

ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH AND COMMUNITY
Fall, Winter and Spring 2003-04
Fall Quarter Syllabus

Lin Nelson, faculty

876-6056

Office: Lab 1, Rm 2010

nelsonl@evergreen.edu

Office Hours, fall: Friday 10-noon and by appt.

Program Secretary: Pam Udovich, Lab 1, Rm 1020

Program webspace.. www.evergreen.edu (go to Campus Directories-Academic)

Or www.iq-data.net/edu/ehc Greg Dasso has created a very exciting and effective webspace for our program, one that we can all have a role in developing and maintaining. This is an essential resource for your weekly explorations of organizations and resources, beyond the shared weekly readings. You will also find various documents, class contacts and other key program materials.

** It is very important that you consult this syllabus often and bring it to class. Because of our connections and collaborations with people in the region, our schedule will necessarily change as we work around other schedule demands. Please be attentive to changes as they emerge.

Fall program schedule:

Tuesday, 11- 2:30 ... Library Rm 2101

Tuesday, 2:30-5 ... Lab 2, Rm 2211

Wednesday, 10-1 ... Library Rm 2101

Thursday, 11-2:30 ... Library Rm 2101

Thursday, 2:30-5 ... Lab 2, Rm 2211

(We will decide on lunch and other breaks, as the schedule evolves around visitors, fieldtrips, program projects and such.)

This year-long group contract will explore the complex, changing and sometimes elusive links between the environment, public health and the community. While students may join this program from a background and interest that is strongly focused in either environmental studies or health/development or community development, our work together as a group will be to examine and be involved in the connections between these. We will study scientific/clinical developments, public policy, industrial conditions, legal strategy, political participation and community life. Our attention will center on how environmental health is shaped and experienced at the community level, but we will be developing our analysis in view of regional, national and international conditions (from trade to global warming to militarism). The emergence of an environmental health movement and public interest science, linking professional and citizen, will be an essential area of our work. Throughout the year we will be guided by our consultation and collaboration with regional practitioners, analysts and activists, with students preparing for spring quarter team projects and/or internships (these might range across such interests as the health of local food systems, environmental health and children, workplace health or fisheries and human health).

Fall quarter will involve an exploration of the broad terrain of Environmental Health as a field. Our work in class, and potentially through your projects, will be highly consultative and collaborative with people in fields related to health and environment; these include staff in public agencies, health care providers, activists, as well as representatives of such organizations as Collaborative on Health and the Environment, Institute for Children & Environmental Health, WA Toxics Coalition, Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility, patients rights groups and worker health advocates. Winter quarter we will be observing/participating in the Legislative session, as it bears on our areas of concern (for example, bills proposing the phase-out of persistent, bioaccumulative toxics). As one collaborative example, some of you might be involved in organizing and participating in Evergreen Labor Center's workshops on Workplace Health. During spring we'll organize a weekly workshop/plenary session around student-based interests and projects. Credits will be awarded in social science, public policy, environmental health issues and policies, global/regional/community studies, public health, research methods and project design.

Main Texts (available in the bookstore, some downtown at Orca Books):

Living Downstream, Sandra Steingraber, Vintage Books, 1998.

Our Global Environment: A Health Perspective, Anna Nadakavukaren, Waveland Press, 5th edition, 2000.

Dangerous Intersections: Feminist Perspectives on Population, Environment and Development, Jael Silliman & Ynestra King (eds), South End Press, 1999.

Deceit and Denial: The Deadly Politics of Industrial Pollution, Gerald Markowitz & David Rosner, Univ of CA Press, 2002.

A Civil Action, Jonathon Harr, Vintage 1996.

No Safe Place : Toxic Waste, Leukemia and Community Action, Phil Brown, Univ of CA Press, 1997.

Reclaiming the Debate: The Politics of Health in a Toxic Culture, Richard Hofrichter (ed), Mit Press, 2000.

Citizen Muckraking: How to Investigate and Right Wrongs in Your Community, Center for Public Integrity, Common Courage Press, 2000.

Core readings will be augmented by articles, newsletters, journals, websearches and other resources. Some of these will be handed out in class, others will be on reserve. An evolving list of web resources will be on our website and you will want to be looking at this very steadily throughout the quarter.

ASSIGNMENTS:

- (1) There will be 4 analytic book essays. For each reading, I will provide one or more questions that might guide your essay. OR, you may develop your own question and approach. You need to choose 4 out of the 7 essay opportunities, with 2 of them submitted by November 4th. On 2 of these, you need to have another student read and comment on your first draft; then you'll turn in the other student's copy with comments and your second draft. Essays should be double-spaced, typed – about 3 pages.
- (2) Each week you need to dedicate at least an hour to websearching an EHC-relevant issue, organization, agency or website of your choosing. This can be one organization you decide to acquaint yourself with or an issue that takes you to many sites and sources. Then you need to provide a one-page profile of the issue, data, theme and/or resources. Your profile can be a text narrative or bulleted points. They need to be turned in by Friday or Tuesday of the following week; they'll become part of our program collection which will be available in Reserve and on the website.
- (3) Each week you need to write a one-page thematic analysis, inquiry or creative exploration of a theme or question of interest. This is meant to draw out your broad sense of analysis, questioning – and adventure. There might be a theme or problem that emerged in a workshop, fieldtrip or guest presentation. This is meant to go beyond “the facts”, the info-glut, the eternally growing mass of data and resource. What themes and challenges are emerging for you? They might have something to do with ethics, cross-generational impacts and responsibilities, environmental justice, individual coping, community adaptation, corporate malfeasance, citizen right-to-know, public interest science and so on. You might want to journey with one central theme or inquiry over the quarter, letting your thoughts simmer and leaven as you explore new material. Your choice. These one-pagers need to be turned in on Friday, or Tuesday of the following week. Often they will be exchanged during class-time for others to read and comment on. Occasionally there might be in-class, spontaneous writing and reviewing.
- (4) 5th week self profile/interest mapping – submit day before conference
- (5) Final paper/presentation. Handout later. Format developed by group.

WEEK-BY-WEEK: WORK, EVENTS, ETC.

*Typically there will be one book seminar a week, possibly two – dependent on interest, need and other pulls on our time. We'll try to have the weekly seminar on Tuesday afternoon from @ 2:45 -5; we'll typically be breaking up into 3 groups, with the last 45 minutes being dedicated to report-backs and synthesis.

WEEK ONE: September 30, October 1-2.

Main reading: Living Downstream (through chapter 4)

9/30 – Introductions, Orientation, videos, riskmaps, group resume.

10/1 – Seminar on Steingraber – foreword, prologue, chapters 1-4

10/2 – Presentation on general themes and issues.

Video “Witness to the Future” and discussion.

2:30-4 Meet in LIB computer classroom (ask at Reference desk)
for Orientation to EHC webspace and NGOs/Agencies

WEEK TWO: October 7-9

Main reading: Living Downstream, complete the book; GE -- selected chapters.

10/7 – Presentation

-- Seminar on Steingraber

10/8 – Outing to Fertile Ground, 311 9th Ave., across from the Public Library

Plan on being there from 10-1, or longer if you’d like.

Some of us (5 people) need to be there by 9 for food preparation

Bring \$2 to cover lunch costs.

Prepare for the day by going to www.fertileground.org

10/9 – Overview of EH issues. Seminar/review sessions on parts of
Global Environment. There are four chapter groupings that we’ll
explore.. Chs. 2-5 (population); Chs 6-7 (disease/toxic);

Chs 8-9 (pests, pesticides, food); Chs 11-12 (atmosphere/air)

Pick two groupings to focus on for discussion. Riskmaps/fear factors.

10/9 – Olympia City Council Chambers. Public meeting on Sustainability
and Planning, 7pm Olympia City Hall, Plum St.

10/9-12 Peace Studies Conference, with a presentation on
War, Environment and Media

WEEK THREE: October 14-16

Main reading: Global Environment – continued discussion Wed, Thurs

10/14 – Learning Place – exploring downtown Olympia

This will be an all-day, 11-5 activity. Meet at 11 at the

Bus Terminal on State St. Between 11 and 3, we will – in small groups –

visit various sites and talk with hosts here and there. From 3-5 we will

be meeting in the Community Meeting Room of the Olympia

Public Library, on 9th Ave., across from Fertile Ground.

A detailed guidesheet for the day will be available @ 10/9.

Go to www.greenmap.com for background.

10/15 – Bring Dangerous Intersections to class, so that we
can together plan our readings for Week Four.

Further review/discussion of Global Environment

11:30-1: Judi Best, State Legislative Internship Office.

..... Presentation on state legislative process.

1pm, LIB 1507, Legislative Workshop for the college.

10/16 – 11-2:30 Elise Miller, Director, Institute for Children’s Environmental Health and the Collaborative for Health and the Environment.
Preparation: www.iceh.org; www.partnersforchildren.org;
www.cheforhealth.org; www.protectingourhealth.org
Further discussion of Global Environment and EH issues.
Riskmaps/fear factors.

WEEK FOUR: October 21-23

Main reading: Dangerous Intersections

(we’ll all read some of the chapters and divy up the others, with groups reporting on key areas of interest/concern)

Important: read or review Global Environment Chs 2-5 as background.

10/21 – Video (“People Count”) /presentation

-- seminar

10/22 – Seminar, synthesis, possible guests

10/23 – Visit to Tacoma, Citizens for a Healthy Bay, sites along Commencement Bay; our guide is Leslie Anne Rose.

Departure 9am sharp. Carpool assembles 8:45. Return @ 5pm.

Prepare for the day by spending some time at www.healthybay.org

Prepare by reading Global Environment Chs 15-16

WEEK FIVE: October 28-30

Main reading: Deceit and Denial

Read the whole book, with a focus on either Lead or PVC. You’ll then seminar with the group focusing on your interest and prepare group report back.

10/28 – Presentation; video Trade Secrets and discussion, w/ TESC Labor Ctr. Seminar

10/29 No regular class. Optional viewing of Song of the Canary (workplace health – classic video in the worker health movement)

10/30 3-5 Dr Michael Silverstein, Assistant Dir, WA Dept of Labor & Industries/WISHA (Industrial Safety & Health).

Presentation/discussion on Workplace Health and Safety.

To prepare, go to www.lni.wa.gov and www.nycosh.org

** This week we’ll have reduced classtime in order to have individual faculty-student conferences. These will be scheduled mostly on Wed, Thurs and Friday; sign up on Thursday, Oct 23 or Tues, Oct 28th. These are 20-30 minute meetings to discuss how your work is going, your emerging interests, etc.

WEEK SIX: November 4-6

Main reading: A Civil Action

Good preparation: review Global Environment, Chs 15-16

11/4 11-1 Darryl Cochran, Thurston County Dept of Environmental Health, presentation on EH issues, enforcement and governance at the county.

Seminar on Civil Action

11/5 Presentation/video on Woburn case study

- 11/6 Continued examination of Civil Action – presentation & seminar
11/8 -- “In Harm’s Way: Toxic Threats to Child Development”, conference at
University of Washington, Seattle.
www.iceh.org/Pages/IHWSeattleweb.pdf

WEEK SEVEN: November 11-13

Main reading: No Safe Place

- 11/11 Presentation/Discussion on Citizen Science, Public Interest,
Professional and Popular Epidemiology
Seminar NSP
11/12 Implications of Woburn for EH policy, family/child health, litigation;
other case studies and national/international developments
11/13 Presentation/review/discussion of issues/themes to date.
Planning for end-of-quarter and winter quarter.
11/15 Waters of Life Celebration/Conference Longhouse.

WEEK EIGHT: November 18-20

Main reading: Reclaiming the Debate

(There will be a division of labor around interests)

- 11/18 Presentation and/or panel on EH practice and advocacy.
Seminar on parts of Reclaiming the Debate
11/19 Seminar on parts of Reclaiming...
11/20 Presentation and/or panel on EH practice and advocacy;
planning for Week 10 presentations and for Winter quarter.

THANKSGIVING BREAK...

WEEK NINE: December 2-4

Main reading: Citizen Muckraking

(We will divide up some of the readings, with focused group discussions and presentations)

The Art of Anonymous Activism: Serving the Public While Surviving Public Service (copies provided through class – make sure you get copy before Break)

- 12/2 – Presentation/Discussion Citizen Knowledge and Action
2:30-5 – Lea Mitchell, WA PEER (Public Employees for Environmental
Responsibility) To prepare go to www.peer.org (& WA links);
Look over PEER newsletters (class and/or reserve)
12/3-4 Interest/Skill Development around research, right-to-know

WEEK TEN: December 9-11 Paper/presentations/events.

3 days of student-created discussions, workshops, learning experiences.

Handout/guidesheet developed in program planning.

EVALUATION WEEK: December 15 -

