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ENVS 400: Senior Seminar

Information

Class Meetings: Thu 5:00–8:00 PM

Location: Howard 244

Credits: 4 credits graded

Instructor: Prof. Jim Proctor (jproctor@lclark.edu, 503.768.7707)

Office Hours: Wed 10:30 - 1:00, Howard 348

Objectives

The ENVS Program at LC seeks to provide resources and cultivate an atmosphere whereby students

1. Appreciate the intellectual and practical complexities of environmental problems and solutions,
2. Master key concepts and methods of environmental analysis drawn from, and integrating, a broad range of disciplines, and
3. Fuse this background knowledge and analytical ability with leadership and communication skills to successfully devise and implement creative, academically grounded solutions to environmental problems.

ENVS 400 is the capstone course for the Environmental Studies major, drawing together all the above three elements to prepare the student for an enriching academic, professional, and personal life. Its three specific objectives are for participants to complete a thesis on an approved topic, read and discuss contemporary topics in environmental studies, and consider academic and professional next steps.

1. Senior Thesis. You will complete a stellar [senior thesis](#), following guidelines available on the [ENVS majors page](#) and demonstrating high quality scholarship in environmental studies and your chosen concentration. The project will follow a strict timetable, and will be completed in consultation with myself and an LC faculty member representing your concentration, as well as other resources including the [LC Writing Center](#). Much of your thesis work will be done outside of class, but you will routinely present and discuss in-project updates in class, as well as give a final oral and poster presentation. The oral presentation will take place in class during the final portion of the semester, and the poster presentation will take place at our ENVS End-of-Semester Celebration on Thursday May 1, 4–5:30 PM.
2. Contemporary Topics. Environmental studies is a young and growing scholarly field. As graduating seniors, you will develop confidence in articulating to others the current state of environmental studies by reading and discussing some important current works, including *Breakthrough: From the Death of Environmentalism to the Politics of Possibility*, by Ted Nordhaus and Michael Shellenberger (Houghton Mifflin, 2007), and *Politics of Nature: How to Bring the Sciences into Democracy* by Bruno Latour (Harvard, 2004).
3. Next Steps. In addition to completing a senior thesis and keeping abreast of contemporary topics in environmental studies, we know that you will soon graduate. What happens next? Now is not too soon to starting thinking of your next steps. We hope to bring in ENVS alumni and others to talk with you about opportunities. You will complete, as part of ENVS 400, a five year plan.

Schedule

ENVS 400 meets on Thursday evenings. The semester schedule proceeds with an overview of contemporary environmental studies to help you identify how to connect yourself and your senior thesis to the field. The senior thesis is produced in three stages over the semester: the proposal, a draft, and the final version. In between these milestones, we will discuss contemporary issues in environmental studies, consider academic and professional next steps with the assistance of LC staff and ENVS alumni, and support each other in the long writing and thinking process necessary to produce a stellar senior project!

A detailed schedule is available on our Moodle course page. The schedule will be frequently updated. It is your responsibility to check this schedule online to keep abreast of assignments, readings, and other course activities.

Readings

In addition to the two required works noted above, you will be assigned a small set of electronic readings for ENVS 400, all available on our Moodle course page. Readings will occasionally be discussed online as well as in class, and/or contribute to assignments.

Assignments and Exams

Assignments will be posted for submission on Moodle. All assignments are designed to contribute to the above three objectives; in particular, we want to give you plenty of time to work on your senior project and help others with their senior projects, so this will receive priority.

There are no exams for ENVS 400, as your senior project represents the culmination of this course.

Your Responsibilities and Grading

Everyone wants to get a good grade. Here are some requirements and recommendations:

1. *Check your email regularly.* In addition to announcements made in class, we will communicate important information to you via our Moodle news forum, which you will also receive via email. It is your responsibility to keep up to date on these postings!
2. *Check the ENVS 400 Moodle page regularly.* You will find all links to readings, lectures, assignments, and other course resources and activities on our ENVS 400 Moodle page. This page is frequently updated.
3. *Be on time.* Whether attending class or submitting assignments, please be punctual. If you have not provide prior notification that you will be late to class, please do not disrupt us by arriving late. I will allow up to two absences before deducting from your participation score, then will deduct ten percent from the attendance portion of this score for each additional absence. For all assignments, you will be deducted ten percent of the score for every day or portion of a day late, with a grace period of one hour for due dates.
4. *Ask your instructor for help.* Sometimes students are afraid to talk to their professors when they need help. Yes, it's important to try to figure things out on your own, but we are here to support you in ENVS 400 and the ENVS major in general, so please feel free to drop by my office, call me, or send me email when you have an important question.

Your ENVS 400 grade will be calculated as follows:

- 15%: Senior project proposal, potentially including feedback on other proposals
- 15%: Senior project draft, potentially including feedback on other drafts
- 45%: Final senior project oral (5%) and written (30%) report and poster (10%)
- 05%: Next Steps paper
- 20%: Course participation, including forum postings on readings and other small activities

Raw scores will be privately posted on Moodle, as well as in-progress grades; students scoring below a B- will participate in a mandatory consultation with their instructor.

As a final note, it is worth reminding you that plagiarism in any form is a serious offense at Lewis & Clark College. Your work should be your own, and if you borrow from someone else's work, you should properly cite that resource. Failure to do so may result in serious grade implications, or dismissal from the course. For details, please consult the [LC Academic Integrity Policy](#).

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