EVR 3004 ECO-CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Spring, 2026

[Course Format (Online Synchronous, Online Asynchronous, In-person, Hybrid)],[Number of Credits]

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Office Hours (virtual): Thursdays 10:00-12:00 and by appointment

Course Description

This course guides students in developing an understanding of civic engagement and environmental problems and solutions. Through service-learning experiences, students will examine environmental problems, community organizations, and social equity. The course format will be lecture, discussion, and service learning in the local community. The goal for this course is for students to learn about the importance of community engagement and organizational approaches to targeting environmental issues.

Course Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Identify overarching models and frameworks for civic engagement
- Integrate important aspects of civic engagement into course interactions and assignments
- Identify the intersections between environmental issues and social issues
- Meaningfully engage in direct service with partnering local environmental organizations
- Develop a personal framework for civic pathways
- Describe the role of individual and collective civic actions to affect environmental changes

Course Overview and Purpose

This course is designed to guide students in developing a basic understanding of key concepts and frameworks associated with civic engagement and our local environment. Students will critically examine environmental issues facing our local community, community relationships and organizations, power structures, and environmental justice issues. The course format will be lecture, discussion, direct service-learning experiences, and guest presentations. Through class discussions, readings, journaling, and presentations, students will be encouraged to engage in critical reflection regarding class topics and other relevant issues. The goal for this course will be to provide opportunities for students to learn about environmental problems and their potential solutions, the importance of community engagement, and organizational approaches to targeting environmental issues.

Course Prerequisites
Junior or senior standing

Textbooks, Learning Materials, and Supply Fees

Cress, Christine M., Peter J. Collier, Vicki L. Reitenauer, and Associates. 2005. *Learning through Serving: A Student Guidebook for Service Learning across the Disciplines*. Stylus Publishing: Sterling, VA.

Lerner, Steve. 2010. *Sacrifice Zones: The Front Lines of Toxic Chemical Exposures in the United States*. MIT Press.

Required Technology & How to Obtain the Technology

We will be using a Canvas course web site throughout the semester for grade management, access to course materials, course announcements, and submission of class assignments. Please check this site before every class to check for announcements, schedule changes, or other important information.

Technical Support

UF Computing Help Desk & Ticket Number: All technical issues require a UF Helpdesk Ticket Number. The UF Helpdesk is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. https://helpdesk.ufl.edu/ | 352-392-4357

Weekly Course Schedule

[required, but format can be adapted for each unique course]

Dates	Topics	Readings*	Assignments
Week 1 Jan. 13, 15	Introduction to Civic Engagement and the Environment	Chapter 1 in Cress et al. "What is Service Learning?"	No assignments
Week 2 Jan. 20, 22	Choosing an organization/topic; journaling Democracy and Justice	Chapter 2 in Cress et al. "Building and Maintaining Community Partnerships"	Readings review #1
Week 3 Jan. 27, 29	Theories of Community Organizing Individual and Collective Action Grassroots Case Studies **Guest Speaker**	Chapter 3 in Cress et al. "Becoming Community"	Readings review #2 Guest speaker questions due Journal entry #1

Week 4 Feb. 3, 5	Working in Groups and Group Dynamics *Guest Speaker*	Chapter 4 in Cress et al. "Groups are Fun, Groups are Not Fun"	Readings review #3 Guest speaker questions Journal entry #2
Week 5 Feb. 10, 12	Culture and Difference in Community Work Power and Powerlessness Environmental Justice	Chapter 5 in Cress et al. "Creating Cultural Connections" Watch "The Power of Privilege" (link on Canvas) *Anne Saville and Alison E. Adams. 2019. "Balancing Environmental Remediation, Environmental Justice, and Health Disparities: The Case of Lake Apopka, Florida." *Case Studies in the Environment*, https://doi.org/10.1525/cse.2018.001610	Readings review #4 Journal entry #3
Week 6 Feb. 17, 19	Reflection and Civic Action *Guest Speaker*	Chapter 6 in Cress et al. "Reflection in Action"	Readings review #5 Guest speaker questions Journal entry #4
Week 7 Feb 24, 26	Case study discussion Environmental health and illness Grassroots health movements	Lerner, Steve. 2010. "Ocala, Florida: Community Blanketed by 'Black Snow' from Neighboring Charcoal Factory." Pp. 19-40 in *Sacrifice Zones: The Front Lines of Toxic Chemical Exposures in the United States*. MIT Press.	Readings review #6 Journal entry #5
Week 8 March 3, 5	Case study discussion Grassroots tactics and strategies *Guest Speaker*	Lerner, Steve. 2010. "Pensacola, Florida: Health Problems Near 'Mount Dioxin' Require Relocation." Pp. 41-71 in *Sacrifice Zones: The Front Lines of Toxic Chemical Exposures in the United States*. MIT Press.	Readings review #7 Guest speaker questions Journal entry #6

		Lerner, Steve. 2010. "Tallevast, Florida: Rural Residents Live atop Contaminated Groundwater from High Tech Weapons Company." Pp. 157-176 in *Sacrifice Zones: The Front Lines of Toxic Chemical Exposures in the United States*. MIT Press.	
Week 9 Mar. 10, 12	Case study discussion Negotiating community needs: Environment vs. Economy?		Readings review #8 Journal entry #7
		*Watch: Tallevast - An Environmental Divide Pits Residents Against Industry, State	
Week 10 – March 14-21 *No class – Spring Break*			
Week 11 Mar. 24, 26	Challenges to civic engagement and activism Civic engagement in today's political climate Guest speaker	Chapter 7 in Cress et al. "Failure with the Best Intentions"	Readings review #9 Guest speaker questions Journal entry #8
Week 12 March 31, April 2	Exploring ways of knowing Critical thinking and critical inquiry going forward Journal/paper workshop	Chapter 8 in Cress et al. "Expanding Horizons"	Readings review #10 Journal entry #9
Week 13 Apr. 7, 9	Benefits and challenges of learning and serving ***Guest Speaker***	Chapter 9 in Cress et al. "Beyond a Grade" *Watch "Being Young and Making an Impact"	Readings review #11 Guest speaker questions

| Week 14

Apr. 14, 16 | Community work and environmental issues

Thinking globally and acting locally – consumerism and activism

Environmental action: Case study workshop | *"Campus Alternative Food Projects and Food Service Realities: Alternative Strategies." Peggy F. Bartlett

Chapter 10 in Cress et al. "Looking Back, Looking Forward" | Readings review # 12

Journal entry # 10 |
| Week 15
Apr. 21 | Student Work Day | No readings | Final Paper Due |

Grading Policy

Course grading is consistent with UF grading policies.

Course Grading Structure

Assignment Type	Point Value	Percent of Final Grade
Student Journal Entries (10 @ 10 points each)	100 points	16
Readings Reviews (12 @ 10 points each)	120 points	19
Guest Speaker Questions (6 @ 10 points each)	60 points	10
Attendance and Participation	100 points	16
Community Research Partnership Plan (50 points for submission; 50 points for presentations	100 points	16
Final Paper	150 points	24

Grading Scale

[scale is required; plus and minus grades may be used but are not required]

Grade	Points	Percentage
A	585.9 or higher	93-100
A-	567-585.8	90-92.9

Grade	Points	Percentage
B+	541.8-566	86-89.9
B	504-541	80-85.9
C+	478-503	76-79.9
C	441-477	70-75.9
D+	415.8-442	66-69.9
D	378-415	60-65.9
E	377 and under	<60

Academic Policies and Resources

Academic policies for this course are consistent with university policies. See
https://syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/uf-syllabus-policy-links/

Campus Health and Wellness Resources

Visit https://one.uf.edu/whole-gator/topics for resources that are designed to help you thrive physically, mentally, and emotionally at UF.

Please contact UMatterWeCare for additional and immediate support.

Software Use

All faculty, staff and students of the university are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against university policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate.

Privacy and Accessibility Policies

- Instructure (Canvas)
  - Instructure Privacy Policy
  - Instructure Accessibility
- Zoom
  - Zoom Privacy Policy
  - Zoom Accessibility

Additional information

Please see our Canvas page for specifics on assignments, assignment descriptions, rubrics, and for additional assigned readings.