

Lehigh Sustainability Workshop - Syllabus remake

GCP 010 Introduction to Global Citizenship

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Goal – reinvent and deepen section on sustainability in the freshmen Intro to Global Citizenship course with intentionality.

Spring 2019 – this was the first semester of GCP 010 (syllabus attached separately)

- First time teaching this course, making the syllabus up as I went. The class has students from all of the colleges, all freshmen. Some stay on for the GC program; others take this as a one-off.
- I had put sustainability questions at the end of the term – this was the least developed module of the course and is my area of least expertise. I had purposefully placed it at the end of spring to give me more time AND with the idea we might get outside at some point.
- I gave 4 classes in this module. Thanks to COVID, we adjusted our schedule a bit, and I did not get the ILL books I had planned to order for this.... I ended up simplifying where possible, both for myself and for students. I was hesitant to go deeply into some issues also because I had heightened awareness around students' different home environments (crowded Philly apartment in low-income neighborhood vs summer home in CT...) and was unsure of how to discuss environmental inequities in the off-campus realm as the playing field was far from level.
- It's fair to say there was little intentionality behind what we did – it felt piecemeal and random.
- My desire was and still is to focus less on documenting the environmental crisis and more on framing understandings in larger contexts AND exposing them to what I believe are less commonly taught eco-elements related to cultural differences (other cosmovisions, other daily practices, areas around eco-feminism, eco-anxiety, eco-therapy...).

Assessment of sustainability module cases this spring – there were 4 classes organized as such:

1. What is your relationship with nature? We read about eco-therapy and nature deficit disorder in political and cultural context. The themes worked; the discussion was too free flowing for a first day on teaching remotely. It may or may not have been a disaster, but it felt chaotic and wrong over zoom. The reading was good, however, as it provides a quick look at inequities and our loss of relations with the natural environment over time.
2. Is Mother Nature a citizen with rights? This theme works wonderfully for the global citizenship focus. I had too much material to cover and may have lost people. I lectured

to try to squeeze in things I could have assigned beforehand (again, was trying to ease demands with COVID-19, but I proved again that I dislike lecture classes). I focused on how this question has played out in complex ways in Bolivia under Evo Morales.

Reading: Gudynas, *Buen Vivir*. Did not have time to discuss, although it was assigned.

3. History of environmental activism. I noticed a certain blame-the-prior-generation theme that started to grate on me, so I created an extremely unplanned class to include a kamikaze history of the environmental movement to make the point that action did not begin with this generation. It needs development. I'm only superficially familiar with this history myself. It was interesting to see that this was not known material to students. They had not heard of Rachel Carlson, for example, and they were noticeably intrigued by Julia Butterfly Hill, who I had never heard of before creating the class activity, but I was surprised that this is the figure who most stood out to many.

What I took from the workshop and will include next year

- The need to expand – I will include 5 classes around nature, sustainability, and environmental activism next time. I have started pulling together more readings for students and for myself.
- The possibility of having students do an in-place/anyplace sit-down in a natural spot to conduct some observations as well as more reflection on their own eco histories – the two-legged exercise we did (and listening to others' ideas that resulted) was extremely helpful as it reminded me that experiential learning could still be done remotely from home and, still hoping we are on campus, quickly and easily in the class.
- From the 8 ways to incorporate sustainability session - I took note that not everything with a sustainability theme needs to fit into an environmental module. I have an earlier workshop on individual action and overwhelm where I can fit in an essay on the futility of taking shorter showers, paired with websites and playlists from South Africa's Day Zero water efforts several years ago that precisely document a successful shorter shower move (this is accompanied by artists' 2 min versions of their hit songs that time out to the 2 min allotted for showers.) Students can try the shower move at home. I also have an earlier class around global citizenship education that included a semi-ecological example from children's literature that I could have made more of/could remake more critically from this angle and then refer back to in the actual module on sustainability. This session on ways to incorporate was, therefore, extremely useful in its simplicity and thanks to the range of options we left with.

For next spring, course module outline

1. What is our relationship to the environment?

Before class

- Read Louv on Nature Deficit Disorder
- Read Chalquist, from *Eco-Therapy* which describes the effects of our disconnect from nature with attention to inequities

- Do before class - an experiential piece. I will ask students to spend time connecting through all of the senses to a natural setting and then in class, we'll relate this bodily experience to our heady/scientific/news/doom approach to climate change.

In class

- Warm up writing - What is the environment? What is sustainability?
- Discussion memories, meanings, and eco-experiences; personal and social; discuss variations by class/race/generation/urban-rural location
- Goal – have them articulate their relationship with nature as embodied individuals situated in class-based/urban-rural/and other contexts.

2. What other relationships with nature are possible?

Before class

- Read about the Scandinavian concept of “friluftsliv.”
<https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20171211-friluftsliv-the-nordic-concept-of-getting-outdoors>
- Watch – video on forest bathing (shinrin-yoku).
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MtiWqKLLPmA>
 - Skim / optional – scientific article on forest bathing (The physiological effects of Shinrin-yoku (taking in the forest atmosphere or forest bathing): evidence from field experiments in 24 forests across Japan Bum Jin Park Æ Yuko Tsunetsugu Æ Tamami Kasetani Æ Takahide Kagawa Æ Yoshifumi Miyazaki)
- Read about indigenous cosmovisions around nature. I will most likely create a short piece to post on this rather than use 1 reading.

In class

- Ideally, have someone host a forest bathing experience for us out in nature.
- Goals – learn, consider and try on experiences with different approaches to nature (both Western and non); critically analyze how these different approaches might underwrite action/activism; how listening to others and recognizing these differences (a key global citizenship skill) plays into the larger concerted movement to ensure sustainability.

3. Could Mother Nature be a citizen with rights?

Before class

- Read Gudynas article, Buen Vivir: Today's Tomorrow. *Development* (2011) 54(4), 441–447
- Read extract from Ecuador's constitution (downloaded in word doc)

- Read online about rivers with rights
<https://www.npr.org/2019/08/03/740604142/should-rivers-have-same-legal-rights-as-humans-a-growing-number-of-voices-say-ye>
- Extra - Watch the video of animals at play on empty streets around the world during COVID-19 lockdowns. Possibly add video on clean canals, rivers, etc. during same.

In class

- Discuss – Why are humans the only subjects who have counted? Let's consider when some humans were not counted as subjects (colonialist debates over indigenous people's humanity/did they have souls; slavery; other disenfranchised populations). Is Nature simply the next/obvious subject being re-added?
- Despite the failure in Ecuador and Bolivia, or incomplete nature of the change, it's a huge step. Debate – should rivers, mountains, etc. have rights, and if so, what would change? What is your position. How could this be enacted now/here?

4. Whose shoulders are we standing upon?

Before class

- Read Ch 1-2 from Rachel Carlson, *Silent Spring*
- Read selection from a book by Julia Butterfly Hill, TBD.

In-class

- Quick in-class activity – an exercise around key women in environmental history, key people of color in environmental history. We'll link this to the Chalquist reading to add diversity not only in experience of environmental problems but also in their solutions.
- Group reflection on what they are learning from the readings and a look at ecological writing as another form of activism.
- Goal – students place themselves within a lineage of concern and action that may be more diverse than expected. Students consider how the ways we frame and enact activism have changed over generations.

5. From grief and fatigue to action

Before class

- Watch
https://www.ted.com/talks/per_espen_stoknes_how_to_transform_apocalypse_fatigue_into_action_on_global_warming
- Write down 3 powerful things he says that resonate with you. You can stop the video and jot down OR click on the transcript and pull from the text, whichever is easier for you. Bring these 3 points to class ready to share.

- In class
 - o Go over eco-grief and eco-anxiety (short presentation I will create)
 - o Wrap this into a discussion of what resonated with different pieces of Ted talk
 - o Design points for/consider starting a discussion and action group around this over the summer.
 - o Goal – have them now move from situated individuals to global citizenship practitioners with a plan.