DESCRIPTION

Overview

An innovative, collaborative, applied graduate course and group practicum in environmental policy consultation at the global level. Linked via a common online platform with students in parallel courses at Wageningen University (Netherlands) and Van Lang University (Vietnam), EST 690 students will serve as “externs” for a semester-long consultancy project ('commission') with the Division on Technology and Logistics, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD); and Division for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) ('client'). Students will learn group consulting skills including issue definition and stakeholder identification; proposal preparation, team building and leadership; data collection, analysis and interpretation; consultancy report writing and presentation. With colleagues in the Netherlands and Vietnam, students will fulfill the client's Terms of Reference, producing and delivering a set of Science-Policy Briefs for international policy makers related to the work of the United Nations Interagency Task Team on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs on anticipated effects of emerging technologies on prospects for sustainable development. Successful completion of the course fulfils the capstone project requirement for the MPS in Environmental Studies degree. Maximum enrollment: 15 students. Instructor's permission required.

* via Microsoft Teams; see below, for further information
Mode & Platform

EST 690 will be fully online (synchronous) this semester. We will meet using the Microsoft Teams cloud-based, collaborative platform, during the regularly scheduled course times, beginning Tues., Aug. 25. Office hours will be primarily virtual during the fall semester. That said, I'd be glad to arrange appropriately physically distanced meet-ups, too, as feasible.

MS Teams is available to all ESF faculty, staff, and students, as part of the MS Office 365 suite of applications, or downloaded separately. Registered students will be entered as a team member (ESF NetID) or guest (SU NetID). Please download MS Teams onto your laptop and/or smartphone, create an account using your ESF or SU email address.

Duration

Students able to continue through December 18 are encouraged to do so, to work with colleagues in the Netherlands and Vietnam in preparation, presentation, and submission of the final consultancy report. Those participating for the duration should enroll for 4 credit hours.*

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.

Texts

REQUIRED

Students will read extensively from peer-reviewed, scientific literature and policy analyses on select new and emerging technologies and their anticipated effects on prospects for sustainable development.

RECOMMENDED


* All credit hours must be signed up for at the time of registration.
Course Deliverables

The primary deliverables for this studio course are specified in the client's Terms of Reference (ToR). Several intermediate procedural and substantive internal deliverables are specified below. In addition, students write two reflective essays, articulating personal goals and expectations for the course, and reflecting on experience in the course, respectively.

Intermediate Assignments

#1: Work teams preliminary briefs (Tues., 10/6)
#2: Presentation of preliminary proposal to client (Thurs., 10/8)
#3: Essay on goals for this course (Tues., 10/13)
#4: Complete revised proposal for client review (Thurs., 11/5)
#5: Completion of draft report (Tues., 12/1)
#6: Presentation of preliminary results to client (Thurs., 12/3)
#7: Reflective essay on experience in the course (Fri., 12/18)

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, including with reference to gendered dimensions;
- 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%

*Client evaluation of the final consultancy report will be submitted by the first week of January. Initially, all ESF 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.)
Communication

DAVID SONNENFELD:
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LOTSMART FONJONG:
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Acknowledgments

Bettina Bluemling, Wageningen University (WUR); and Lei Zhang, Renmin University of China (RUC), were involved in the early 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, Faculty of Social Sciences, WUR. In 2020, we are pleased to welcome our newest partner institution, Van Lang University, and lead instructor Ho Thi Than Hien. Our clients in the United Nations system, led by Clovis Freire, R. Alexander Roehrl, and David O'Connor, have been enthusiastic supporters of the course since its launch in 2013, and have been delightful to work with. Administrative officers at WUR and ESF, including Arthur Mol and Bruce Bongarten, respectively, were very helpful in the initiation of this venture. Funding for course development and technical consultation was provided by Wageningen University, 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.
SCHEDULE *

I. Project Definition/ Launch

**Week 1 – Introduction and Overview**

Tues., 8/25: 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., 8/27: Client introduction

*** Client introduction: UNCTAD & DSDGs staff, re: ToR *** (to be recorded)

REVIEW:
Terms of Reference (handout)


**Week 2 – Technological Change and Sustainable Development**

Tues., 9/1: International policy issues, perspectives, and debates

Deep dive into background readings
Questions, discussion

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* For this multi-sited, collaborative online international learning (COIL) graduate course, now in its eighth 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.
REQUIRED:


**Thurs., 9/3: IEPC partner institutions & consultancy structure***

*** Introductions by Astrid Hendriksen (AH) & Jillian Student (JS), Wageningen University; and Ho Thi Than Hien (HH), Van Lang University *** (to be recorded)

**Week 3 – Project Planning, Organization, and Development**

**Tues., 9/8: Being an external consultant: roles and expectations***

*** Skills Module #1: Project Planning & Development (DS) ***

w/ Belbin team roles exercise

RECOMMENDED:

Thomas, ch. 1, "From managing change to managing surprise?"

Thomas, ch. 2, "The art of client management"

Thomas, ch. 5, "Understanding and defining the client's problem"

**Thurs., 9/10: Refining project goals, deliverables, requirements**

Review Terms of Reference

What are «new and emerging science and technologies»?

Project planning & organization (begin)

REVIEW: Thomas, ch's 2, 5

**II: Project Implementation & Client Buy-in**

**Week 4 – ESF Team Meetings**

**Tues., 9/15: ESF team meetings**

Form, begin meeting in ESF work teams

**Thurs., 9/17: Mainstreaming gender***

*** Skills Module #2: Mainstreaming Gender in Sustainable Development (LF) ***

RECOMMENDED:

TBA

**Week 5 – Work Team Meetings**

**Tues., 9/22: Work team meetings**

Project planning & organization

* Work teams will meet during and, as needed, outside regular the class time, in fulfillment of client's Terms of Reference.
Thurs., 9/24: Work team meetings
Continue to organize, work in ESF work teams

**Week 6 – Intercultural Communication**

Tues., 9/29: International consulting – collaboration tools
*** Skills Module #3: Intercultural Communication – Astrid Hendriksen (AH) and/or Jillian Student (JS) ***

Thurs., 10/1: Work team meetings
Meet in ESF work teams

**Week 7 – Preliminary Proposal Presentation**

Tues., 10/6: Work team meetings
Meet in ESF work teams
*** Assignment #1 due: Work teams preliminary briefs ***

Thurs., 10/8: Presentation of preliminary proposal to client
Meeting w/ Client, via MS Teams
*** Assignment #2 due: Presentation of proposal to client *** (to be invited & recorded)

**Week 8 – Work Team Meetings**

Tues., 10/13: Follow-up from client presentation/ revise proposal
*** Assignment #3 due: Essay on goals for this course ***

Thurs., 10/15: Work team meetings
Meet in ESF work teams

**Week 9 – Preparing for International Collaboration**

Tues., 10/20: Work team meetings
Meet in ESF work teams

Thurs., 10/22: Advance work for Tuesday's meeting
Preparing for Tuesday's inaugural meeting with WUR student participants

III: International Collaboration/ Data Collection & Analysis

**Week 10 – Joint meetings**

[Mon., 10/26: Course starts at Wageningen University (WUR) and Van Lang University (VLU)]

Tues., 10/27: Client communication and reporting
*** Skills Module #3: Client Communication & Reporting (AH & DS) ***

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

Thurs., 10/29: ESF-WUR live connection (08.00 NY; 14.00 NL)
ESF individual introductions & project update
Week 11 – Project Planning, Development & Organization

Sun., 10/25: Individual tasks and assignments
Tues., 11/3: International organization & project development
  Development of collaborative, international organizational structure, including coordination, communication, and international work teams (IWT)
Thurs., 11/5: International work team (IWT) meetings (online)*
  *** Assignment #4 due: Complete revised proposal for client review ***

Week 12 – Data Analysis (work teams)*

Tues., 11/10: Joint meeting w/ client
  Individual & work team/ project introductions
  *** Meeting with client *** (to be invited & recorded)
Thurs., 11/12: IWT meetings*
  Outline final report

Week 13 – Data Analysis (work teams)*

Tues., 11/17: IWT meetings
Thurs., 11/19: IWT meetings
  [Sat., 11/21: ESF commencement]

Week 14 – Drafting Preliminary Results

Tues., 11/26: IWT meetings
Thurs., 11/28: *** No Class: Thanksgiving Holiday ***

IV: Consultancy Validation and Reporting

Week 15 – Preliminary Findings: Review, Validate, Present

Tues., 12/1: Review and discussion
  *** Review and discussion of draft report (across sites) ***
  *** Expert validation of preliminary results
  *** Assignment #5 due: Completion of draft report ***
  [ESF final exams begin]

TBD: Presentation of preliminary results
  *** Assignment #6 due: Presentation of preliminary results to client ***
  (to be invited & recorded)

* International work teams (IWTs) will meet during the regular class time and, as needed, also out of class, in fulfillment of client’s Terms of Reference.
Weeks 16 & 17 – Consultancy Report: Finalize, Present, Submit

[ESF final exams continue; ESF extended period begins]

Week of 12/7: Finalization of consultancy report
Design package/ cover; Incorporate infographics; Copyedit w/ UN styleguide;
Write acknowledgments; etc.

*** Client feedback, based on presentation, draft report ***

Week of 12/14: Consultancy report: presentation & submission
Submit final consultancy report, both as integrated document & with separate,
standalone, editable MS Word files for each science-policy brief
Final intersite meeting, debriefing, and conclusion

*** Assignment #7 due: Reflective essay on experience in the course ***

January 2021 – Receipt of Client Evaluation

NOTICES

Pandemic Support
If you are experiencing or expect to experience difficulties in fulfilling the expectations and requirements for this course due to personal or family impacts of the novel coronavirus, please contact ESF’s Office of Student Affairs for support and resources. Resources include a limited number of laptops that may be borrowable for academic purposes. If you find yourself experiencing possible Covid-19 symptoms, please self-quarantine and use available telemedicine and virus testing resources. Face masks, physical distancing, and hand washing and/or sanitizing, are required on the ESF campus, in college buildings and laboratories, and are highly recommended in off-campus social interactions.

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.