Course Description

This course offers an interdisciplinary approach to studying environmental leadership by integrating a weekly seminar session and an intensive project experience (8-10 hours/week) with an environmental organization. This course is intended to provide you with the resources, space and support for intentional reflection on how you balance personal leadership style, academic/technical skills and professional career goals. Each week we will explore a range of themes that help you analyze and interpret the work of local leaders and their organizations. The ultimate goal of the course experience is to help you explore your own leadership style and chart out a professional course for your post-Macalester years.

Objectives

Over the course of the semester we will work through some challenging exercises that will eventually help you answer these questions:

- What matters most to you? How can you translate your life goals into a post-college plan?
- What are your skills, talents and academic interests? Can you identify gaps you need to fill?
- What kinds of working environments suit you best? What kind of mentors do you need?
- What are the challenges confronting recent ES graduates? How can you prepare yourself to find new opportunities and launch your career?
- Where do you see yourself 5 years from now? How do you plan to land that dream job, start that organization or get that next degree?
Evaluation and co-grading

ENVI489/490 is made up of a 4-credit internship and a 2-credit seminar. To earn your internship credits, you need to complete 8-10 hrs of work per week and log your hours (for a total of ~120 hours). The seminar will meet Mondays from 7-9pm.

In this course, we will take a different approach to assessment and grades that is a combination of “ungrading” (Stomel 2020) and that many at Macalester are now calling “co-grading”. The intent is to create flexibility and give you agency so that you can focus on your learning, rather than on grades.

How it works:

Throughout the semester, I will stay mindful of your engagement and participation in class, will respond to your weekly homework (see below), and will offer you feedback on your formal written work (final paper). Around the middle of the semester and at the end of the semester, I’ll ask you to complete a brief self-reflection that will include a question about what letter grade you would give yourself for the course based on the reasoning you present in your reflection. Then, you and I will meet and talk about your work, your reflection, and your self-evaluation. If you assign yourself a grade that is drastically low or high, I reserve the right to amend that grade in consultation with you—thus the term “co-grading.”

You and I will determine your grade on the basis of:

1) **Seminar attendance & participation (20%)**
   Please aim for thoughtful, respectful, and productive engagement in class discussions. You are expected to attend every seminar session and to complete your project hours each week. If you must be absent due to illness or other extenuating circumstance, contact me as soon as possible. If you must be absent from your project, notify your supervisor.

   See “Expectations for engaged learning” (below).

2) **Submission of short homework writing assignments (35%)**
   There are 10 short homework assignments in this course. Your assignments are due by **12pm the morning of class**, unless otherwise noted. They must be submitted through Moodle.
   
   Please do not e-mail assignments to me.

   I will provide feedback on each assignment by letting you know (via Moodle) whether your work is meeting expectations extremely well (= 3), fairly well (=2), or not meeting expectations (=1). I will be glad to provide feedback on how you can improve your writing. Note: I will very occasionally give an “outstanding” (=4) mark for those submissions that are exceptionally thoughtful and articulate in response to the question prompt, and in the contexts of any assigned readings. If your writing is referred to in class, your identity will remain confidential. Your writing assignments will not be shared with your project supervisor.

3) **Final paper and project presentation (30% total – paper 20%; presentation 10%)**
   There will be a final project presentation session on **Monday Dec 5th (4:30-6)** when you will share your project experiences with the rest of the college community and your supervisors. The main purpose of the assignment is to summarize your work this semester in a succinct and interesting way so that others can easily understand what you have accomplished. All supervisors will be invited to the session.

   A draft of your final reflection paper is due on Monday, Dec 12 at midnight, and the revised final reflection paper is due on **Monday Dec 12 by 5pm** on Moodle. It should be approximately 3-4 pages single spaced (approximately 1500-1800 words). In this paper, I will ask you to imagine yourself 5 years from now and narrate how you have gotten there. In the paper, I expect you to reflect on your project experience in detail. What have you earned about the field you investigated? How well did your project connect with your coursework in Environmental
Studies? What were your most memorable moments and what did they teach you?

4) **E-Portfolio (15%)**
   This semester you will be asked to design and create a portfolio that describes your goals and achievements. It's a space for you to narrate your life story. We will workshop these in class. The final submission date is **Wednesday Dec 14th by 5pm**.

**Expectations for Engaged Learning**

1. **Attend class.** Attendance plays an essential role in learning; you are warmly invited, encouraged, and expected to attend all class meetings. Attendance is important not only for your learning, but also for our ability to build a community together and maintain a sense of connection and commitment to one another during the semester. Your presence in class matters. Note: I recognize that there are unavoidable circumstances that sometimes make it impossible for you to attend class. Although I hope it isn’t the case, those unavoidable circumstances may be more common given that COVID is still very much with us. If you will not be in class for any reason, it is your responsibility to inform me in advance via email. Students with disabilities should discuss their accommodations with me early in the course to work out a plan that aligns with maintaining course expectations.

2. **Prepare for class.** Do the homework assignments and respond to the prompt on Moodle. Come to class with ideas and questions you’d like to discuss.

3. **Participate.** During class meetings, ask questions, share your thoughts and insights, take part in in-class activities. I will do my best to offer a range of discussion formats so that those who are quieter by nature can find their voice and help guide our conversations. If you find it difficult to speak in class, please talk with me so we can strategize together.

4. **Leave technology in your backpack.** Being present and engaged usually also requires that you participate without the distraction of an open laptop or notifications on your phone. Even with the best of intentions, having technology open throughout class is an invitation to divided attention. While it is occasionally necessary to open a laptop to access readings or check notes, I encourage us all to keep these moments to a minimum and to refrain from checking phones or computer notifications during class meetings.

5. **Turn in assignments (by their deadlines).** I am relatively flexible with deadlines, but I strongly believe in the need for them. A 24-48 hour deadline extension is nearly always available – talk to me.

6. **Demonstrate care and effort on your assignments.** Practice your presentations, and proofread/spellcheck your formal written work (e.g., final paper).

7. **Revise.** You will have the opportunity to revise formal written work. When you revise, respond thoughtfully to the feedback offered by me and/or by your peers.

8. **Complete the reflections** (mid-semester, end of semester) to tell me what you've learned, what you're proud of, and where you'd like to invest more effort.

9. **Help me create a classroom community.** Human beings are a social species, driven by a desire for community and belonging. It turns out that a culture of support in the classroom - learning with a group of people who care about the wellbeing of each other – helps you grow. My hope is that with your help we can become members and collaborators of a learning community, kindly sharing our skills, abilities, experiences, perspectives (etc.) with each other.
10. Appreciate, respect, and honor the diversity of perspectives that are available from your peers in this class.

11. Talk to me! Come to my office hours to chat - not just about class but about your life and ambitions, who you are and what you enjoy. Please also come talk to me privately If something in the course isn’t working for you, and we will work together to make adjustments.

Other important course information:

Academic Integrity: It is assumed that all members of the class will act with academic integrity and will not engage in behavior such as plagiarism, academic dishonesty, misrepresentation, or cheating. Please refer to the college’s policy on academic honesty.

Student Health and Well-being: Senior year is normally a stressful time for most students as they begin to imagine life beyond College. And, now are adding a global pandemic, economic disruption, a historic election, and remote teaching and learning. It is important that you let me know when you need support, which can be mental, emotional, physical, and financial. If you are having difficulties maintaining your well-being, please don’t hesitate to contact me for support.

See class schedule, assignments and due dates on Moodle