UEP 101
Environment and Society
Spring 2014
Professor Victor M. Polanco
Office: UEPI Building 2nd Floor
Office Hrs: T/Th 12:00-1:00 or by apt.
polanco@oxy.edu

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section 1</th>
<th>Section 2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T/Th 10:05-11:30 AM</td>
<td>T/Th 1:30-2:55 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class meets in Johnson Hall 106</td>
<td>Class meets in Tree North</td>
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Students are expected to have read and understood the contents of this syllabus

Course Background and Conceptual Themes
UEP 101 is an introductory course on the urban environment. It is designed for students with an interest in urban and environmental issues who might want to pursue further coursework and research through the Urban and Environmental Policy major as well as for those interested in the topic even though they may be pursuing another major.

The class examines a broad range of urban and environmental issues. Readings, discussions, presentations, class exercises and writing assignments will allow students to engage with the concepts, critical assessments and perspectives about the urban environment. You will be asked to think about issues from their “upstream”/root causes to their “downstream” consequences and the challenges and opportunities for change, with critical analysis throughout as to how power disparities (i.e., race, class, gender) come to influence those urban and environmental issues. The course will be organized around three introductory sessions and five broad conceptual themes.

Introductory Sessions:
How does knowledge turn into action, whether it’s how we identify and address environmental issues in our own backyard (at our homes or on campus), in Los Angeles, or in the ways we consume “stuff”? How do individual, institutional, political and economic factors contribute to community and environmental impacts? How might we identify and evaluate different agencies for change? What are the pitfalls and promises of ethical consumption? How can we build critical thinking skills to evaluate issues from the local/personal to the systemic?

Conceptual Theme #1: Global Forces, Local Impacts
How do the forces for a globalized production and consumption system impact our local communities, jobs, and our environment? How do global trade and freight traffic impact the environment? And what role do emerging economies (nations like China that are rapidly growing their economies and experiencing huge environmental challenges) play in the context of larger global environmental debates? What are the environmental and social justice implications of climate change? How might we change our fossil fuel-dominated energy systems and conceptualize a green energy economy? What opportunities for action are available in the face of such deeply embedded causes of potentially catastrophic outcomes?
Conceptual Theme #2: Environmental Health and Justice
How do we experience environmental health and justice issues such as toxics products or unhealthy and unjust food systems in our everyday lives? What are the sources and impacts of toxic exposure and the multiple sources of pollution? What are the different strategies employed by communities and organizations to address sources of pollution or food system problems? How do the debates about pollution prevention vs pollution control vs market strategies vs. precaution also serve as an intro to U.S. environmental policy? And what different strategies are available to change the food system to become more fair, sustainable, and just.

Conceptual Theme #3: The Right to the City
Who has a right to the city and what does that mean? Is it the way that cities are structured which limit or prescribe their uses? How does city planning connect to individual and community health? What is the connection between transportation decisions, sprawl and the environment? How do we define and build more livable cities? In what context have planning decisions been made over time and who suffers and who benefits from existing city planning structures?

Conceptual Theme #4: Nature in the City
How have cities been constructed that exclude and/or control nature? How has “Nature” as represented by non-urban places and the natural environment been managed that effectively excludes particular constituencies (e.g., urban inner city residents)? Can cities incorporate nature to become more sustainable? More just? More livable? More ecological? Are ideas of “urban” and ideas of “nature” at odds? Is the concept “Nature in the City” an oxymoron?

Conceptual Theme #5: Food Politics
Where does our food come from and how it is manufactured? Where is it purchased, and how it is consumed? What strategies can we employ to address the problems with our existing food system?

Course Requirements
Grades will be based on the following:

1. PARTICIPATION (40% of grade)

Participation and active engagement in class discussions, exercises, assignments, and out-of-class events are a critical component of the course.

A. Reading Responses (20% of grade)
One of the key aspects of the class will be discussions related to the readings and the posting of reading responses. You are required to post a reading response for every class session on the class Moodle site by 10:00pm the night before class. Readings listed for each class are to be done before that class (i.e. readings listed for Jan 23 are the readings we will discuss in that day’s class). Reading responses should not focus on whether or not you liked the readings (at least two or more of what’s assigned), but rather
should provide a critique, assessment, opinion, protest about the authors’ key arguments, or any combination of these. Your responses are a contribution to discussion about topics covered. As such, you should respond to the readings as well as your classmates’ postings in a thoughtful and productive way so as to benefit discussion. You may also highlight issues that are unclear to you or that you wish to discuss further in class. Reading responses should be no more than 150-250 words. You are expected to cite at least 2 readings in your response (use CMS author-date system for citation).

B. Attendance & Class Participation (10% of grade)
Class attendance and active participation in class is essential to the class. Let us know if you’re unable to attend class; if you don’t, we’ll assume you just failed to come without a particular reason for doing so.

C. Out-of-Class Events (5% of grade)
Students are required to attend at least 2 out-of-class events. You may also identify your own event, as approved by the Professor. Students should also post an event memo (no more than 200 words) afterwards on Moodle about the event (feel free to include pictures). A list of events will be shared and updated through a google doc made available to the class.

D. Two Minute Perspective (5% of grade)
Each student is responsible for presenting a two minute perspective on a subject of their choice (relevant to the course and pre-approved by the instructor). It is an opportunity to voice an independent opinion on a topic for which you feel great passion. Presentation of these Perspectives will begin in the 2nd week of classes (details in handout).

2. ASSIGNMENTS (25% of grade)
Assignments will consist of 3 essays, homework exercises/memos, and 1 group presentation.

A. Short Essays (15% of grade)
Students will write three formal essays, one on ethical consumption and two on the different topic areas covered in class. In addition to the formal essays students will write (1) a short memo identifying the most pressing environmental issues in your hometown (DUE Th Jan 23rd, hardcopy in class and uploaded to Moodle) and (2) undertake the Environmental Footprint and Scorecard exercises (DUE Tu Jan 28th, hardcopy in class and uploaded to Moodle). The grading for the formal essays will be based on your ability to state a clear and compelling argument, provide some evidence to back up your claim(s), organize your paper logically, cite appropriate references, and provide a clear written presentation (typed, title, double-spaced, 12-pt font, page numbers, name and date on the first page, etc). The essays are expected to be 2-3 pages. The use of graphic evidence (photos, tables, maps, charts, etc.) to strengthen your points can also be utilized (not included in the page limit). Please cite appropriately for all of your essays in Chicago Manual format (see attached document on citations)
Essay #1: The Promises and Pitfalls of Ethical Consumption (required for all students) Due as a hard copy in class February 4th and posted to Moodle (by class time).

Essays #2 and #3: Short Essays for the Conceptual Theme Areas (choose 2)

Note: you will NOT write an essay on the conceptual theme that you are presenting on – see group presentation below – so students will have a choice of writing about 2 of the other 4 conceptual themes.

The short essays are meant to be a further exploration of one of the themes or debates about the issues within each conceptual theme. You are free to choose any topic within each area, therefore there is no “prompt” for these two essays. Students are expected to reference at least two of the class readings within their short essay, but are encouraged to do additional research on the subjects covered in the essay.

Essays on topic areas will not be accepted following the due dates listed below, with the essay to be submitted as a hardcopy in class and on Moodle (no exceptions). Please do not submit via email. This will not be counted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Global Forces, Local Impacts</td>
<td>February 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Health and Justice</td>
<td>March 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Right to the City</td>
<td>March 27</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nature in the City</td>
<td>April 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Justice</td>
<td>April 24</td>
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B. Group Presentations (10% of grade)
You will choose a conceptual theme area (e.g., Right to the city, Climate Justice, etc.) and work with a group to help organize the seminar for your group presentation session regarding the readings for your topic area.

Presentation groups of about five students will be formed the second day of class (arrive early to sign up for your first choice). Each group will give a presentation and facilitate class discussion on their course topic areas. Each group is required to meet with the professor prior to the presentation to discuss the topic and the presentation. Groups are encouraged to draw on the readings, speakers, events, and also identify current coverage of events (e.g., post on moodle for the class to read a newspaper article, video, etc., that will also pertain to their presentations. In-class group presentations for each of the 5 conceptual themes will be on the following dates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conceptual Theme</th>
<th>Group Presentation Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Global Forces, Local Impacts</td>
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3. FINAL RESEARCH PAPER (35% of grade)

*Hardcopy Due Monday May 5 by 3:00 PM in the UEPI office—No late papers accepted (upload to Moodle as a PDF by the same time).*

The research paper should be on a specific topic, issue, or question of your choice. The purpose of the research paper is to conduct research on a topic of your choosing that relates to one of the broad conceptual themes or a current environmental debate (upon approval of the professor).

A. Research Paper (25% of grade)

Your papers should be between 10-12 pages double spaced (without your citations and bibliography). Your paper should describe your topic and its relevance to the environment and society. For your final paper, you may do 1) a traditional research paper or 2) an action research paper that includes a partnership with an organization (you would need to determine this avenue early on). This could include working with an organization on a campaign or issue relevant to your area of interest that the organization could use for their effort.

In addition to a presentation and analysis of your issue, research papers should consider and present policy and/or other types of recommendations for the issues you have identified. For your research, you should draw on and integrate concepts and discussions from the course as well as outside sources (e.g., books, journal articles, and relevant websites). Also include a bibliography that lists resources used for your paper.

*Grading.* You will receive a letter grade based on the following:

- Completion of assignment
- Depth of analysis (rather than simply a description of facts and history)
- Critical thinking with clear arguments to support your assertions
- Integration of course lectures, discussions, readings, and films, where appropriate
- Overall organization and structure of the paper.
- Connection to the organization’s research agenda (for an action research paper)

B. Benchmarks (5% of grade)

You should begin work on your final research paper early. To ensure you work on your paper throughout the term (and not leave it to the last minute, which invariably leads to a poor grade), we have set a series of benchmarks **DUE** in class (and uploaded to Moodle) on the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benchmark</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>(1) Identify topic and 2-3 possible questions</td>
<td>Th Feb 11</td>
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<tr>
<td>(2) Narrow topic and complete 3 steps</td>
<td>Tu Feb 18</td>
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<tr>
<td>(3) Annotated bibliography</td>
<td>Th Mar 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>(4) Draft Outline</td>
<td>Tu Mar 20</td>
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<tr>
<td>(5) Detailed Outline</td>
<td>Tu April 15</td>
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C. Individual Presentation (5% of grade)
There will be two (but possibly 3) sessions dedicated to presentations – the last two days of class April 29 and May 1 (and possibly May 2--Reading Day). Students will have 5 minutes to present and a few minutes for feedback.

Think of the presentation as a précis (a condensed summary of the key pieces of your paper). You should discuss:

1. The issue you were studying (i.e., your topic).
2. How you studied it (e.g., comparison of cases, interviews, etc).
4. Evidence to back up your claim/argument.
5. Lessons learned or potential remedies.

If you use power point which is encouraged (no more than 5 power points per presentation), they will be due (uploaded to Moodle) by **11:55 pm on April 28.**

Readings and Class Schedule

All readings are available on the class Moodle website – refer to the website for the syllabus as well as links to specific readings.

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<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1/21 Intro to Course</td>
<td>1/23 Introductory Session</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>1/28 Introductory Session</td>
<td>1/30 Introductory Session</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2/4 Theme 1 Global Forces/Local Impacts</td>
<td>2/6 Theme 1 Global Forces/Local Impacts</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2/11 Theme 1 Global Forces/Local Impacts</td>
<td>2/13 Theme 1 Global Forces/Local Impacts</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2/18 Theme 1 Global Forces/Local Impacts</td>
<td>2/20 Theme 1 Global Forces/Local Impacts</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2/25 Theme 2 Environmental Health</td>
<td>2/27 Theme 2 Environmental Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>3/4 Theme 2 Environmental Health</td>
<td>3/6 Theme 2 Environmental Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>3/11 Spring Break</td>
<td>3/13 Spring Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>3/18 Theme 3 Right to the City</td>
<td>3/20 Theme 3 Right to the City</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>3/25 Theme 3 Right to the City</td>
<td>3/27 Theme 3 Right to the City</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>4/1 Theme 4 Nature in the City</td>
<td>4/3 Theme 4 Nature in the City</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>4/8 Theme 4 Nature in the City</td>
<td>4/10 Theme 4 Nature in the City</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>4/15 Theme 5 Food Environment</td>
<td>4/17 Theme 5 Food Environment</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>4/22 Theme 5 Food Environment</td>
<td>4/24 Theme 5 Food Environment</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>4/29 Individual Presentations</td>
<td>5/1 Individual Presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Final Paper due 5/5 by 3pm</td>
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Course Policies and Support Services

Late Work
Students are expected to submit their work by the stated due dates. No late assignments will be accepted without prior approval, which will NOT be granted as last minute requests in person or by email. No exceptions.

Academic Integrity
Occidental College assumes that students and faculty accept and respect the principle of academic honesty. The policies on academic misconduct are outlined in the Student Handbook (http://www.oxy.edu/StudentHandbook.xml). Plagiarism is representing others work as your own. Students are expected to understand and abide by Oxy’s plagiarism policy (http://www.oxy.edu/x8000.xml).

Classroom Responsibilities
Teachers and students share the responsibility of learning and teaching. We see our responsibilities as creating the space and stimulating enthusiasm for learning, coming prepared to class, creating the goals and structure for a course, introducing concepts and ideas, and facilitating the sharing of knowledge amongst the students and between ourselves and the students. Students are responsible for attending and participating in class, completing assignments in a timely manner, and being prepared to discuss readings and material in class. Students are also responsible for engaging in respectful, open and thoughtful discussion with each other and with the professors.

Classroom Policies
There are five basic rules in this classroom:
   (1) Read all assigned material before class
   (2) Ask questions if you don’t understand
   (3) Participate in the discussion if you have something to say
   (4) Respect others, and
   (5) Turn off your wireless devices and NO laptops in class.

Support Services
The college provides a set of resources to students to support them in learning. The Center for Academic Excellence (CAE) provides writing assistance to students to develop ideas, draft, and revise papers. See http://departments.oxy.edu/cae/.

If you have specific physical or learning disabilities and require accommodations, please let me know early in the semester so that we can meet your learning needs. The Center for Academic Excellence also provides services to assist students with physical or learning disabilities; these students need to contact Magen Todd, Learning Strategies & Disabilities Specialist, x2849, mtodd@oxy.edu in the Center for Academic Excellence (x2545).

The Emmons Health and Counseling Center provides support for issues of stress, medical and mental health. See http://www.oxy.edu/EmmonsHealthCenter.xml.
The “Fatal Five”

1. **Reading the slides.** More respondents complained about this behavior than anything else – and by a wide margin. Many indignantly asked why a presenter would read slides aloud when audience members were entirely capable of reading them for themselves…“Watching someone read PowerPoint slides is a form of torture that should be banned under the Geneva Convention,” wrote one respondent.

2. **Too long, too much information.** How long is too long? If a presentation is boring, respondents told us, even 10 minutes can seem too long. And boring presentations appear to be rampant across the sector… “Too many slides with too many words, too many points, too much data, too long, too didactic.”

3. **Lack of interaction.** The problem that first appeared when we asked respondents to describe the typical presentation resurfaced strongly in subsequent answers to open-ended questions. Many complained about being “talked at” for 30, 40, even 60 minutes at a time…

4. **Lifeless presenters.** Presenters who speak in a monotone, who seem to lack interest in their own material, or who appear to have wandered in from the set of “Night of the Living Dead” were also reported by many in the survey…

5. **Room/technical problems.** LCD projectors that don’t work, air conditioning that works too well, sound systems that are either too soft, too loud, or have too much hiss – just about every room or technical problem you can imagine showed up in survey answers…many are preventable, and even those that cannot be avoided do not have to ruin a talk…presenters often do not anticipate them or fail to have a backup plan.

The Three Most Wanted

In another open-ended question, we asked, “What one or two key things make a presentation excellent?” Again, respondents provided a wide range of answers, although a few unhappy campers claimed they had *never* seen an excellent presentation. A consensus emerged around three characteristics, and unsurprisingly each is a direct opposite of a common problem cited above.

1. **Interaction.** Nearly one out of every four respondents mentioned interaction – with the speaker, with other audience members, or both – as a hallmark of excellent presentations. “Interactive presentations that create opportunities for the audience members to work together and with the presenter are almost always top notch,” one respondent told us.

2. **Clarity.** Some used the words “well organized,” and some wrote “concise,” but if you were to scan the verbatim responses to this question, you would see a long run of answers that begin with “clarity.” One such response: “Clarity of three to four well-framed key points the speaker wanted the audience to take away, coupled with smart use of metaphors/anecdotes that helped speaker drive them home.”

3. **Enthusiasm.** Whether respondents used the words energy, passion, charisma, engaging, dynamic or lively, they all wanted the same thing: presenters who were enthusiastic about their topic and conveyed that interest to the audience.

Four other qualities that each received a high number of mentions were: humor, use of stories, relevance, and well-produced visuals.