ENVST-UA 900
Environmental Studies Senior Seminar
Fall 2020

Instructor Information

- [Gernot Wagner](mailto:gwagner@nyu.edu)
- Email: gwagner@nyu.edu
- Office Address: Department of Environmental Studies, 285 Mercer Street.
- (Currently Virtual) Office Hours: Wednesdays, 2:30-4:30 p.m. Please [sign up here](#).
  Alternatively, join me on a ~40-minute [morning run](#) (6 feet apart). If none of these times work, please [email me](mailto:).
- Course Assistant: Katie Eng; email: katie.eng@nyu.edu

Course Information

- Class Meeting Times: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 11:00 a.m.-12:15 p.m.
- Class Location: Class meets via Zoom and other online tools (e.g. [spatial.chat](#) for small-group discussions).

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 does the ‘field’ of environmental studies look like? 
  What are the next steps in the field of environmental studies?
- How do we define environmental problems?
- What are the major drivers of environmental change?
- What are the frontiers of knowledge and practice?
- How are environmental problems being defined?
- What is critical thinking in light of environmental problems?
- What tools are the speakers using?
- Who is the audience for the work?
- What does their daily life look like? What are their major challenges?
- What questions aren’t answered?
- How well-supported are the claims?

Course and Learning Objectives

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

Required Readings

There is no textbook. Weekly readings will complement guest speakers and guide discussions 
throughout the semester. All readings will be available via the course website.

Assessment Assignments and Evaluation

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Short response papers</td>
<td>Twelve short response papers analysing and critiquing readings and class discussions, 400-600 words, 5% each.</td>
<td>60%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annotated bibliography</td>
<td>Each student will create an annotated bibliography of the most relevant readings and materials from their Environmental Studies college courses.</td>
<td>15%</td>
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You have a choice between two semester-long projects, either:

(i) a **research paper**, focused on one of the major themes discussed throughout the semester, or

(ii) a personal **career plan**, reflecting more directly on ES as a field, your comparative advantage within the field, and where and how to make the biggest difference.

Either will be ~3,000-5,000 words long.

If you choose (i), you will also write at least one short response paper focused on your broader career plans.

### Final presentation

In-class presentation of semester-long research and/or career plan project.

### Participation

Actively engage with the readings and participate in class discussions throughout the semester.

Bonus points for anyone able to point to recent news stories or other readings relevant to the topic at hand. Please post them by 9:00 p.m. the night before each class, on NYU Classes.

### Total

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.

Short response papers are due, via NYU Classes, by 10:00 p.m. on Fridays during the week that they were assigned.

If you need more time, you will need to optimize in light of the following time-grade tradeoff: You will lose ½ point (out of a possible 5 for each essay) immediately, and another ½ point for each additional 24 hours the assignment is late.
To request a regrade on any assignment, send me an email with your full assignment attached, explaining your request within 1 week of receiving the graded assignment. I will re-grade the entire assignment—grades may increase or decrease as a result.

**Course Schedule**

Course Topics (11 in total) to be scheduled.

**NYU Classes**

All announcements, resources, and assignments will be delivered through the NYU Classes site.

**Academic Integrity**

Plagiarism results in failure in the class and referral to your academic dean. It includes: copying sentences or fragments from any source without quotes and references; not citing a source 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. More detail can be found at [http://cas.nyu.edu/page/academicintegrity](http://cas.nyu.edu/page/academicintegrity). NYU offers academic support and tutoring at the University Learning Center: [http://www.nyu.edu/cas/ulc](http://www.nyu.edu/cas/ulc); (212) 998-8085.

**Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at NYU**

Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. Please visit the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) website and click on the Reasonable Accommodations and How to Register tab, 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.

**NYU’s Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays**

[NYU’s Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays](http://cas.nyu.edu/page/religiousholidays) 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 first iteration of it in fall 2020, in close coordination with Kim Carlson, who will teach the seminar in spring 2021. Many thanks to her and especially to Chris Schlottmann, director of undergraduate studies, for help every step along the way.