

EVS 595 Seminar/Final Project in Environmental Studies
Department of Environmental Studies • University of North Carolina Wilmington
Spring Semester 2011

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Course Description

The course is designed to provide a capstone experience for students in the Environmental Studies Graduate program. As such, it is intended to be taken toward the end of the student's academic career, and therefore, acts as a culmination and synthesis of prior academic and practical experiences.

This course is therefore geared toward developing competent and engaged environmental professionals. It allows students to expand their skills and knowledge within a specific area of interest within an applied learning setting. This course also provides students with the opportunity to work closely with a respected individual within their intended professional field, thereby increasing their experience base and fostering professional contacts. Finally, it allows students to present their work within a critical, professional setting.

Course Objectives

The structure of EVS 595 provides a great deal of flexibility to the student. However, successful completion of the course requires that students meet specific objectives:

- 1) The student will be able to successfully conceptualize, develop and implement a capstone project which is a synthesis of prior academic and professional experience.
- 2) The student will be able to successfully seek out and contract with an environmental professional who will act as a mentor on the project.
- 3) The student will be able to successfully present the results of the capstone project in a professional setting.

The Role of the Mentor

Once a project proposal has been developed, each student will seek out an individual within the environmental profession whose area of expertise is consistent with the project's focus. The student will then come to an agreement with that individual as to what the role of each party will be in implementing the project. The mentor will be responsible for assigning the student's grade at the completion of the project by communicating with the instructor of record.

Criteria for Projects

The range of EVS 595 projects is as broad as the areas of expertise within the environmental field. Past projects have included field-based research projects, environmental education curricula, development and implementation of environmental management plans, and legal analyses of

environmentally-related cases (just to name a few). Nonetheless, each project must meet certain criteria:

- 1) The project must be a culmination of the student's academic career. As such, its focus must be consistent with the student's academic concentration.
- 2) The project must be of sufficient depth and rigor to warrant 3 hours of graduate credit.
- 3) The project must be done in conjunction with a mentor in the field who possesses relevant professional expertise.
- 4) The project must be concluded with an oral presentation of the project.

Course Components

1. Project proposal (working document, not graded)
2. Project document (90% of final grade)
3. Project presentation (10% of final grade)

Project Proposal

In the proposal, the student will briefly describe the issue which will be investigated within the context of the project and the intended research agenda to address this issue. This proposal provides guidance in fully developing and implementing the project and acts as a vehicle upon which the relationship with the project mentor is developed. The proposal should be less than 500 words. Critical components of this proposal include:

- A. Title
- B. Name and contact information of the student
- C. Name, contact information and qualifications of the proposed mentor
- D. Statement of the problem
- E. Project objectives
- F. Intended procedure(s) to address the problem through the project
- G. Project evaluation (if relevant)
- H. Final deliverables for the project (e.g. master plan, journal article for submission, GIS database, environmental education curriculum)
- I. Timeline with specific milestones addressed

Project Presentation

Each student will make a professional presentation of the project. Anticipate 15 to 20 minutes for the presentation and 10 to 15 minutes for questions. In the delivery of the presentation, PowerPoint must be used. Practice is advisable.

Guidelines for Written Work

The ability to present thoughts clearly and concisely is one of the most important components of professional communication skills. Guidelines for written work in the project are:

1. All written work should be presented in a professional manner. One of the easiest ways to ensure this is to proofread thoroughly before submitting your draft to both mentor and coordinator.

General sloppiness is easy to recognize and correct, but look deeper. Is the document complete? Is it well organized? Does it present the necessary information? Does it come to a logical conclusion?

2. All written assignments must be word processed. Handwritten and/or typed papers will not be accepted. Using a word processor improves the quality of work by allowing the author to easily experiment with structures, correct errors, update previous drafts and provides an abundance of tools at your fingertips, such as a thesaurus and grammar checker.
3. Since you are already using a word processor, use the spell checker. Spelling errors will severely affect your grade, as will typos, hand corrections, and other evidence of sloppiness.
4. All references and citations must follow an accepted format, such as APA, MLA, or Science.

Course Attendance

Although the majority of this course will be spent working on your project during your own time, it is critical that you attend the project presentations on Reading Day. Not only does this help support your colleagues but it also provides a constructive environment for presentation and discussion of capstone projects. Therefore, absences from Reading Day presentations will cause 20% of the final grade to be deducted unless the absence is legitimate and documented. Legitimate absences include illness, death in the family, etc. Absences which are not legitimate include oversleeping or forgetting. Documentation of legitimacy is required.

Course Timeline

Although most of the project will be spent in independent, there are several specific milestones that must be met.

First week of course	EVS 595 students meet together as a class (time and date TBA)
January 24	Project proposal due
April 12	First draft of deliverables due (copies to instructor of record and mentor)
April 26	First draft returned to student with commentary
May 3	Presentations (time TBA)
May 6	Final copy of deliverables due (copies to instructor of record and mentor)

If the deadline for first draft, presentation or final copy of the deliverables is missed, an Incomplete will be assigned.

Religious Observance Policy

In accordance with NC SL 2010-211, you are entitled to two excused absences for religious observances per academic year. You must inform me in writing the first week of class if you will be missing any classes due to religious observance and using one of the two permissible absences for the academic year. In addition, please inform the Registrar the first week of class, who will then confirm your intentions to miss class with the course instructors. Any absence for religious purposes

will be considered unexcused unless you submit the request in writing the first week to either me or the Registrar.

Academic Expectations

In choosing UNCW, you have become part of our community of scholars. We recognize that the UNCW learning experience is challenging and requires hard work. It also requires a commitment to make time available to do that hard work. The university expects you to make academics your highest priority by dedicating your time and energy to training your mind and acquiring knowledge. Academic success in critical thinking and problem solving prepares you for the changes and challenges you will encounter in the future. Our faculty and academic support resources are readily available as partners in this effort, but the primary responsibility for learning is yours.

Academic Integrity

All members of UNCW's community are expected to follow the academic Honor Code. Please read the UNCW Honor Code carefully (as covered in the UNCW Student Handbook). Academic dishonesty in any form will not be tolerated in this class. Please be especially familiar with UNCW's position on plagiarism as outlined in the UNCW Student Handbook. Plagiarism is a form of academic dishonesty in which you take someone else's ideas and represent them as your own. Here are some examples of plagiarism:

- a. You write about someone else's work in your paper and do not give them credit for it by referencing them.
- b. You give a presentation and use someone else's ideas and do not state that the ideas are the other person's.
- c. You get facts from your textbook or some other reference material and do not reference that material.

Disability Accommodation

Students with diagnosed disabilities should contact the Office of Disability Services (962-7555). Please give me a copy of the letter you receive from Office of Disability Services detailing class accommodations you may need. If you require accommodation for test-taking please make sure I have the referral letter no less than one week before the test.

Diversity in the University Community

As an institution of higher learning, the University of North Carolina Wilmington represents a rich diversity of human beings among its faculty, staff, and students and is committed to maintaining a campus environment that values that diversity. Accordingly, the university supports policies, curricula, and co-curricular activities that encourage understanding of and appreciation for all members of its community and will not tolerate any harassment or disrespect for persons because of race, gender, age, color, national origin, ethnicity, creed, religion, disability, sexual orientation, political affiliation, marital status, or relationship to other university constituents. Students with Disabilities information and resources is available at <http://www.uncw.edu/stuaff/disability/>

Violence and Harassment

UNCW practices a zero tolerance policy for any kind of violent or harassing behavior. If you are experiencing an emergency of this type contact the police at 911 or UNCW CARE at 962-2273. Resources for individuals concerned with a violent or harassing situation can be located at <http://www.uncw.edu/wsrc/crisis.html>

Grading

There are 100 possible points:

Final project..... 90 pts.
Presentation 10 pts.
Total 100 pts.

As instructor, I maintain the right to adjust grades as I best see fit in order to maintain fairness and consistency.

Final letter grade by total points:

A 93 - 100 pts.
A- 90 - 92
B+ 87 - 89
B 83 - 86
B- 80 - 82
C+ 77 - 79
C 73 - 76
C- 70 - 72
D+ 67 - 69
D 63 - 66
D- 60 - 62
F 0 - 59