



ENVST-UA 900

Environmental Studies Senior Seminar Spring 2021

Course Information

- Class Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 11:00 am - 12:15 pm
- Class Location: Class meets via Zoom. Please log in via [Brightspace](#).

Instructor Information

Course Prerequisites

Open to seniors in the Environmental Studies major and the Gallatin-ES Partnership.

Course Description

The Environmental Studies Senior Seminar is a research and professional seminar attended by all senior Environmental Studies majors in either the fall or spring semester of their senior year. The seminar will include both a regular research and professional seminar series (about 12 per

semester) as well as classroom instruction. The purpose of the senior seminar is to integrate environmental research and practice into the senior experience, teach critical and integrative thinking, and enhance community- and cohort-building.

Guiding questions, more broadly integrative than those asked in ENVST-UA 100 and ENVST-UA 101, include the following. Speakers will be asked to reflect on some of these questions, to provide continuity:

- What is environmental studies?
- What are the frontiers of knowledge and practice in environmental studies?
- What questions aren't answered?
- What are the unknowns and uncertainties?
- What is critical thinking in light of environmental problems?
- What tools are the speakers using?
- How well supported are the claims the speakers are making?
- Who is the audience for the work done by the speakers?
- Who do speakers interact with on a daily basis?
- What is the daily life of the speakers like?
- What major challenges do the speakers face?

Course and Learning Objectives

The course goals are to integrate your Environmental Studies undergraduate experience and set you up for success for what comes next.

Course Materials

This course has no textbook. Instead, weekly readings will complement guest speakers and guide discussions throughout the semester. All readings will be available via the course website.

Assessment and Grading

Each assignment, including expected content, style, length, medium, and submission format will be fully explained to students before the due date. Assignments will be accompanied by rubrics used for grading. The following weights will be given to each of the course requirements in the determination of final grades.

Component	Description	Points
Short response papers	Students will write 11 weekly papers that analyze and critique readings, speaker presentations, and class discussions.	550

Annotated bibliography	Each student will create an annotated bibliography of the most relevant readings and materials from their Environmental Studies courses.	150
Research paper or career plan	Students will develop a semester-long project. They can choose between the following options: (i) Research paper. This paper should focus on one of the major themes discussed throughout the semester. If a student selects the research paper, they should write at least one short response paper focused on their broader career plans. (ii) Personal career plan. This plan should include a reflection on environmental studies as a field, the student's comparative advantage within the field, and where and how to make the biggest difference.	150
Final presentation	During the last two weeks of the semester, students will present their research and/or career plan project to peers. For students who are unable to attend the synchronous session, a pre-recorded presentation is acceptable.	50
Participation	Students should actively engage with class throughout the semester. This includes asking questions during discussions and guest speaker events and contributing to online discourse. For students who are unable to attend the synchronous classes, a full participation grade will require substantive weekly online engagement. Once during the semester each student will be required to work with other students to facilitate class discussion; this will contribute to the participation grade. The instructors will note participation on a weekly basis as well as during the facilitated discussion, and the participation score will reflect aggregate semester long participation.	100
TOTAL		1000 points

All written assessments are individual. Discuss the topic with each other; join up in reading groups; come to office hours alone or in groups to discuss details; but submit your own, individual essays.

Deadlines. Due dates are strictly imposed. Late work will be accepted with a 5% penalty for each day of delay. After ten days, and until the final day of classes in the semester, 50% will be awarded for the assignment.

Revise and Resubmit. Students can improve a grade they received on an assignment by revising their work. To do so, they should send an email to the course assistant (please copy the instructor on the email) within 7 days of receiving the assignment grade. The email should include the revised assignment WITH TRACK CHANGES ON so that the instructors can see how the revision compares to the original submission. The entire assignment will be re-graded potentially leading to an increase or decrease in the overall score.

Grading Scale. Final letter grades will be assigned according to the schedule below.

A	$100 > x \geq 94$
A-	$94 > x \geq 90$
B+	$90 > x \geq 87$
B	$87 > x \geq 83$
B-	$83 > x \geq 80$
C+	$80 > x \geq 77$
C	$77 > x \geq 73$
C-	$73 > x \geq 70$
D+	$70 > x \geq 67$
D	$67 > x \geq 65$
F	$x < 65$

Brightspace

All announcements, resources, and assignments will be delivered through the Brightspace site: brightspace.nyu.edu

Respect for Diversity

I intend that students from diverse backgrounds and perspectives are well served by this course, that your learning needs are addressed, and that the diversity that you bring to class is viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit. I aim to present materials and activities that respect diversity. I encourage your suggestions around course materials and approaches that will better serve this goal. I am continuously learning about diverse perspectives and identities. If something communicated in class (by anyone) made you feel uncomfortable, please reach out to me (either in person or electronically) or provide anonymous feedback. Also [reach out to me](#) and let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you or for other students or student groups.

Academic Integrity

Scholastic dishonesty of any form is not tolerated and may result in a failing grade and reporting the behavior to the College of Arts and Sciences. Scholastic dishonesty includes plagiarism, cheating, and fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or analysis. Obviously, bringing answers into an examination or copying all or part of a paper straight from a book, the Internet, or a fellow student is a violation of this principle. But there are other forms of cheating or plagiarizing which are just as serious — for example, presenting an oral report drawn without attribution from other sources (oral or written); writing a sentence or paragraph which, despite being in different words, expresses someone else's idea(s) without a reference to the source of the idea(s); or submitting essentially the same paper in two different courses (unless both instructors have given their permission in advance). Receiving or giving help on a take-home paper, examination, or quiz is also cheating, unless expressly permitted by the instructor (as in collaborative projects). If you are unsure on how to do proper citation, please see me. I highly encourage the use of reference management software such as Zotero, RefWorks, EndNote, or Mendeley. More detail can be found [here](#). NYU offers academic support and tutoring at the [University Learning Center](#), (212) 998-8085.

Student Accessibility

New York University is committed to providing equal educational opportunity and participation for students of all abilities. Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. If you have a disability, or think you have a disability, please visit the [Moses Center for Students with Disabilities \(CSD\) website](#) or call or email CSD at (212) 998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu for information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are strongly advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance. If you have already been approved for accommodations through the Moses Center, please meet with the instructors so we can develop an implementation plan together.

NYU's Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays

[NYU's Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays](#) states that members of any religious group may, without penalty, absent themselves from classes when required in compliance with their religious obligations. Please notify me in advance of religious holidays that might coincide with exams to schedule mutually acceptable alternatives.

Acknowledgments

This course has been conceptualized and designed by the faculty of the Department of Environmental Studies. I am teaching the second iteration of it in spring 2021, in close coordination with Gernot Wagner, who taught the seminar in fall 2020. Many thanks to her and especially to [Chris Schlottmann](#), director of undergraduate studies, for help every step along the way.

Week	Topic	Days	Activities	Readings/Resources		Due
1	Introduction	Thursday January 28	Overview and expectations	Syllabus		
2	Communication	Tuesday, February 2	Discussion	Lejano and Nero 2020 - Ch 2 and 5	Hassol, Susan Joy. "Improving how scientists communicate about climate change." Eos, Transactions American Geophysical Union 89.11 (2008): 106-107.	
2	Communication	Thursday, February 4	Raul Lejano			Short Response Paper (Friday)
3	Risk and uncertainty	Tuesday, February 9	Discussion	Book chapter from Michael	TBA	
3	Risk and uncertainty	Thursday, February 11	Michael Webster			Short Response Paper (Friday)
4	n/a	Tuesday, February 16	Office Hours			
4	n/a	Thursday, February 18	NO CLASS (follow monday schedule)			
5	Professional and research ethics	Tuesday, February 23	Discussion	TBA	TBA	
5	Professional and research ethics	Thursday, February 25	Jennifer Jacquet			Short Response Paper (Friday)
6	Problem-definition and problem-solving	Tuesday, March 2	Discussion	Fleischman, Forrest, et al. "Pitfalls of tree planting show why we need people-centered natural climate solutions." BioScience 70.11 (2020): 947-950.	TBA	
6	Problem-definition and problem-solving	Thursday, March 4	Forrest Fleischman			Short Response Paper (Friday)
7	Justice and Inequality	Tuesday, March 9	Discussion	WNYC Interview w/Jami Floyd	Birding for Social Change	
7	Justice and Inequality	Thursday, March 11	Georgia Silvera Seamans			Short Response Paper (Friday)
8	Scale: local and global	Tuesday, March 16	Discussion	TBA	TBA	Annotated Bibliography
8	Scale: local and global	Thursday, March 18	Ritwick Ghosh			Short Response Paper (Friday)
9	How to get an ES job	Tuesday, March 23	Discussion	Cities hold the key to a low-carbon economy	TBA	
9	How to get an ES job	Thursday, March 25	Gernot Wagner			Short Response Paper (Friday)
10	TBA	Tuesday, March 30	Discussion	TBA	TBA	
10	TBA	Thursday, April 1	Guest TBA			Short Response Paper (Friday)
11	Interdisciplinarity and integration	Tuesday, April 6	Discussion	TBA	TBA	
11	Interdisciplinarity and integration	Thursday, April 8	Jonathan Foley			Short Response Paper (Friday)
12	Science and advocacy	Tuesday, April 13	Discussion	book chapters from Kim	TBA	
12	Science and advocacy	Thursday, April 15	Kimberly Nicholas			Short Response Paper (Friday)
13	TBA	Tuesday, April 20	Discussion	TBA	TBA	Research Paper or Career Plan
13	TBA	Thursday, April 22	Becca Franks			Short Response Paper (Friday)
14	final presentations	Tuesday, April 27	student presentations			
14	final presentations	Thursday, April 29	student presentations			
15	final presentations	Tuesday, May 4	student presentations			Final Presentation
15	wrap-up	Thursday, May 6	final discussion			
16	n/a	Tuesday, May 11	NO CLASS (READING DAY)			
16	n/a	Thursday May 13	NO CLASS			