

## ENVS-490 Independent Studies Syllabus: Green Eagle Edition

Faculty Adviser for Fall 2011

Dr. David Culver

202-885-2180, dculver@american.edu

### Course Objectives

#### Enhance your experience in a working environment through:

- Develop and implement science-based sustainability studies
- Develop technical skills needed to complete environmental sustainability projects.

### Requirements

- You must be a part of the Green Eagles
- You may enroll for 1 credit hour.
- Complete assignment described see below. As this course has no exams, submitting your assignments on time is critical. Value of your assignment will be decrease by 10% per day that it is late.

### Assignments & Grading

Note that all assignments are due on Friday at 5 PM of the week indicated (below). Once registered, you will be enrolled in a Blackboard course to which will post all your assignments. Your assignments will thus be available to other students who are enrolled in course for that semester. You are encouraged to read and comment (constructively) on other student's work.

You will receive an In Progress (IP) designation for the Fall semester pending successful completion of the final assignments during the Spring. A final grade will be awarded at the end of the Spring semester.

Assignment	Points (%)	Due Date
1. Project Proposal	15	6 <sup>th</sup> Week of Fall Classes
2. Background Research	15	10 <sup>th</sup> Week of Fall Classes
3. Preliminary Finding & Plan	15	Last Week of Fall Classes
4. Final Project Due	45	10 <sup>th</sup> Week of Spring Classes
5. An oral or poster presentation in the Spring at a college-wide student research conference or similar venue	10	TBD during Spring

### Detailed Description of Assignments

Please carefully read the instructions for each of the assignments, paying attention to when they are due and how they should be submitted.

#### *Assignment 1: Project Proposal (15%) - Due End of 4<sup>th</sup> Week of Fall Classes*

Outline your idea for a research project (see below). You should discuss possible ideas with your Green Eagles and independent studies advisors as early as you can. The proposal should contain the following information:

- (a) project title
- (b) objectives: brief statement on the outcomes of the proposed work
- (c) rationale: describe the general area of environmental concern that is being addressed by the project (i.e., background information)
- (d) methodology: describe the methods that will be used; include as much details as possible
- (e) schedule of work: describe milestones and timelines for their achievement

The proposal should be between 500 and 600 words and posted directly to Blackboard (i.e., copy and paste) instead of being uploaded as a document.

*Assignment 2: Background Research (15%) - Due End of 7<sup>th</sup> Week of Fall Classes*

For this assignment, write a background paper on your research topic; consult with your advisor as needed. This paper should be 300-400 words and include information that explains and supports the need for your project. The assignment should be posted directly to Blackboard.

*Assignment 3: Preliminary Findings & Continuing Plan (15%) - Last Week of Fall Classes*

This paper should be 2-3 pages (not including appendices, etc), single spaced, 12 pt font, with 1 inch margins. Your paper should have an executive summary or an abstract (half page or less) as well as a reference section. The paper should add the proposal you wrote but updated with a description of what you have done (i.e., data), an assessment of how the work is going, revisions to the plan (if needed), and a timeline for completion. For this assignment, paste the executive summary to Blackboard and attach the entire document to the posting.

*Assignment 4: Final Project (45%) – Due 10<sup>th</sup> Week of Spring Classes*

Your final project should be 6-8 pages (not including appendices, etc), single spaced, 12 pt font, with 1 inch margins and should include (revised and updated) up to 1 page for project proposal (minus the schedule) and executive summary/abstract, 1-2 pages for literature/background survey and the preliminary findings & continuing plan submitted at the end of the fall semester. The remainder of the paper should include a reference section, final description of procedures, and final description of what you have done (i.e. data), an assessment of all data/research, and potential applications of your research to sustainability on AU's campus. In addition to a written project, a PowerPoint summarizing the paper is also required. You may have other related documents such as surveys, videos, etc that are also relevant and should be turned in. The paper, PowerPoint, and all related documents should be posted directly to Blackboard.

*Assignment 5: An Oral or Poster Presentation (10%) – Presentation TBD, Abstract Due Last Week of Spring Classes*

The final assignment is to present on your research at a research conference or similar venue. Examples include the [Robyn Rafferty Mathias Student Research Conference](#) for CAS students or those completing CAS course work or the annual [SIS Undergraduate Research Symposium](#). Upload a copy of the abstract you plan to submit or have submitted to Blackboard by the last Friday of classes.