**Environmental Studies 490: Senior Seminar**

**Fall 2022**

3 credits

TTH, 11:30-1:00

Sage 3208

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| Professor: Jim FeldmanEmail: feldmanj@uwosh.edu Telephone: 920-424-3235 | Office: Sage 3451Office Hours: Th 1:15-2:45, or by appt. |

**Course Description:** This course is designed as the capstone in Environmental Studies. In it, you will put the skills and knowledge that you have learned in their Environmental Studies career into practice by working with the UW Oshkosh Campus Sustainability Office to help achieve the climate action planning goal of reaching carbon neutrality by the year 2030. The particular focus of the semester will be on technologies to replace our increasingly outdated heating and cooling systems, which represent a significant component of our carbon emissions. Students will conduct research on possible options to replace the boilers and chilling plant, investigate projects on other campuses, interview local stakeholders and national experts, and research costs and barriers. The project will culminate with an open campus presentation on to members of the Campus Climate Action Planning Committee and university administration, and a written report submitted to the Campus Sustainability Office.

In addition to reporting on potential heating plant replacement technologies, students will discuss readings intended to provide a context for sustainability and higher education. Students will also engage in career preparation activities including updating and refining résumés and learning skills for job interviews, and participating in an ES Alumni networking event.

An additional goal of this class is to further your liberal arts education. What does this mean? The liberal arts education focuses on general learning, intellectual ability, and critical thinking rather than technical or professional skills. The goal of this class, then, is not just to convey specific information about sustainability but to teach you how to interpret this information critically, and how to understand modern environmental issues in their social, historical, and political context. A liberal arts education provides the tools we need to be active citizens of our communities. In Spring 2008, UW Oshkosh adopted a set of Essential Learning Outcomes to help define the meaning of a liberal education. One of these outcomes is the recognition that a liberal education recognizes our “Responsibility, as individuals and communities.” This includes “Knowledge of sustainability and its applications.” This course is designed to help us think about our responsibilities to each other, to our communities, and to our environment.

**Bulletin Course Description**: A capstone seminar for the Env. Studies program that will examine the student's ability to integrate perspectives gained in previous environmental studies courses emphasizing science, society and values. Prerequisite: Environmental Studies 260, 261, and 282, or consent of Environmental Studies Program Director.

**Learning Outcomes:** Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Apply key concepts in Environmental Studies in analyzing a real-world problem and possible solutions. That is, they will put the concepts they have learned in the ES Program into practice.
2. Understand and critically evaluate different stakeholder perspectives and assumptions in relation to a specific, local sustainability issue/problem.
3. Work collaboratively in a team setting to assess a local sustainability issue and to develop a practical response to that issue.
4. Produce an annotated bibliography of sources and materials that is relevant to the chosen topic and that summarizes literature related to the problem and evaluates the usefulness and limitations of each item for that specific topic.
5. Communicate research and recommendations on the chosen topic in both oral and written formats in ways that is understandable to an educated general audience and sophisticated enough for an expert audience.

**A Note on Community Engagement & Environmental Studies:** Because of its broad interdisciplinarity, the Environmental Studies Program is both one of the most challenging and one of the most rewarding programs at the university. The key to meeting the challenges and gaining the rewards of our program is embracing the idea of community. Just as environmental problems cannot be solved without communities coming together in dialogue and action, our classes in ES require you to come together as a community characterized by open participation, mutual respect, and shared responsibility. Participation means actively contributing both your voice in class discussions and your work to build knowledge together. Respect means listening and making space for your peers’ voices while also feeling free to disagree (as the best forms of understanding often arise out of what begins as disagreement). And responsibility means holding ourselves accountable for being curious, engaged, and informed members of our shared community.

What we discuss in our classes is often difficult, but if we see each class as a community in which we are actively engaged, we will gain not only the rewards of knowledge and capacity for action, but a sense of feeling supported, both academically and emotionally – of confronting the problems we face together. Further, an environmental education obligates us to address issues we see and to collaborate with others to build relationships and try to make things better. This means embracing your major as your program, helping it be the best version of itself, and getting involved outside of the classroom on campus and beyond.

**Individual Assignments, Group Projects & Grades:** Some of the work in this course is individual (annotated bibliography, stakeholder identification paper, final individual paper, Earth Charter reflection). All of these assignments will be discussed in greater detail during the semester. The most important parts of the class, however, will be done in groups. As we all know, group work is challenging—it demands flexibility, communication, patience, and teamwork. True collaboration goes beyond just participating; success in group projects sometimes requires putting aside what you may want for the benefit of the group. It may mean letting go of personal frustrations, it may mean letting others know if they are not meeting your expectations. You will have significant time in class to work together, but you will also need to work outside of class time to complete your projects. At the end of the semester, your grade will be determined by the quality of your team’s final product. However, I might assign different grades to different group members, based on my understanding of how the team worked together and whether responsibilities and productivity were shared equally. I will ask you to provide to me confidential, advisory evaluations of all members of your team to help in this process.

**Professionalism and Community Engagement**:As you complete the projects for this class, you will be out in the community of Oshkosh interviewing and interacting with stakeholders and representing both UW Oshkosh and the Environmental Studies Program. Professional behavior is expected at all times. Examples of the myriad behaviors that comprise professionalism include: timeliness; preparedness; cleanly dressed; respectful listening and talking; thinking critically and creatively; challenging appropriately; producing high-caliber work; kindly and respectfully interacting with stakeholders, community members, target audience, colleagues, etc.; being a hard-working and reliable team member, etc.

### Required Readings: There will be a few readings on Canvas, but there are no books required for this seminar. Students are expected to complete all common readings prior to class on the day that those readings are assigned, and to have a copy of those readings with them in class—either in print or in digital form.

**Attendance, Discussion and Participation**:This course requires close interaction with research and course materials, each other, and with community stakeholders. Your participation in discussions and other class activities is essential. This course will only be successful with full student engagement and participation, both in class activities, and especially in your group project. Attendance will be taken each day; your grade will drop significantly with each absence. If you have more than five unexcused absences, you will fail the course. An “unexcused absence” is any absence for which you cannot provide a note from a doctor, another professor, or some other documented explanation of your absence. Your full participation in all of your group’s meetings and activities is expected. Your active participation is the key to your learning the material and to the success of the course—both for you as an individual and for the class as a whole.

**Course Components & Grading Breakdown:** Students will be evaluated on the following components, each of which will be discussed in further detail during class:

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| Attendance, Participation & Short Assignments…. | 10% | Final Individual Paper …..…………........... | 15% |
| Stakeholder Identification Paper …………………. | 15% | Project Presentation ………………………. | 20% |
| Annotated Bibliography ………….......................... | 10% | Final Written Project ……………….…….. | 20% |
| Earth Week Reflection/Analysis …………………. | 5% | Group Progress Reports/Presentations …… | 5% |
| Mock Interview Workshop .……...………………. | P/F |  |  |

**Course Policies and Conduct:**  All of us must do our best to be intellectually honest and tolerant of personal differences. Environmental topics are often controversial, and we all have our own beliefs. I hope that everyone will feel safe to express an idea, even if that idea is not a popular one. This is particularly true in the context of your group. You will be working closely with group members on completing the final project—just as you will be expected to do in professional settings after you graduate.

There are some university guidelines for behavior that I expect all of us to abide by. One of these has to do with plagiarism, or taking credit for the work of others. This is a serious offense and will be treated according to university guidelines; failure of the course is a potential outcome of academic dishonesty. This doesn’t mean you shouldn’t talk with other students about what you are thinking or writing; but when you write something on a paper, it must be in your own words, not copied from someone else. We will discuss what plagiarism means more fully during the course of the semester. If you have any questions about academic honesty, and what might or might not be considered plagiarism, please ask, rather than taking a risk with grave consequences.

Knowing and applying the names and pronouns that students use is a crucial part of developing a productive learning environment that fosters inclusion and personal dignity. Please let me know the name and pronoun you use any time before or throughout the semester.

**Grading Scale:**

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| A 93-100 | B+ 87-89 | C+ 77-79 | D+ 67-69 | F ≤ 59 |
| A- 90-92 | B 83-86 | C 73-76 | D 63-66 |  |
|  | B- 80-82 | C- 70-72 | D- 60-62 |  |

Students are advised to see the following URL for disclosures about essential consumer protection items required by the Students Right to Know Act of 1990: https://uwosh.edu/financialaid/resources/consumer-information/

**Course Calendar—Dates and assignments subject to change**

**Wk 1:** Thursday, September 8 – Introduction & Course Themes

**Wk 2:** Tuesday, September 13 – Achieving Change

Reading: Michael Maniates, “Individualization,” Canvas

**Reading response (1-2 pages, dbl spaced):** Evaluate Maniates’s main argument. What does he say is necessary to achieve social/environmental change? How, in his opinion, can change be achieved?

Thursday, September 15 – Issue Briefing with Campus Sustainability Director Brad Spanbauer

Reading: ACUPUCC, “Higher Education’s Role in Adapting to a Changing Climate,” Canvas

 Ball State University Geothermal Case Study, Canvas

 Student Nation, “How Climate Change Threatens Colleges Across the Country,” Canvas

**Wk 3:** Tuesday, September 20 – Campus Climate Action Planning

Reading: Create an AASHE account (details in class)

 Buckley and Strauss, “Climate Change and Sustainable Campus Planning,” Canvas

 Kelly et al., “Education in a warming world,” Canvas

**To consider for class:** Based on what we have learned from Brad, and your own experiences on campus, how does UWO compare to the universities and examples discussed in these readings?

Thursday, September 22 – Library Workshop—meet in Polk Library Lobby

Reading: Timmons & Weil, “A cost-minimizing approach,” Canvas (skim)

**Wk 4:** Tuesday, September 27 – Project Planning: Team Meetings with Jim and Brad

No Reading

Thursday, September 29 – Sustainability and Higher Education

Reading: Orr, *Earth in Mind*, Canvas

 Nugent, “The Unexpected Ways Climate Change Is Reshaping College Education,” Canvas

**Reading response (1-2 pages, dbl spaced):** What does Orr believe to be the purpose of a university education? How do the imperatives of climate change alter what you can/should/want to get out of your experience in college?

**Wk 5:** Tuesday, October 4– No class; team meetings with Jim (and Brad if needed)

## Thursday, October 6 – No class

**Wk 6:** Tuesday, October 11 – Class meets; research presentation workshop; **annotated bibliography due**

Thursday, October 13 – Class meets; **Research & Sustainability Presentations**

**Wk 7:** Tuesday, October 18 – No class; attend climate change workshop on Tues. OR Thurs., registration details TBD

Wednesday, October 19: Required attendance at Earth Charter Community Summit Keynote—Dr. Andrea Dutton, “The View from Here: A Geologist’s Perspective on Living Through Climate Change,” 5:00 PM, Culver Family Welcome Center

Thursday, October 20 – No class; attend climate change workshop on Tues. OR Thurs., registration details TBD

**Wk 8:** Tuesday, October 25 – Class meets— **Audit/Benchmarking Presentations**

**Required attendance** at ES Alumni Networking Night, 5:30-7:00; details TBA

 Thursday, October 27 – Eco-Anxiety & Making a Difference Workshop

 Reading: Ray, A Field Guide to Climate Anxiety, Canvas

 Additional readings TBA

**Wk 9:** Tuesday, November 1 – Class meets: **Stakeholder Presentations & Stakeholder Analysis Due**

Thursday, November 3 – Class meets: Networking & Interviewing Workshop; **Earth Charter Reflection Due**

**Wk 10:** Tuesday, November 8 – No class; mock interviews as scheduled through Career Services—team meetings with Jim/Brad if needed; **Cost Analysis Due**

 Thursday, November 10 – No class—team meetings with Jim/Brad

**Wk 11:** Tuesday, November 15 – Class meets—**draft report due; workshop on final presentations**

Thursday, November 17 – Presentation Dry Run 1

**Wk 12:** Tuesday, November 22 – Presentation Dry Run 2

Thursday, November 24 – NO CLASS – Thanksgiving Break

**Wk 13:** Tuesday, November 29– Presentation Dry Run 3

Thursday, December 1 – Final Presentation to Campus Climate Action Committee, **8:30-9:30 AM**

**Wk 14:** Tuesday, December 6 – Class meets—final paper workshop and course evaluations

## Thursday, December 8 – Class meets—final paper workshop and course evaluations

**Wk 15:** Tuesday, December 13 – Class meets—course evaluation & wrap up; **individual reflection papers due**

 Thursday, December 15 – No class; **Final Group Papers in Canvas dropbox by 1:00 pm**