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<th>Course name:</th>
<th>Environmental Issues and Sustainable Development</th>
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<td>Course number:</td>
<td>ENVI 3101 BAAR</td>
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<td>Programs offering course:</td>
<td>Open Campus</td>
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<td>Open Campus track:</td>
<td>Sustainability and Environmental Sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Language of instruction:</td>
<td>English</td>
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<tr>
<td>U.S. semester credits:</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contact hours:</td>
<td>45</td>
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<td>Term:</td>
<td>Fall 2018</td>
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**Course Description**

This course seeks to critically examine the science-policy interface on several issue areas related to the idea of sustainable development itself and its promotion in the global and regional contexts. In exploring that relationship between expert knowledge and public policies, the course will trace the origins of the concepts of sustainable development by looking at the different institutions, regimes and conventions that gave origin to that idea. That will allow us to then link those discussions on sustainability and environmental sciences to a South American context by revisiting the historical dilemma of development in a region rich in natural resources and the associated socio-environmental conflicts. By analyzing the role of different actors traditionally associated with the concept of environmental governance, students will be able to grasp some of the existing functions of knowledge (expert and traditional) in environmental public policy setting in South American. Do these sources of knowledge objectively inform environmental public policies or do they merely justify a political decision? Do all actors and agents of knowledge have similar capacities to affect environmental governance in our region?

**Learning Objectives**

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Articulate a deeper understanding of relevant and current debates around environment and development in Argentina and Latin America
- Critically evaluate actors’ positions revolving around the relationship between scientific/expert knowledge and environmental politics
- Independently source and verify additional and relevant sources of information
- Develop and deliver complex arguments on environmental sensitive issues

**Assessment and Final Grade**
1. Presentation 20%
2. Discussion Forums (2) 20%
3. Midterm Exam 20%
4. Final Paper 20%
5. Class Participation 20%
TOTAL: 100%

Course Requirements

Presentation
Students will be required to deliver a presentation during the course. These presentations should be 10-15 minutes in length and demonstrate a good understanding of a selected topic and the ability to put it in perspective. The topic should be presented in a concise yet comprehensive manner.

Midterm Exam
Students will take an exam that assesses both the level of comprehension of the readings and the understanding of the issues discussed in the first half of the term. The exam will consist of three exam questions, from which students choose two and elaborate their answers based on both the readings discussed and the topics discussed in class.

Discussion Forums
Each of two Discussion Forums consist of a role-play exercise in which students, divided into smaller groups, will represent the positions and interests of different organizations in a multi-stakeholder negotiation (involving corporate, NGO, media and governmental actors) around a pertinent sensitive subject (i.e., climate change or a productive development implying conflictive interests).

Final Paper
Students will be provided with the instructions for the production of a final paper, 3000 words in length, based one of subjects discussed during the second part of the term. This paper will require students to critically think, synthesize and integrate the concepts from different class sessions. Students are expected to show extensive knowledge of the discussed literature being also allowed to use complementary material to support their arguments. The paper should use APA citation style in referencing resources.

Participation
Participation is valued as meaningful contribution in the digital and tangible classroom, utilizing the resources and materials presented to students as part of the course. Meaningful contribution requires students to be prepared in advance of each class session and to have regular attendance. Students must clearly demonstrate they have engaged with the materials as directed, for example, through classroom discussions, online discussion boards, peer-to-peer feedback (after presentations), interaction with guest speakers, and attentiveness on co-curricular and outside-of-classroom activities. Each session will begin with a ‘breaking ice’ exercise that consists on briefly describing the main ideas and arguments introduced by the authors at discussion for that specific session (listed as mandatory readings for the day). Therefore only students who voluntarily participate along the different session’s opening will have that 10% count as part of their final grade for class participation.

**Attendance Policy**

Regular class attendance is required throughout the program, and all unexcused absences will result in a lower participation grade for any affected CIEE course. Due to the intensive schedules for Open Campus and Short Term programs, unexcused absences that constitute more than 10% of the total course will result in a written warning.

Students who transfer from one CIEE class to another during the add/drop period will not be considered absent from the first session(s) of their new class, provided they were marked present for the first session(s) of their original class. Otherwise, the absence(s) from the original class carry over to the new class and count against the grade in that class.

For CIEE classes, excessively tardy (over 15 minutes late) students must be marked absent. Attendance policies also apply to any required co-curricular class excursion or event, as well as to Internship, Service Learning, or required field placement. Students who miss class for personal travel, including unforeseen delays that arise as a result of personal travel, will be marked as absent and unexcused. No make-up or re-sit opportunity will be provided.

Attendance policies also apply to any required class excursion, with the exception that some class excursions cannot accommodate any tardiness, and students risk being marked as absent if they fail to be present at the appointed time.

Unexcused absences will lead to the following penalties:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Total Course Hours Missed</th>
<th>Equivalent Number of Open Campus Semester classes</th>
<th>Minimum Penalty</th>
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<tr>
<td>Up to 10%</td>
<td>1 content classes, or up to 2 language classes</td>
<td>Participation graded as per class requirements</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 – 20%</td>
<td>2 content classes, or 3-4 language classes</td>
<td>Participation graded as per class requirements; written warning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 20%</td>
<td>3 content classes, or 5 language classes</td>
<td>Automatic course failure, and possible expulsion</td>
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**Weekly Schedule**

NOTE: this schedule is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor to take advantage of current experiential learning opportunities.

**Week 1  Orientation Week**

Class 1:1  Introduction

An introduction to the course topics, activities (Discussion Forum, guest speakers, etc.), and assessment methods, while providing space for questions by students. Additionally, by highlighting the main topics to be discussed on the following weeks, we will provide an overall contextualization of how mastery of the learning objectives will be approached throughout this course.

Class 1:2  Sustainable Development as a concept

Historical developments and current debates around the concept of sustainable development will be presented in this session. Introduction to the three pillars of
sustainability and to International commitments and programs for fostering sustainable development while also assessing the progress experienced at the regional/national levels. This session is the first conceptual-historical building block in the path of understanding the need for a more balanced relationship between economic, social and environmental imperatives in 21st century development. It also focuses on the controversies in Latin America around this concept from its origin in international organizations to expert discussion and civil society.

Reading:


Class 1:3 Newer Visions and Proposals

The proposals of Buen Vivir, Ubuntu, Sustainable Degrowth and Post-development will be individually analyzed and compared. The session is oriented at providing insight on the new alternative visions introduced by different groups of ecological thought. A comparison of the main conceptual components of these alternatives versus those of Green Economy and Green Growth, Circular Economy will help strengthening the students’ understanding of the substantial differences between the contributions of these approaches.

Reading:

Week 2

Class 2:1 The Problem of Development

Modernity, progress and development as competing concepts have been historically intertwined with Latin America development ideal. The dilemmas revolving around the natural resources-based development model will be presented and discussed assessing the concepts of extractivism and post-extractivism. By analyzing recent debates around development in relation to the prevailing political economic orientations of the region, neoliberalism, neo-development and post-development will be broken down and linked to the
main associated socio-environmental conflicts and the limits for development present in the region.

Reading:

Class 2:2 Mining in Latin America

What are some of the main challenges for extractive industries in the Global South? Discussions on the environmental impacts, social conflicts and the perpetuation of a mere exporter role will be a key element in this session. Latin America has exploited its minerals since colonization times, and many countries have developed their economic system around this activity. However, the current technical, political and economic conditions have posed a different set of challenges involving high environmental impacts, social conflicts and strong dependence on volatile prices. The module seeks to discuss the main challenges that emerge from the current global scenario for extractive industries and national development strategies.

Reading:

Class 2:3 Guest Speaker: TBC

An expert on subnational politics on mining will present the different positions and strategies around development put forward by the main mining provinces of argentina’s discussing the interplay between subnational governments and transnational companies.

Reading: TBC

Week 3
Class 3:1 Environmental Governance

The concept of governance is linked to the capacities of states to influence the economic and social spheres in search of consensus for policy development. In theory, an ideal notion of necessary balance between the state, market and civil society characterizes the concept governance. Nonetheless, in practice, not all experiences of interaction reflect a balanced encounter between these three fundamental social actors. The session will cover subjects as state, market, civil society relations. The emerging concept of substitute governance will be presented as a way to show existing tension in the relations among these actors along the planning of public policies.

Reading:


Class 3:2 Civil Society Environmental Governance

The participation of NGOs as a driving force in key collective decisions: the monitoring of the clean-up plan of the Matanza-Riachuelo water basin. The session seeks to analyze the process of civil society’s involvement in a litigation case on the remediation of one of Latin-America’s most polluted water basins in which more than 18 million people live. By looking at the different stages of a collective process involving a judicial decision of Argentina’s Supreme Court of Justice, which created a collegiate charter that (coordinated by a national ombudsman) integrates civil society organizations in the monitoring of the clean-up plan, the session discusses the opportunities and shortcomings of civil society organizations’ participation in environmental governance.

Media Resource:
Farn (2014), “La vuelta al Río”. Fundación Ambiente y Recursos Naturales. It will be provided by the professor.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=17&v=MybUS3VaMp8

Class 3:3 Midterm Exam
Week 4

Class 4:1  Site Visit: Riachuelo Basin

The goal of the visit is to see and understand some of the environmental restaurations measures that are been taken in terms of water, air, soils, biodiversity and living conditions by Matanza Riachuelo Watershed Authority, the agency responsible for implementing the Integral Plan for Environmental Sanitation of the basin.

Reading: TBC

Class 4:2  Plural Knowledge: Expert Discourse / Traditional Knowledge

The hegemony of Western knowledge and sciences is being increasingly contested. Not only the classical disputes around positivism, but mainly those related to feminism, postcolonial approaches and subaltern studies, question their main implications related to codification and exploitation of nature and other human beings. The relation between science, knowledge and power is in the center of the critics. In Latin America, in particularly, these critics are also related to the emergence of indigenous movements and to the alternative visions to sustainable development presented in Week 1. The project of a plural knowledge questions the division between expert and traditional knowledge and subordination of the latter. This discussion has relevant implications for rethinking the relationship between science and power and the evolution of public controversies and socio-environmental conflicts.

Reading:

Class 4:3  Discussion Forum I

Students will be asked to choose from and represent in a forum a different variety of organizations with contrasting cognitive and culture maps around a given public controversy/ conflict.

Reading: TBC

Week 5
Class 5:1  Science and Politics

Expert scientific knowledge has been vindicated as a key element for supporting policy decisions in highly sensitive issue areas like the environment and minimizing possible adverse effects. The session discusses the complex relationship between science and politics by analyzing tensions between the normative ideal of objective science as source of solutions based on the authority of knowledge and the prerogatives of politics and power. The main approaches revolving around this interdependence (complex thinking, post-normal science, interdisciplinarity, epistemic communities) will be presented and discussed.

Reading:

Class 5:2  Case Study: The Development of Biofuels in Latin America

Biofuels as an alternative source of energy in a context of climate change will be presented and assessed and the main sustainability rules and dilemmas discussed. The session’s goal is to assess the relationship between science and politics in the sector’s evolution in economic, social and environmental terms.

Reading:

Class 5:3  Discussion Forum II

Students will prepare presentations for representing a multi-stakeholder negotiation related to the development of an energy dam megaproject.

Reading:  TBC
Class 6:1 Environmental Science

The session will highlight the role of Environmental Sciences in defining the objects and areas for conservation or exploitation. The conflict between nature conservation and development will be introduced by referring to practical cases. Another focus of the class will be the conflict between Global Public Goods and National Resources in concept and practice, bringing into debate the case of Yasuni-ITT in Ecuador. Each discussion will be framed within the idea of the Anthropocene as a new geological age. The session will also analyze the role of experts in the controversies around Climate Change.

Reading:


Class 6:2 Guest Speaker: The Development of the National Inventory of Glaciers in Argentina

Glaciers are considered a relevant source and reservoirs of freshwater; due to their importance, they have been considered strategic, and therefore must be protected by law. At the same time, many glaciers overlap with mining activities that may be affecting these sources of freshwater. A geologist and technical analyst from the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development of Argentina (TBC) will describe and analyze the challenges of environmental sciences in the process of making the National Inventory, and the role the Ministry and the Argentinean Institute of Nivology, Glaciology and Environmental Sciences (IANIGLA) as a fundamental step for coping with the Glaciers Protection Environmental Act.

Reading:

Class 6:3 Presentations
In small groups, students will present about a set of cases related to a conflictive use of natural resources.

- Final Paper due

**Course Materials**

**Readings**


Online Resources
