

YALE-NUS PROGRAMME IN ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

YID 4202: Applied Environmental Research

Academic Year 2018-2019, Semester One (August – November 2018)

Monday and Thursday, 1030 – 1145, CR13

Facilitator: Michael Maniates

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Consultation hours: Monday 3:00 – 4:30 p.m., Friday 11:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m., and by appointment

Go to <http://tinyurl.com/maniateshours> to schedule a time

The seminar is a multidisciplinary exploration of a contemporary, often controversial environmental problem. Students conduct research, perform necessary analysis, and present their findings in project teams to relevant stakeholders. The seminar heightens students' ability to conceptualise and analyse knotty problems, fosters an ability to communicate effectively across disciplines, and develops specific research skills necessary to the final capstone project. The module is required of all students majoring in Environmental Studies and is open only to those students.

Learning Objectives

If all goes according to plan, you will experience or enjoy:

1. the further development of your research and writing abilities, especially with respect to defining and executing do-able research questions with punch
2. an enhanced capacity to identify critical tasks in the formulation and completion of applied environmental research, and to act on these tasks in collaborative settings
3. an expanded appreciation for varied approaches to research and writing in the field, as explored by visiting EStudies professors throughout the term
4. a deeper understanding of how and why knowledge products support (or fail to support) policy change, value transformation, or material improvement in natural capital
5. greater confidence in your ability to produce successful research proposals, in part because of your completion of a mock research proposal
6. an opportunity to contemplate knowledge brokering, especially with respect to communicating research results via non-conventional 'storytelling'
7. the benefits of co-authorship of professionally produced final products

Assessment

Eleven Response Papers (3% each, 33% total): Assignment posted (almost) every Wednesday by 5 p.m., due the following Monday by 9 a.m., submitted via Canvas. You will have the opportunity to write on 12 weekly prompts; I will take your top eleven scores. The focus of the response papers will vary, and may include queries about your grasp of readings, your progress on your own research, your participation in the group seminar, and your observations of group process. Your responses are private. You have one "24-hour" late pass over the semester. See policy on late submissions below.

Mock Research Proposal (22%): A draft is due after recess week (ungraded) with the final proposal due during the first week of final exams. Fourth-year ES students in our seminar will be offered an alternative assignment of equal weight and difficulty.

Final Knowledge Products (45%): By the end of the first week of the final exam period, the seminar group will have produced one or more knowledge/research products, targeted at specific stakeholders, in support of this semester's project. Seminar participants will develop a rubric for assessing these products in collaboration with Professor Maniates. Individual grades for this category will be assigned in light of your final participation score, e.g. a participation score of 95% and a knowledge product group grade of 94% = an overall score of $(0.95)(0.94) = 89\%$ (B plus/A minus).

Participation: There is no separate assessment for participation. Instead, your colleagues, your professor, and you (40/20/40) will assess your contribution to the project at the middle of the semester and again at the end of the term. Only the final participation score will be used when determining your final grade for the 'Final Knowledge Products' segment of the module.

The Research Proposal

A successful research proposal will be well organized and clearly written. It will be the product of multiple drafts. All acceptable research proposals will have the following elements:

- A one-paragraph statement of your central question
- A description of the argument, debate, or conversation within which your capstone research is situated. You are [joining a scholarly conversation](#) with your work. What is that conversation, and what are the key articles, books, essays and other elements of 'the literature' that define this scholarly conversation? (You may think of this as a focused literature review.)
- A description/justification of your methods and methodology that will move your capstone project from simple description to description *and* analysis.
- A bibliography of all works cited in the proposal
- An annotated bibliography of **at least ten scholarly sources**, representing a suitable mix (for your project) of research elements such as books, journal articles, conference papers, and grey literature (e.g. government and NGO white papers, technical reports, and working papers).
- A timeline of work, with self-imposed deadlines, for the remainder of the semester

Workload

Expect to devote ~ 10 hours a week, on average, to this course, including time in class. Some weeks will be heavier and some will be lighter. See me if you are spending more than ~ 10 hours a week so that we may discuss how you can streamline your approach.

Course policies and procedures

- ✚ Attendance: I have no attendance policy in this course. If you miss a class, you miss whatever material we covered that day. Consult with other members of the seminar to learn what you've missed. I am available, within reason, to fill in remaining gaps.
- ✚ Late submissions: You may obtain extra time to submit assignments at the cost of 10% of the assignment grade per 24 hours of extension. Extensions at this cost are granted automatically.

Course policies and procedures (continued)

- ✚ Tardiness: I will aim to start promptly at 10:30 a.m. and end promptly at 11:45 a.m. Please endeavor to be settled in nicely by 10:30 a.m.
- ✚ Laptops: You'll need your laptop in class to access readings, but laptops in seminar also can be distracting, to others and to you. I occasionally may ask you to close your laptop. Please don't be offended if I do.
- ✚ Interim evaluation: The EStudies programme requires you to take this course. The programme faculty want it to be useful to you. To that end, anonymous feedback evaluations will be conducted at the end of weeks three and eight, with results reported back to the class.
- ✚ Academic integrity:
 - This would be an unfortunate moment for you to run afoul of our shared understandings of academic integrity. Please see the Yale-NUS "avoiding plagiarism" website at <http://library.yale-nus.edu.sg/avoiding-plagiarism/> Please review the Cornell University Plagiarism Tutorial on this page. Also consider perusing <https://studentlife.yale-nus.edu.sg/policies/academic-integrity/>
 - Instances of lapses in academic integrity are easily found, including [this embarrassment](#) at the Republican National convention in the United States. But other, more subtle mistakes, often associated with sloppy paraphrasing, are equally common. Be especially diligent in your notetaking practice (consider using Zotero or another citation management to help you) and work closely with the library staff and academic advisor if you have doubts about your ability to write in your own voice. Also consider reviewing, thoroughly, "*They Say/I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing*", which is a favorite of many environmental-studies professors at Yale-NUS.
 - It is difficult to overstate the difficulties that we will all experience if you should violate, either intentionally or inadvertently, norms of academic integrity. Make every effort to err on the side of full citation of the work of others. Organize your note-taking and draft-writing to insure that you are composing prose that revolves around your own voice rather than the voices of others.

Accommodations for students with disabilities

If you have specific physical, cognitive, or other learning disabilities that require special accommodations, please let me know early in the semester so that your learning needs can be appropriately met.

Health and wellness

If you are experiencing undue stress or feel you might benefit from private counseling, please contact the Yale-NUS Health and Wellness Centre. The wellness centre also offers a wide range of enriching workshops and events. Additionally, consider reaching out to your Vice Rector. For this and other kinds of support, see <https://studentlife.yale-nus.edu.sg/wellness/>