**Course Title:** Environmental Studies Community-Engaged Practicum

**Course Summary**
The *Environmental Studies Community-Engaged Practicum (Practicum, ENVS 0401, formerly called the Environmental Studies Senior Seminar)*, offered since 1988, is required for all majors. It evolved as a capstone course that brings together students from all foci within the major into one classroom to collaborate and take a comprehensive approach to addressing on-the-ground environmental issues. *Practicum* students work in small groups with one of a variety of partners to complete a semester-long, community-engaged project. Topics vary by term and typically focus on local and regional environmental issues that offer the opportunity for students to apply their work in the classroom. Project work relies on students’ creativity, interdisciplinary perspectives, skills, and knowledge developed through their previous course work and other experiences (e.g., internships, study away, independent research).

The projects are guided by an environmental studies faculty member and carried out with a high degree of independence by the students. Students prepare for and direct their project work through readings and discussion, independent research, collaboration with project partners, and consultation with external experts. Depending on the project, the course may also include workshops focused on developing key skills (e.g., interviewing, public speaking, video editing). Students produce and present to their partners and the public a variety of final products, such as written reports, policy white papers, media (such as podcasts and websites) and other marketing and educational outreach materials. The underlying methodologies and approaches for the products are captured in a final report.

**Student Learning Goals**
In this course, students
- Apply and extend their interdisciplinary environmental knowledge, thinking, and skills, as well as other academic and personal experiences, to real-world environmental issues of community interest.
- Collaborate with an interdisciplinary group of peers and external partners to conduct a scholarly and pragmatic open-ended environmental project of interest to a larger community.
- Cultivate research- and project-based skills, including project planning and delivery; cooperation, collaboration, listening, and leadership; mapping, surveying, and interviewing; and strategic interpersonal and multimedia communication for various audiences
- Reflect on personal and academic growth and meaning with regard to (among other aspects) interdisciplinarity, systems thinking, civic engagement, collaboration and reciprocity in the context of academic/community partnerships, and their transition from higher education.

**Representative Course Assignments**
- **Intellectual Journals:** Roughly four to six pages turned in three or four times per term to provide a window into students’ thinking and evolution through the course. They include substantive reflections on readings, in-class discussions, guest visits, and work with community partners as well as the Environmental Studies Program’s weekly Woodin Speaker Colloquium Speakers.
- **Self and project team evaluation:** On at least one occasion students formally provide feedback to team-members as well as self-reflect on their own contributions, strengths and ways to improve.
- **ES Community feedback**: A couple weeks into project work, student groups present their research questions, work plans, and initial set of questions or anticipated obstacles to a diverse and interdisciplinary group of environmental faculty and staff. The faculty and staff ask questions, make suggestions, brainstorm for scholarly and community resources, and generally form a community of support for the students as they pursue their projects.

- **Group project working documents**: Work plans, progress reports (written and oral).

- **Group projects final products**: include a written report reflecting the scope of work (not necessarily outcome) agreed upon with the partner; other materials (written, audio and/or visual) produced for the partner and/or for a wider audience; at least one (often two) formal presentations of work: a) a 25-minute public presentation made at the weekly Woodin Environmental Studies Colloquium, a weekly seminar series that welcomes students, faculty, and staff from across campus, as well as non-College community members; and, b) a more in-depth presentation to project specific partners and/or stakeholders connected to the work.

---

**Course Title**: Contested Grounds: U.S. Cultures & Environments

**Course Summary**
Throughout the history of the United States, Americans have created a complex set of meanings pertaining to the environments (wild, pastoral, urban, marine) in which they live. From European-Native contact to the present, Americans’ various identities, cultures, and beliefs about the bio-physical world have shaped the stories they tell about “nature,” stories that sometimes share common ground, but often create conflicting and contested understandings of human-environment relationships. In this course, we investigate these varied and contested stories from multi-disciplinary perspectives in the humanities—history, literature, and religion—and include attention to race, class, gender, and environmental justice.

**Select Course Assignments**
The grading for this course is based upon three papers, as well as attendance and participation. Two of the paper prompts include thinking and working beyond the classroom. They include:

- Identifying a real problem, conflict, or dilemma (be it historical, social, cultural, political, etc.) that provoked a writer to create a lasting work of environmental literature (or nature writing). How does the text in question address or provide a resolution to the problem, if it does at all?

- Describe an experience of “the natural world” (a loaded phrase that can mean many things) -- one that centers on a particular natural phenomenon, place, region, or experience that had an important impact on your life. In what ways has it affected you? What did this place or experience mean to you when you were there (or undergoing the experience), and what does it mean to you now?

---

**Course Title**: Conservation & Environmental Policy

**Course Summary and Goals**
This course covers the formation and implementation of conservation and environmental policy at local, regional, state, and national levels. The course explores how stakeholders and institutions critically affect the policy process, focusing on historic as well as current policy challenges in the U.S. The course examines the exploration of both proximate as well as ultimate drivers of environmental degradation with a focus on relations between production and consumption, representation and regulation, rights and responsibilities, and information and norms. Students are asked to investigate how the intersection of social, economic and political forces has led to an unjust distribution of environmental benefits and
burdens across communities within the United States. Beyond the walls of the classroom, students are expected to follow current environmental news. Course discussions assume students are conversant with current events, and class participation credit can be gained by bringing up connections between environmental news stories and course topics.

**Representative Course Assignments**

- **Political Environment at Home paper**: This 1,000-word (max) paper provides an opportunity for students to reflect on their own relationship to the environment, and specifically, how changes in the environment (e.g. those generated by policy) have influenced their surroundings.

- **Environmental Policy Analysis** Students choose a socio-environmental problem on which to focus their policy analysis.
  - **Step 1**: A proposal for the issue and related key policies *(ungraded)*
  - **Step 2**: Part 1 (2,000 words) outline the historical trajectory of the selected policy (including major players, the key debates, and the policy process) (submitted to peer reviewer and professor)
  - **Step 3**: Peer-review comments are due to partner and professor
  - **Step 4**: A complete analysis (4,000 words total) consisting of a revised Part 1 and an evaluation of policy outcomes and potential policy improvements.