Working Outline

EST 690, Section 01, #21497 (3-4 cr)

INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY CONSULTANCY

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Dept. of Environmental Studies, SUNY-ESF

with Dr. Myanna Lahsen & Astrid Hendriksen
Environmental Policy Group, Wageningen University, the Netherlands

SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry
Fall 2019, TuTh 8-9:20am, Baker 141

DESCRIPTION

Overview
An innovative, collaborative, applied graduate course and group practicum in environmental policy consultation at the global level. Linked via information and communication technologies with students in a parallel course at Wageningen University, the Netherlands, students take up a semester-long consultancy project (‘commission’) with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) & Division for Sustainable Development Goals, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (‘client’). Students learn consulting skills including issue definition and stakeholder identification; proposal preparation; team building and leadership; data collection, analysis and interpretation; science communication; and consultancy report writing. With colleagues in the Netherlands, students fulfill the client's Terms of Reference, producing and delivering an integrated set of science-policy briefs for international policy makers related to UNCTAD’s Technology and Innovation Report 2020, and work on new and emerging technologies by the Interagency Task Team on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs. This year’s consultancy focuses on the anticipated effects of new and emerging science and technologies on social inequality and prospects for sustainable development. Successful completion of the course fulfills the capstone project requirement for the MPS in Environmental Studies.

Enrollment
Students able to continue through ~ December 20 to work with colleagues in the Netherlands in preparation and delivery of the final report are encouraged to enroll for 4 credit hours.* Maximum enrollment: 15 students. Instructor's permission required.

* Note: all credit hours must be signed up for at the time of registration.
Requirements
As an applied, team-oriented graduate course, students are expected to be actively engaged through the semester and take initiative as individuals and members of work teams, including:

- Regularly attending course sessions and participating in local and international work team sessions, as needed;
- Completing background readings, writing literature reviews, and carrying out research activities;
- Communicating and working effectively with participants across and between sites; with client contacts, as appropriate; and with subject experts;
- Energetically engaging with individual, local and international work team assignments; and
- Contributing to team, course, and inter-site project deliverables, as specified in the course syllabus & the client's detailed terms of reference.

Course Deliverables
As a studio course, the primary deliverables are specified in the client's detailed Terms of Reference (ToR). In addition, several intermediate procedural and substantive internal deliverables are specified below. Also, students write two reflective essays, communicating personal goals and expectations for the course, and reflecting on experience in the course, respectively.

Intermediate assignments
#1: Work teams preliminary briefs (Tues., 10/8)
#2: Presentation of preliminary proposal to client (Thurs., 10/10)
#3: Essay on goals for this course (Tues., 10/15)
#4: Complete revised proposal for client review (Thurs., 11/7)
#5: Completion of draft report (Tues., 12/3)
#6: Presentation of preliminary results to client (Thurs., 12/5)
#7: Reflective essay on experience in the course (Fri., 12/20)

Learning Outcomes
Upon successful completion of this course, each student should be able to:

- Collaboratively plan, develop, and coordinate complex, multi-sited projects;
- Communicate effectively and professionally with external clients and scientific experts;
- Analyze environmental problems and policy options, including: issue definition and stakeholder identification;
- Collect, interpret, evaluate, and validate scientific and policy-oriented data and findings;
- Effectively communicate scientific and policy-oriented findings in written, visual, and oral forms; and
- Contribute to team building, coordination and communication, across multiple cultures and sites, and via multiple media.
Grading

- Client evaluation of team products, 50%
- Instructor and peer evaluation of your contributions to the course & work teams, 30%
- Two reflective essays on your personal goals for & experience in the course, 20%

Communication

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E-mail: <dsonn@esf.edu>, and <DASonnenfeld@gmail.com>
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Texts

REQUIRED

Students will read extensively from scientific literature on select new and emerging science and technologies and their anticipated effects on social inequality and prospects for sustainable development.

RECOMMENDED


Available through the ESF Bookstore.

Acknowledgments

Drs. Bettina Bluemling, Wageningen University (WUR); and Lei Zhang, Renmin University of China were involved in the initial development and design of this course. The course has continued to develop and thrive with Myanna Lahsen, Machiel Lamers, and Astrid Hendriksen, Environmental Policy Group, Department of Social Sciences, WUR. Our clients in the United Nations system, led by Clovis Freire, Alex Roehrl, and David O’Connor, have been enthusiastic supporters from the onset in 2013 & have been delightful to work with. Administrative officers at WUR and ESF have been very helpful in the success of this collaborative venture from the beginning. Funding for initial course development and technical consultation was provided by Wageningen University, the Netherlands, through the "Small Projects for Innovation of Education and Distance Learning” grant program. Additional funding for participation in conferences of the State University of New York Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) initiative has been provided by ESF.

*Please note: client evaluation of team products will be submitted in approximately the first week of January. Initially, all participants thus will receive an Incomplete (“I”) for the course; upon receipt of the client evaluation, this will be changed to a letter grade (“A”, “B”, etc.).
SCHEDULE *

I. Project Definition/ Launch

**Week 1 – Introduction and Overview**

**Tues., 8/27: Course Introduction**

Individual introductions
Introduction to the Client and Terms of Reference

REQUIRED:
Terms of Reference (ToR)

RECOMMENDED:
Fasulo, *An Insider’s Guide to the UN*
Kamau, et al., *Transforming Multilateral Diplomacy*

**Thurs., 8/29: Technological Change, Inequality, and Sustainable Development**

Deep dive into background readings
Questions, discussion

REQUIRED:

RECOMMENDED:
« Presentation of initial TFM findings informal findings by the Technology Facilitation Mechanism in response to General Assembly Resolution A/RES/72/242 », by Elliott Harris, UN Dept. For Economic and Social Affairs. New York : June 5, 2018, 10 pp.

* For this multi-sited, partially online, international course, now in its 7th year, all the usual and customary caveats about ‘subject to change’ remain applicable. ICT-mediated collaborations across time, space, and cultures are dynamic by definition! Thanks in advance for your patience as we work through whatever comes our way this time around.
Week 2 – External Consulting: an Introduction

Tues., 9/3: Being an External Consultant: Roles and Expectations
*** Skills Module #1: Project Planning & Development (DS) ***

RECOMMENDED:
Thomas, ch. 1, "From managing change to managing surprise?"
Thomas, ch. 2, "The art of client management"
Thomas, ch. 4, "Managing initial client meetings"
Thomas, ch. 5, "Understanding and defining the client's problem"

Thurs., 9/5: IEPC Consultancy Goals and Organization
*** Introduction by Dr. Myanna Lahsen (ML), Wageningen University ***
Follow-up Belbin team roles exercise
Review Terms of Reference
Review background documents
Preparing for initial Client meeting

REQUIRED:
Thomas, ch. 4, "Managing initial client meetings"

REVIEW:
Terms of Reference (handout)

Week 3 – Project Planning and Development

Thurs., 9/10: Client Introduction
*** Client introduction: UNCTAD & DSDGs staff, re: ToR (invited) ***

REQUIRED:
Readings in the 'Horizon Scanning' folder on Blackboard

REVIEW:
Terms of Reference (handout)

Tues., 9/12: Refining Project Goals, Deliverables, Requirements
Review Terms of Reference
What are «new and emerging science and technologies» ?
What is «social inequality» ?
Project planning & organization (begin)

REVIEW: Thomas, ch's 2, 5
II: Project Implementation & Client Buy-in

**Week 4 – ESF Team Meetings**

Tues., 9/17 & Thurs., 9/19

Project planning & organization

**Week 5 – Work Team Meetings**

Tues., 9/24: Work team meetings*

Form, begin meeting in ESF work teams

Thurs., 9/26: Work team meetings

Continue to organize, work in ESF work teams

**Week 6 – Intercultural Communication**

Tues., 10/1: International Consulting – Collaboration Tools

*** Skills Module #2: Intercultural Communication (ML) ***

Thurs., 10/3: Work team meetings

Meet in ESF work teams

**Week 7 – Preliminary Proposal Presentation**

Tues., 10/8: Work team meetings

Meet in ESF work teams

*** Assignment #1 due: Work teams preliminary briefs ***

Thurs., 10/10: Presentation of preliminary proposal to client

Virtual meeting w/ Client, via Skype

*** Assignment #2 due: Presentation of proposal to client ***

**Week 8 – Work Team Meetings**

Tues., 10/15: Follow-up from client presentation/ revise proposal

*** Assignment #3 due: Essay on goals for this course ***

Thurs., 10/17: Work team meetings

Meet in ESF work teams

**Week 9 – Preparing for International Collaboration**

Tues., 10/15: Work team meetings

Meet in ESF work teams

Thurs., 10/24: Advance work for Tuesday’s meeting

Preparing for Tuesday's inaugural meeting with WUR student participants

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* Work teams will meet during and, as needed, outside regular the class time, in fulfillment of client's Terms of Reference.
III: International Collaboration/ Data Collection & Analysis

**Week 10 – Joint meetings**

[Mon., 10/28: Course starts at Wageningen University (WUR)]

**Tues., 10/29:** ESF-WUR live connection (08.00 NY; 14.00 NL)
- Individual & work team/ project introductions
- Joint preparation for meeting w/ client

**Thurs., 10/31:** Joint meeting w/ client (invited)
- Progress on ToR; WUR student intros to client; client overview of ToR

**Week 11 – Project Planning, Development & Organization**

**Tues., 11/5:** Preparing Formal, Written Reports

RECOMMENDED:
- Thomas, ch. 7, "Presenting client feedback"

*** Skills Module #3: Client Communication (DS) ***

**Thurs., 11/7:** International work team (IWT) meetings (online)*

*** Assignment #4 due: Complete revised proposal for client review ***

**Week 12 – Data Analysis (work teams)**

**Tues., 11/12:** Joint meeting w/ client (invited)
- Individual & work team/ project introductions

*** Meeting with client ***

**Thurs., 11/14:** IWT meetings (online)*
- Outline final report

**Week 13 – Data Analysis (work teams)**

**Tues., 11/19:** IWT meetings (online)
**Thurs., 11/21:** IWT meetings (online)

**Thanksgiving break**

[WUR: Drafting preliminary results]

**IV: Report Writing/ Presentation of Results**

**Week 14 – Presentation of Preliminary Results**

**Tues., 12/3:** Review and discussion (in person & online)

*** Review and discussion of draft report (across sites) ***

*** Expert validation of preliminary results

*** Assignment #5 due: Completion of draft report ***

* International work teams (IWTs) will meet during the regular class time and, as needed, also out of class, in fulfillment of client terms of reference.
Thurs., 12/5: Client presentation  
*** Assignment #6 due: Presentation of preliminary results to client ***

Weeks 15 & 16 – Final Report Preparation  
[ESF extended period begins]

Week of 12/9: Final Report Preparation  
*** Client feedback, based on presentation, draft report ***

Week of 12/16: Final Report Submission  
*** Assignment #7 due: Reflective essay on experience in the course ***

January 2018 – Receipt of Client Evaluation

NOTICES

Accommodations
SUNY-ESF works closely with Syracuse University’s Office of Disability Services (ODS) in assisting students with learning and physical disabilities. If you think you may need accommodations in this course related to a disability, you may contact the ESF Division of Student Affairs, 110 Bray Hall, tel. 315.470.6660, for assistance with the process. You may also contact ODS directly at Room 309, 804 University Avenue; visit the ODS website; or call (315) 443-4498 or TDD: (315) 443-1371, for an appointment to discuss your needs and the process for requesting academic adjustments. ODS is responsible for coordinating disability-related academic adjustments and will issue students with documented Disabilities Accommodation Authorization Letters, as appropriate. Since academic adjustments may require early planning and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact ODS as soon as possible.

Fire alarm procedures
If a fire alarm sounds, exit the building immediately to the designated area for this course. Stay together as a class, until released. Take all personal belongings with you, including electronics, backpacks, coats and keys. Please let your instructor know in advance if you might have any special needs in case of a building evacuation. For further information, contact the Division of Student Affairs, tel. 315.470.6660.