Faculty Committee on Graduate and Continuing Education

Proposal to Change a Graduate Course

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

Will this course be cross-listed with an undergraduate or other graduate course? □ YES  X NO

If yes, please complete an attach to this proposal a Permission to Cross-List a Graduate Course form.

Course change(s) will go into effect: Fall 2011

Change(s) desired:
Change the credit hours from one (1) to two (2).

Revise the course description for Graduate Core Seminar (EVSS 646) as follows:
EVSS 646 (2 credit hours)
Graduate Core Seminar
This seminar course on environmental studies topics will offer an introductory review of the environmental studies discipline. Students will review recent scholarship, including primary sources, with an emphasis on interdisciplinarity, providing them an environmental studies overview.

Justification for change(s)
To properly introduce students to the discipline of environmental studies, two contact hours per week are needed to better review scholarship in this field and improve students' analytical communication skills. This assessment is based on the past history of the course as offered in the one-credit format in which these objectives were intended yet not met due to the limitation to just one contact hour per week. This course will be taught each semester and is intended to be taken by students in their first year in the program.

Signature of Program Director: [Signature] Date: 2/8/11

Date approved by the Department: February 4, 2011

Signature of Department Chair: [Signature] Date: 2/8/11

Signature of Schools’ Dean: [Signature] Date: 2/9/11

Signature of Provost: [Signature] Date: 2/11/11

Return form to the Graduate School Office for Further Processing

Signature of Chair of the Faculty Committee on Graduate and Continuing Education: [Signature] Date: 2/23/2011

Signature of Chair of Grad Council: [Signature] Date: 2/23/11

Signature of the Faculty Secretary: [Signature] Date: [Signature]

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

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EVSS 646 Graduate Core Seminar

Goals:

1) To provide an introduction to the discipline of environmental studies, including the interdisciplinary links to economics, social science, policy, biology, chemistry, physics, geology and statistics.

2) To provide opportunities for collaboration between students and working professionals in the field of environmental studies, thus facilitating the creation of students’ independent research projects.

3) To prepare students to develop a plan of study for their MES degree and a draft proposal statement describing the significance and broader impacts of a research project, with knowledge on how their method or field fits into the broader literature/concerns of environmental studies.

Main Topics:

1) History of Environmental Studies: broad outline of the fields of inquiry and activism [1 week]

Will draw upon literatures in the disciplines of history, geography, ecology

2) Human and Non-human drivers of environmental change [3 weeks]

Will also draw upon disciplines including geology, biology, physics, geography, economics, and political science to identify how environmental problems occur and how to address potential solutions

4) Environmental Governance and Justice at local, regional, national, and international scales [2 weeks]

Will draw upon disciplines of political science and geography

5) Sustainability studies: conservation biology; ecosystem, watershed, and land management; energy systems and production-consumption cycles; building and community design/architecture; agricultural systems [3 weeks]

The remaining 1/3 of the semester will focus on a case study analysis of an environmental problem in an interdisciplinary framework (e.g., Hurricane Katrina, Deepwater Horizon Gulf Oil Disaster)

Learning Outcomes:

• Expose students to how environmental problems are generated
• Expose students to the scope of human-environment research and employment fields
• Develop student skills in asking interdisciplinary research questions

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

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• Expose students to the scope of interdisciplinary methods of data collection and analysis
  ▪ Students will skills in identifying literature and write analytically about a field of inquiry
  ▪ Produce a tentative graduate research plan (coursework, specialties to develop)

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 statement: 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 research statement identifying the significance and broader impacts of a field of inquiry in environmental studies; 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 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 on Primary and Secondary Source Readings (30%)
Proposal (40% total)
  [First Draft with reference list (10%)  Final Report (30%)]
Proposal Presentation (20%)

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
  F -- below 71 Failing

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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 the applied research topic.

Example Readings (to be amended and focused as needed for each course offering)

1) History of Environmental Studies: broad outline of the fields of inquiry and activism


2) Interdisciplinarity of Environmental Studies


3) Global Environmental Governance and Justice


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**4) Sustainability Science and Design**


