
CONTEMPORARY ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES in Spring 2021 (SC2010)

Course Code	SC2010	Professor(s)	Elena Berg
Prerequisites	None	Office Number	C-202
Class Schedule	TF: 13:45-15:05 in C-505 TF: 13:45-15:05 in RMOTE-00	Office Hours	Monday afternoons, on Teams - by appointment
Credits	4	Email	eberg@aup.edu
Semester	Spring 2021	Office Tel. Ext.	

Course Description

At one point or another we have all asked ourselves what concrete steps we could take to “make the world a better place.” Although I can assure you that no, you will not find a cure for cancer during my class, I will be inviting you to dive in and think seriously and realistically about how to tackle pressing real-world environmental problems. This course will focus on anthropogenic environmental impacts, and what we can do to address them. These can be as visually dramatic as the melting of Arctic ice caps, or as subtle as ocean acidification. They can be driven by global warming, as is the case for coral bleaching, or by societal dynamics, as for fresh water resource depletion. Some of these impacts affect us directly, such as heat waves, or through the destruction of our environment, such as oil spills, chemical spills, habitat destruction, or introduction of invasive species.

In the first part of this course, we will investigate specific real-world problems (and possible solutions) and cases discussed in recent peer-reviewed scientific articles and in the media. In addition, we will be reading and preparing for an online conference on climate change (ZERO: Zero Emissions Revolution Online) that AUP students are hosting Fri March 19 through Sun Mar 21. Please mark your calendars!

During the second half of the course we will read a text that we’ll decide on together: the theme this year will be environmental justice. Meanwhile, as you become more familiar with the major environmental issues of our time, you will pitch and “sell” an idea for making AUP a greener and more sustainable campus. As the semester progresses, you will develop a realistic, feasible grant proposal about this idea – complete with a background literature review, a description of the project, and a detailed budget. At the end of the class each of you will formally present your grant proposal, and I will be encouraging all of you to apply for SGA (or other) funding to make it happen! The point is not just to learn about the various threats to the health of our planet, but to propose workable solutions.

Course Learning Outcomes

Students will demonstrate basic knowledge of the science behind specific environmental issues
Students will analyze the historical emergence of global environmental issues from the physical, political, economic and social perspective

Students will evaluate environmental risk minimization and amelioration strategies

Students will be able to engage in the writing practices and culture of the field of environmental sciences

Students will be able to engage in the writing practices and culture of their chosen major, adding to the skills acquired in the Research, Interpretation, and Writing classes to develop a personal, authentic disciplinary voice (CCR)

General Education

This course can be used to fulfill the Disciplinary Research Methods and Writing (CCR) requirement for both Environmental Studies and Quantitative Environmental Science majors. All CCR courses have the following learning outcome (Learning Outcomes for GLACC components are defined on the AUP GLACC Website):

- You will be able to engage in the writing practices and culture of your chosen major, adding to the skills you acquired in the Research, Interpretation, and Writing classes to develop a personal, authentic disciplinary voice.

Course Outline

Date	Topic	Readings/assignments due th
Tues Jan 19	What is environmental science?	Note: we will be fully online and Teams until Fri Feb 12
Fri Jan 22	Discussion of your current events research	What is in the press? Spend at le combing the internet to identify a topics in environmental science. media say? How are scientists re the implications for our everyday Blackboard (listed under the “ Assignments” tab) and be read

		Watch clip of Last Week Tonight https://www.youtube.com/watch?
Tues Jan 26	Together, we will identify the main themes we'll cover this semester (and decide what book we want to read during the second half of semester)	Choose 3 topics in environmental interest you, and why – back up sources. Submit on “Short Ass Blackboard and be ready to dis
Fri Jan 29	Finalize syllabus Special visit from students Michael Bowers and Sandra Lefaure to discuss ZERO conference in March	Browse the grant proposals from and brainstorm about potential p https://aupedu-my.sharepoint.co g_aup_edu/Ep11DG6ZjttBtjDBXW0J1zHKuGHeZA?e=q7jLq2
Tues Feb 2	Elena-led discussion of topic 1	Reading/s for topic 1
Fri Feb 5	Topic 1, continued	Reading/s for topic 1
<i>Mini break – Mon Feb 8 to Weds Feb 10 – NO CLASS</i>		
Fri Feb 12	Topic 2 Meet in the classroom for the first time!	Reading/s for topic 2
Tues Feb 16	Topic 3	Reading/s for topic 3 Post your grant proposal ideas (under “Grant Proposal” tab) b
Fri Feb 19	Topic 4	Reading/s for topic 4
Tues Feb 23	No class: Work on your grant proposal ideas!! Start gathering scholarly sources.	One of the class periods that we for your participation in the ZERO 19 – Sun Mar 21.
<i>Mini break – Weds Feb 24 to Sun Feb 28 – NO CLASS</i>		
Tues Mar 2	Selling your project ideas – we will view and discuss your Flipgrid videos in class	Submit 3-min Flipgrid sales pi see “Grant Proposal” tab
Fri Mar 5	Topic 5	Reading/s for topic 5
Tues Mar 9	Topic 6	Reading/s for topic 6
Fri Mar 12	Peer review of Abstracts	Draft of 250 word Abstract + a bibliography are due today. Su Proposal” tab in Blackboard a class.

Tues Mar 16	Discuss book we chose during first week	TBA Your reflections on student pr due on Blackboard (“Short ass
Fri Mar 19	Discuss book we chose during first week Are you ready for the conference?	Prepare for conference!
Fri Mar 19 – Sun Mar 21 Zero Emissions Revolution Online « ZERO » conference		
Tues Mar 23	Discuss book we chose during first week	TBA
Fri Mar 26	Discuss book we chose during first week	TBA
Tues Mar 30	Discuss book we chose during first week	TBA
Fri Apr 2	Peer review of rough drafts – you will be uploading these to Blackboard and emailing copies to your partners by Weds Apr 7	Rough draft of grant proposal Blackboard (“Grant Proposal” laptop to class.
Mini break – Mon Apr 5 and Tues Apr 6 – NO CLASS		
Weds Apr 7: Deadline for uploading your peer reviews to Blackboard (and don’t forget to email th partners)		
Fri Apr 9	No class: Individual online meetings to go over your projects	Work on your presentations and
Tues Apr 13	No class: Individual online meetings to go over your projects	Work on your presentations and
Fri Apr 16	Oral presentations	Final PPT files due on Blackbo Proposal” tab) by 9 AM today. fully remote by then, you must final video file at the same time
Tues Apr 20	Oral presentations	
Fri Apr 23	Oral presentations	
Tues Apr 27	Discussion of oral presentations, wrap up and final thoughts.	Justify, in 250-300 words, how y proposals, and which ones you v without voting for yourself. Subm Blackboard by noon.

		Final grant proposal is due on Both assignments can be found "Proposal" tab.
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Textbooks

This course doesn't have any textbook.

Attendance Policy

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE AND HEALTH & SAFETY MEASURES:

- Bring all assigned online readings to class and be ready to discuss them, even if you are not leading discussion that day.
- Submit all assignments on time. All assignments are to be submitted on Blackboard. Written assignments submitted late will go down by a proportion of a letter grade for every day late, i.e. A becomes A-, A- becomes B+, etc.
- Any assignment that is proven to be plagiarised will receive a zero and serious cases will result in an automatic F for the course. Plagiarism is academic misconduct and a serious breach of university policy. University disciplinary procedures will be carried out in case of infraction.
- Please be respectful of others and do not use your mobile phones or computers for personal reasons during class. If you are joining us online or we have to move classes online for any reason, please try your best to find a quiet location where you can focus on the class, without interruption. If at all possible, please turn on your video so we can see everyone's faces during class time. That is a crucial way to create community.
- Come to class and be on time, regardless of whether we are meeting in person or online. Please, do not be late unless you have an excellent excuse. If you are more than 10 minutes late to class, you will be marked absent. If you have to be absent from class, please inform me as soon as possible, by e-mail, about the reasons for your absence. If you are late or absent, it is always your responsibility to catch up on any missed material. Four or more unexcused absences will lead to a 0 for the attendance grade. If you miss three consecutive classes, you must explain your absence to Student Affairs, who will then contact me.
- Special health and safety measures during the reign of COVID-19, once we are back in the classroom Friday Feb 12:
 - o Please, for everyone's safety you must wash your hands well with soap before you enter the classroom. You are required to wear a mask during all face-to-face classroom time or for individual meetings with me or other students. The mask must cover your nose and mouth at all times. No exceptions!

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- o Respect social distancing measures! Remain at least 1 meter from each other and from your instructor for the duration of the class.
 - o Unfortunately, no food or drink will be allowed inside the classroom.
 - o If you feel ill, DO NOT COME TO CLASS. If you are well enough, you can join us online instead. If you experience ANY symptoms consistent with COVID-19 (fever, dry cough, aches and pains, respiratory difficulty), please seek medical help immediately. Make sure to keep me informed, and get a note from the doctor if you have to be absent from class.
 - o If you are unable to come to class because you are in quarantine, make sure you communicate with me immediately – in that case, please join the class remotely via Teams (at the same time as our class is scheduled). If I am quarantined, I'll tune in via Teams – in that case, either you will all tune in from home, OR you will come to class and project me onto the screen in Teams. We'll discuss the details if/when necessary.

AUP ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Students studying at The American University of Paris are expected to attend ALL scheduled classes, and in case of absence, should contact their professors to explain the situation. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of any specific attendance policy that a faculty member might have set in the course syllabus. The French Department, for example, has its own attendance policy, and students are responsible for compliance. Academic Affairs will excuse an absence for students' participation in study trips related to their courses.

Covid-19 temporary amendments:

Students studying at The American University of Paris are **STILL EXPECTED TO ATTEND ALL SCHEDULED CLASSES**. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, students will have the option of attending classes remotely when special circumstances apply. For example, when students are placed under quarantine by the French authorities or by their doctor, or when students present symptoms of Covid-19 and are directed, by their doctor or the AUP Health Office, to remain home. It is still the student's responsibility to be aware of any specific attendance policy that their professor might have set in the course syllabus. In particular, Students attending remotely from distant Time Zones should check with their professors about the specific attendance policy for remote learners.

Attendance at all exams is mandatory. In all cases of missed course meetings, the responsibility for communication with the professor, and for arranging to make up missed work, rests solely with the student.

Whether an absence is excused or not is **ALWAYS** up to the discretion of the professor or the department. Unexcused absences can result in a low or failing participation grade. In the case of excessive absences, it is up to the professor or the department to decide if the student will receive an "F" for the course. An instructor may also recommend that a student withdraw, if absences have made it impossible to continue in the course at a satisfactory level. Students must be mindful of this policy when making their travel arrangements, and especially during the Drop/Add and Exam Periods.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY STATEMENT:

As an Anglophone university, The American University of Paris is strongly committed to effective English language mastery at the undergraduate level. Most courses require scholarly

research and formal written and oral presentations in English, and AUP students are expected to strive to achieve excellence in these domains as part of their course work. To that end, professors include English proficiency among the criteria in student evaluation, often referring students to the university Writing Lab where they may obtain help on specific academic assignments. Proficiency in English is monitored at various points throughout the student's academic career, most notably during the admissions and advising processes, while the student is completing general education requirements, and during the accomplishment of degree program courses and senior theses.

Grading Policy

Item	Description	Percentage of f
Participation in discussions	Exemplary attendance and continuous, active, high-quality contribution to in-class discussions and presentations.	15%
Attendance	It is extraordinarily important to come to class and to participate actively, whether you are joining us in person or online. Note: anyone who misses more than 4 class periods will receive a zero.	10%
Short writing assignments	You will submit three short assignments on specific topics.	10%
Climate conference preparation and participation	From Friday Mar 19 – Sunday Mar 21 , AUP students will be hosting the ZERO conference on climate change, which all of you will be required to prepare for and attend.	10%
Grant proposal and presentation	8-page grant proposal, in stages (see below), culminating in a 12-minute oral presentation.	55%

Other

Grant proposal (8 pages) & oral presentation: You will pick a topic in environmental science, form a research question, and write a grant proposal that outlines a realistic project that is designed to improve the sustainability of the AUP campus. You will receive multiple forms of feedback on this process both from your classmates and from me throughout the semester. The grant proposal in all its parts will be worth 55% of your grade, divided into 250 points. During the last week of class, you will give a 12-minute Powerpoint presentation about your research findings to the class. If we are unable to meet in person, you will instead create a video of your presentation. Important due dates:

Identify research topic – talk to me about your grant proposal ideas and then post your ideas on Blackboard (5 points) – Tues Feb 16

3-min professional pitch of your presentation using Flipgrid (10 points) – Tues Mar 2
Draft of 250-word Abstract and annotated bibliography (25 points) – Fri Mar 12
Rough draft of full grant proposal (60 points) – Fri Apr 2
Peer review of another student's project draft (10 points) – Weds Apr 7
Oral presentation (30 points) – PPT files and/or video files are due on Fri Apr 16 by 9 AM
Final draft of grant proposal (100 points) – Tues Apr 27
Your final summary and assessment of student projects (10 points) – Tues Apr 27
Participation in discussions: More than any other class that I teach at AUP, this is a fully collaborative effort between you and me. We will be teaching this class together and learning from each other. As a group, you will decide what topics you want to read about and discuss, particularly during the first half of the semester before you begin developing your grant proposals. Each of you will be working in teams to teach at least one class period.

Climate conference preparation and participation: AUP seniors Michael Bowers and Sandra Lefaire are organizing a 3-day online climate conference entitled "ZERO: Zero Emissions Revolution Online," which will take place during Earth Week, from Friday March 19 through Sunday March 21. Your attendance and participation are mandatory and will count towards your final grade for this course. Please mark your calendars! This conference is a collaborative effort between multiple members of the international AMICAL network of American universities – including the American University of Central Asia, the American University of Beirut, The American University of Nigeria, and the American University in Bulgaria. The theme is sustainability and reducing the carbon footprint of the AMICAL campuses. You will be working with Sandra and Michael to coordinate and may be playing a variety of roles, including setting up Teams sessions, leading discussions, presenting your grant proposal ideas, and helping to write a summary document from the conference. In exchange for your participation in the conference we'll be dropping 2-3 regular class sessions.

Short assignments: You will have multiple opportunities to reflect critically on environmental issues this semester. The assignments will be more or less structured, depending on our goals. In your first assignment, you will spend time researching environmental topics in the news and will jot down web links and your reflections. We'll follow this up with an in-class discussion of what you have found. Immediately following this assignment, you will identify and write about three environmental topics that you would like to discuss in class this semester. In your third mini-paper, toward the end of the semester, you will reflect on each of the student presentations you have heard in class. These short assignments will not receive individual grades – I'll assign a single grade at the end on the basis of your overall effort and attention to detail. No late entries will be accepted.