Course Description
This course explores environmental issues in urban centers, their causes and impacts, and the rise of a movement that considers the “environment” not just as the term we use to describe the natural world from which many urban residents feel dissociated, but rather as the array of places where we live, work and play. We will consider the relationship between society and public policy in the context of environmentalism, social justice and urban health.

This course introduces students to sustainability planning and public policy analysis, with a focus on policy development, implementation and decision-making in New York City. We will examine the powers of the NYC Council and consider the role of agencies, the private sector, and interest groups as critical parts of a bureaucracy through which environmental issues are shaped, managed and negotiated. Through case studies, students will understand the political, legal, economic and technical and scientific constraints of the policy decision-making process and explore the path towards managing, using and protecting environmental resources in urban centers.

Course Requirements
Performance expectations for this class are very high. Earning “A” grades require a significant amount of inquisitiveness, self-initiated research, and proactive learning and sharing. Students begin this class with 0 points. A grades (90+ points) are earned throughout the semester. Students are required to devote time to meet outside of class for group work on required assignments.

This is a reading-intensive course that covers a wide range of topics and case studies and draws from multiple disciplinary perspectives. Students are expected to read, understand and critique all of the reading material. A “critique” is a summary and an evaluation of the readings—students are expected to compare and contrast related readings, differentiate between facts and opinions, contemplate areas of agreement or contention with the given arguments and, finally, present summaries to the class and devise discussion questions for each class period. I will provide guidance on how to read the class materials. Discussion questions and comments count toward students’ class contribution grade.

To do well, you must attend all class sessions, and complete all the required readings before coming to class. Reading assessments (quizzes) may be randomly given over the course of the semester. There will be no make-up opportunities for quizzes or in-class assignments. Students will be provided with selected readings including scientific journal articles, newspaper and magazine pieces, “white papers” by advocacy groups, as well as legislation. However, students are expected to supplement the assigned readings, as needed, to further obtain a balanced view and understanding of the class topics. Class discussions will assume that students have completed all the required readings before coming to class.

Attendance and active participation are required. If you must be absent from class, you must inform me ahead of time, complete all the required reading or assignments, especially in support of your group members. Still, assignments cannot be made up, so students are expected to make every
reasonable effort to not miss class on a day that an assignment is due. If you are sick, for example, you must email your assignment even if you can’t make it to class. Penalties will accrue with class absences. Finally, to do well in this class active participation demonstrating comprehension and reflecting critical engagement with course materials and assignments is required in all classes. Do not sit silently in class and expect to get an A— even if you earn A’s in all the rest of your assignments (see student assessment chart below). If you feel uncomfortable speaking up in class, please be extra thoughtful in devising discussion questions and articulating your reactions as you do the readings and be prepared to share them with the class.

Relevant Policies
• There is no extra credit— nothing can improve your grade beyond doing the assignments on time
• Plagiarism results in failure of the class. It includes: copying sentences or fragments from any source without quotes or references; not citing every sourced used in your papers; citing internet information without proper citation; presenting someone else’s work as your own; or “inadvertently” copying verbatim from any source. For example:
  Original: There is considerable debate in the scientific community as to the sources of climate change.
  Plagiarism: There exists substantial disagreement in the scientific field about the causes of climate change.
  Not Plagiarism: Scientists are engaged in ongoing disagreement and discussion on the sources of climate change (+ citation as endnote).
• Lateness is unacceptable. Grading penalties will accrue with repeated lateness.
• Email is the easiest way to contact me. If you are experiencing problems of any kind contact me immediately, though assignments must be submitted on time.
• Be considerate. No chatting, texting, or web-surfing will be tolerated in class.

Resources
• Access your course materials
  o NYU Classes (newclasses.nyu.edu)
• Databases, journal articles, and more
  o NYU Libraries (https://library.nyu.edu/)
• Strengthening your Writing
  o NYU Writing Center (https://www.nyu.edu/students/undergraduates/academic-services/writing-center.html)
• Tutoring Support
  o Academic Resource Center (https://www.nyu.edu/students/undergraduates/academic-services/undergraduate-advisement/academic-resource-center.html)
• Technology Support

Academic Integrity
Again, work you submit should be your own. Please consult the CAS academic integrity policy for more information: http://cas.nyu.edu/page/academicintegrity. Penalties for violations of academic integrity may include failure of the course, suspension from the University, or even expulsion.
Religious Observance
As a nonsectarian, inclusive institution, NYU policy permits members of any religious group to absent themselves from classes without penalty when required for compliance with their religious obligations. The policy and principles to be followed by students and faculty may be found here: The University Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays (http://www.nyu.edu/about/policies-guidelines-compliance/policies-and-guidelines/university-calendar-policy-on-religious-holidays.html)

Disability Disclosure Statement
Academic accommodations are available to any student with a chronic, psychological, visual, mobility, learning disability, or who is deaf or hard of hearing. Students should please register with the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at 212-998-4980.

NYU's Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Students with Disabilities
726 Broadway, 2nd Floor
New York, NY 10003-6675
Telephone: 212-998-4980
Voice/TTY Fax: 212-995-4114
Web site: http://www.nyu.edu/csd

Assignments

Readings
Assigned readings are noted in the syllabus and will be posted on NYU Classes or available on the web. Check your syllabus for the reading assignments, including required page numbers, each week. Assigned readings and assignment due dates may change throughout the semester.

Written Assignments
All written work, unless otherwise noted, is due at the start of class time. Emailed submissions will not be accepted unless specifically requested in that format. Assignments must be printed in double-sided mode, and formatted with 1-inch margins and 12-point font. Citations are critical and must be formatted as endnotes in MLA style. Google “Purdue Online Writing Lab” to learn more about MLA formatting and style for endnotes and in-text citations. Works cited pages do not count towards the maximum page limits.

Late work will not be accepted, except in cases of serious morbidity (doctor’s note, copy of funeral announcement or note from clergy required). There will be no extensions granted.

Assignment 1 – We will be covering several case studies in New York City environmentalism. You will be assigned a partner and a broad topic area and your assignment is to choose a current issue in another U.S. city within that broad topic area. You will find four related articles (two peer-reviewed, scientific articles and two popular press articles, but not from advocacy websites), describe the issue and summarize the articles (4 pages double-spaced and double sided), using MLA-formatted endnotes as your citations. You will upload the actual articles to NYU Classes (each as a .pdf file) and submit the write-up to me. You will present your team’s findings to the rest of the class via a PowerPoint presentation. This assignment is due on February 13th, 2017. 5 points for the write up and 5 points for the presentation = 10 points

Assignment 2 – Abstract for group research project.
This is the first of three interrelated written assignments: an abstract, a progress update presentation, and a final paper. The abstract is a 2-page double-spaced proposal of the topic which your group will research and develop throughout the term and which will culminate with a final memo and presentation. The abstract will explain your group’s proposed topic and location, its related sustainability initiative(s), why action is needed, and how a solution might be pursued, including broad details of the rationale, goals, needed resources, and challenges of this strategy. Use MLA-formatted endnotes as your citations. You will present your team’s abstract to the rest of the class via a PowerPoint presentation. The abstract is due on March 6th, 2017. 5 points

Assignment 3 – You will be assigned a partner and a broad topic area and your assignment is to choose a current environmental issue in an international city within that broad topic area. Your assignment is to find four related articles (two peer-reviewed, scientific articles and two popular press articles, but not from advocacy websites), describe the issue and summarize the articles (4 pages double-spaced), using MLA-formatted endnotes as your citations. You will upload the actual articles to NYU Classes (each as a .pdf file) and submit the write-up to me. You will present your team’s findings to the rest of the class via a PowerPoint presentation. This assignment is due on March 20th, 2017. 5 points for the write up and 5 points for the presentation = 10 points

Assignment 4 – Group research memo and presentation.
Once your group chooses an urban environmental problem, you will examine the feasibility of improving this problem, by researching and addressing the following questions:

Background: This section describes the “big picture” of your chosen environmental problem—Whose problem is it? What has been done in that place and in other places to address this issue? How is the problem measured? How would the solution be measured? I.e. how do we know we’re making progress on solving the problem?

Issue context:
What is the relevant history and context? How is the problem understood and perceived? What is the political and economic landscape of the topic? Who are the stakeholders and what are the main issues and constraints faced by decision-makers? Has there been recent movement on this issue? What are the precedents for action? Who has led this action in the past?

Recommendations:
What are your group’s recommendations to address this issue? Does your proposed recommendation require public or private financing? If so, how will the proposed recommendation be financed? How is the solution measured? That is, how will we measure the progress and impact of this initiative? Who will be involved in championing and implementing this initiative? Does it require legislation? If so, what is the political path of your proposal (City, State, National)? What is the likelihood of public mobilization in support and opposition of the issue? Is this initiative the most effective use of resources (including time & political capital)?

Summary memo:
The answers to these questions will be condensed into a policy memo. Examples will be provided via NYU Classes. This memo, addressed to a policy or decision maker, proposes a specific recommendation to solve the environmental issue chosen by the group. Think of this memo as the key points you’d want to have at hand if you were stuck in an elevator for 10 minutes with the NYC Mayor, the head of a powerful philanthropic organization, or the Governor of the affected state. These
are very busy women, so they will not digest a dense or unfocused pitch or try to decipher a convoluted proposal. The memo must be concise, but also reflect the analysis you have conducted throughout this semester—that is, it must give this leader the sense that whatever questions she has, have already been researched and thought about. And, know that she cares about the bottom line—thus, this memo will discuss the proposal’s economic, political, and technical feasibility, and its opportunities & constraints; as discussed in class.

The maximum length of your memo is 5 single-spaced, double-sided pages. Use MLA-formatted endnotes as your citations. All references must be traceable and website links must be provided.

Assignment 4 (a): A write-up and Power Point presentation of your assignment progress is due on April 17th, 2017. 10 points

Assignment 4 (b): The class presentation of your final research project is due on May 08th 2017 and it is worth 10 points. Presentation slides must be submitted via NYU Classes.

Assignment 4 (c): The final memo is due on May 08th, 2017. 15 points

Assignment 5: Final Exam is on May 15th, 2017 from 6pm to 7:50pm. 25 points

Assessment and Timeline
February 13, 2017 — Urban environmentalism case study assignment — 10%
March 6, 2017 — Abstract for final research paper — 5%
March 20, 2017 — Urban environmentalism case study assignment — 10%
April 17, 2017 — Progress report of research project — 10%
May 08, 2017 — Final presentations and Research memo — 25%
May 15, 2017 — Final Exam — 25%
Ongoing — Class presence, class discussion and reading assessments — 10%
360 Review Process — 5%

Team Collaboration & Course Review
At the end of the semester, final project team members will each submit a write-up of their itemized contribution to the collaborative final project, including reflections on successes and challenges within the collaborative process in what is called a 360-review process. More details will be provided in class.

Your participation will be evaluated according to the substance and regularity of your contribution to in-class discussions and to your group dynamics and group output, as well as respect for classmates, and support for project team members’ needs. Your effort will also be evaluated by receptivity to new skills and ideas, responsiveness to the feedback you receive, collaboration within groups, and a demonstration of your understanding of the subject matter expertise over the course of the term.

Weekly Schedule and Readings

January 23 — Session 1: Course Introduction
  • Introductions, course expectations, and assessment structure
  • Capacity Building: Managing teams

January 30 — Session 2: Carbon Footprint of Cities
  • Course expectations and assessment structure Q&A
• **Capacity Building: Developing work plans**


**February 6—Session 3: History of the Environmental Movement**
• **Capacity Building: Briefing on briefings**

**February 13—Session 4: Urban Environmental Issues—** ASSIGNMENT 1 DUE
Student Presentations

**February 20—NO CLASS—Presidents Day**

**February 27—Session 5: Consumption and Human Impact**
• **Capacity Building: Final project logistics discussion**
• **Working group:** In class assignment—Develop a draft of your project abstract

**March 6—Session 6: Environmental Exposures and Public Health—** ASSIGNMENT 2 DUE—Group Presentations
• Goldberg, A. and Palmer, D. “Do you know where the lead is?” NYPIRG report.

**March 13—NO CLASS—Spring Break—REVISED ASSIGNMENT 2 DUE by 9AM**

**March 20—Session 7: ASSIGNMENT 3 DUE**
Student Presentations

**March 27—Session 8: PlaNYC: A Greener, Greater, New York**
• Addressing heating oil pollution in NYC—a case study.

**April 3—Session 9: PlaNYC: A Greener, Greater, New York**
• Student discussions: Critique assigned PlaNYC 2011 update report chapter; including relevant sections of 2014 progress report, and provide 1 in-depth case study of assigned chapter. (see links above)

**April 10—Session 10: Environmental policy and advocacy in NYC**
Addressing plastic bag pollution in NYC—a case study.

**April 17—Session 11: ASSIGNMENT 4(a) DUE**
Group Presentations—Final assignment progress report
• Capacity Building: Writing Final Memos: A Few Tips.
• **Working group:** Final project logistics and next steps.

**April 24—Session 12: Other Urban Sustainability Efforts**
May 1—Session 13: Urban Planning and Ecology


May 8—ASSIGNMENT 4(b) and ASSIGNMENT 4(c) DUE in class
Group Presentations of Final Assignment
- Class wrap-up.

May 15—ASSIGNMENT 5: FINAL EXAM from 6pm to 7:50pm.