, individual or small group-focused papers on an environmental issue. Major points to be presented to the class in seminar format.

**Research proposal:** Part of the requirements for the Environmental Studies program is to develop and successfully complete an independent research project, guided by an advisory committee (either a thesis or internship project). One of your products in this course will be a methods section of a research/internship proposal; one important expected outcome of this work is improved written and oral communication skills.

**Class Participation:** Your constructive input is a vital component to this course. It is expected you will attend class regularly and that you will be prepared to discuss the required reading on the day it is assigned. Class participation is a vital component of this class and your ACTIVE participation is therefore strongly encouraged. Participation in class discussions is expected and will be considered in final course evaluations. Such participation includes listening carefully and critically to views being expressed by classmates and asking clarifying questions, as well as expression of personal views and sharing your unique perspectives. You should always be able to contribute.

If more space is needed for any section, please attach additional sheets to this form.

November 2007
prepared, during each class session, to discuss current events related to environmental issues as they relate to the subject of the course.

Grade Structure
Class Participation (10%)
Short Reports (30%)
IRB QUIZ on research ethics (5%)
Project (practicing social science methods) (35%)
Proposal (20% total)
[First Draft with reference list (10%) Final (10%)]

The grading scale will be a conventional 100-91 = A, 90-81 = B etc.
A -- 91-100 Superior
B -- 81-86 Good
C -- 71-76 Average
B+ -- 87-90 Very Good
C+ -- 77-80 Fair
F -- below 71 Failing

Course Schedule

Note: Syllabus will vary each semester, depending on participation of different faculty.

It is expected that course topics and associated readings through week 9 will serve as the foundation for each semester the course is offered; material in weeks 10-15 will vary each semester depending on applied research topic.

Readings (to be amended as needed)

1) Introduction to interdisciplinary methods for understanding human-environment interaction
Moran, Emilio, 2010. Environmental Social Science [selections]

2) Human and non-human drivers of environmental change
Reeves, Roger. 2002. Introduction to Environmental Analysis (Analytical Techniques in the Sciences), London: John Wiley and Sons. [selections]

3) Social Science Methodologies
[Overview, research ethics, and survey design]
Moran, Emilio, 2010. Environmental Social Science [selections]

If more space is needed for any section, please attach additional sheets to this form.

November 2007
Reeves, Roger. 2002. *Introduction to Environmental Analysis (Analytical Techniques in the Sciences)*, London: John Wiley and Sons. [selections]

[archival methods]

[participant-observation and ethnography]

[social theory primer; discourse and content analysis]
Lutz and Collins *Reading National Geographic* [selections]
Rose, Gillian. 2001. *Visual Methodologies*, chapters on content and discourse analysis (I and II)

[Interviews and Focus Groups]

Bosco, Fernando J., and Thomas Herman. Focus Groups as Collaborative Research Performances. 2009. *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Geographay*

[the “Q” Method and other Research Strategies]

[neoclassical econ primer]

[GIS]


4) Mixed-Methods Projects
Reeves, Roger. 2002. *Introduction to Environmental Analysis (Analytical Techniques in the Sciences)*, London: John Wiley and Sons. [selections]


If more space is needed for any section, please attach additional sheets to this form.
November 2007