

Course Change Request

Date Submitted: 03/16/23 6:46 am

Viewing: **EVPP 336 : Tackling Wicked Problems in Society & the Environment** ~~Human Dimensions of the Environment~~

Transfer Course(s): EVPP L336

Last approved: 04/05/22 5:15 am

Last edit: 03/16/23 6:46 am

Changes proposed by: kakerlof

Catalog Pages
referencing this
course

[Department of Environmental Science and Policy](#)
[Environmental Science and Policy \(EVPP\)](#)

Select modification type:

In Workflow

1. **ESP UG Committee**
2. **ESP Chair**
3. **SC Curriculum Committee**
4. SC Associate Dean
5. Assoc Provost- Undergraduate
6. Registrar-Courses
7. Banner

Approval Path

1. 03/16/23 12:13 pm
Younsung Kim (ykih): Approved for ESP UG Committee
2. 03/16/23 3:48 pm
Larry Rockwood (lrockwoo): Approved for ESP Chair

History

1. Aug 29, 2017 by pchampan
2. Dec 21, 2018 by Gregory Craft (gcraft)
3. Feb 19, 2019 by scheselk
4. Jan 8, 2020 by slister1
5. Apr 9, 2020 by Tory Sarro (vsarro)

6. Nov 17, 2021 by
Tory Sarro (vsarro)
7. Apr 5, 2022 by
Jennifer Bazaz
Gettys (jbazaz)

Substantial

Are you completing this form on someone else's behalf?

No

Effective Term: Fall 2023

Subject Code: EVPP - Environmental Science & Policy

Course Number: 336

Bundled Courses:

Is this course replacing another course? No

Equivalent Courses:

Catalog Title: **Tackling Wicked Problems in Society & the Environment** ~~Human Dimensions of the Environment~~

Banner Title: **Tackling Wicked Problems**
~~Human Dimen of the Envir~~

Will section titles vary by semester? No

Credits: 3

Schedule Type: Lecture **w/Recitation**

Hours of Lecture or Seminar per week: **1.5** ~~3~~

Hours of Other Contact Hours per week: **1.5**

Repeatable: May be only taken once for credit, limited to 3 attempts (N3)

Max Allowable Credits:
9

Default Grade Mode: Undergraduate Regular

Recommended Prerequisite(s):

~~N/A One of either EVPP 108 and 109; or EVPP 112 and 113; or GEOL 101 + GEOL 103; or SOCI 101; or ANTH 114; or 60 credits.~~

**Recommended
Corequisite(s):**

**Required
Prerequisite(s) /
Corequisite(s)
(Updates only):**

Registrar's Office Use Only - Required Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s):

And/Or	(Course/Test Code	Min Grade/Score	Academic Level)	Concurrency?

**Registration
Restrictions
(Updates only):**

Registrar's Office Use Only - Registration Restrictions:

Field(s) of Study:

Class(es):

Level(s):

Degree(s):

School(s):

**Catalog
Description:**

Many of our most pressing social and environmental issues today fall into the category of “wicked problems.” To understand the nature of these problems, we must understand the systems from which they arise and their dynamics. ~~Overview of current knowledge regarding human and environment interactions and human ecology.~~ This course in ~~Topics include basic theoretical and conceptual issues; relationship between social and biological sciences;~~ human ~~dimensions~~ ~~causes and consequences~~ of the environment takes a problem-based learning approach and introduces foundational literatures ~~environmental change, and contemporary perspectives~~ on wicked problems, systems thinking, and collective governance. ~~environmental issues.~~

Justification:

What: Lecture/recitation format, modified title, updated description, and updated readings.

Why:

The course was the focus of a 2022-2023 Curriculum Improvement Grant in which the goal was to improve the course content, develop it to build gen ed enrollment, and support a graduate TA line on recitation

sections. Human-environment interactions is an extremely broad scholarly subject area. The revised course still addresses previous content such as: Past and present environments; Environmentalism and environmental movements; Ideas of nature; Public goods; Collective action; Values and justice; Environmental problems as social problems; and Ways of knowing. However, it attempts to do so much more explicitly through three different lenses: understanding the social context for environmental problems, i.e. what makes them “wicked”; thinking of human interactions with their environments as complex socio-ecological systems; and exploring the many ways that different societies and cultures choose to interact with and manage their environments through collective governance.

Lecture/recitation format: The new format will allow for larger course enrollments while maintaining the ability to conduct small group discussions and team projects in the recitation sections, supported by a TA.

Modified title: The revised title is more specific as to the content of the course. Five courses at Mason currently are titled “human dimensions,” making it confusing for students to distinguish between different offerings. All but one of the 5 courses were created—and named—by a professor who has since retired. The term “human dimensions” is not being used in a way that reflects either academic scholarship or popular discourses, but just as an indicator that the course covers human interactions with the environment.

Updated description: The updated description explicitly references “human dimensions of the environment” while focusing on the three lenses under which the course content is organized. The previous course description centered on two topic areas--human and environment interactions, and human ecology—which, as stated above, are extremely broad. (Human ecology is just an interdisciplinary area of scholarship that addresses human-environmental interactions.) The content described in the original course description remains in the revised description. The revisions just specifically call out focal areas within that broad literature.

Updated readings: The course has been taught by Dr. Akerlof since Fall 2019, but was taught by the professor who created it and at least two others in previous years. While the topics of the course have remained the same—as described above—the selected course readings have been quite variable between instructors. The current readings have been updated to reflect current scholarly research and discourses. In addition to being reviewed by the Department of Environmental Science & Policy’s curricular committee, the revised syllabus was reviewed by the Stearns Center and the Curriculum Improvement Grant team members, including the director of the BA program in Environmental and Sustainability Studies, an environmental anthropologist, and an educator with years of experience teaching courses on this topic at the college level.

Does this course cover material which crosses into another department? No

Learning Outcomes:

Attach Syllabus

[EVPP 336 Syllabus Fall 2023 030823.pdf](#)

Additional Attachments

Specialized Course

Categories:

Green Leaf

Mason Impact

Application for Mason Impact

Select the requested Mason

Impact designation:

MI + Civic Engagement (CECL)

MI + Civic Engagement (CECL)

I. Course must meet the following learning outcomes:

Students will understand how knowledge is generated and communicated, and how it can be used to address questions or problems in disciplines and in society.

Students will be able to identify and negotiate multiple perspectives, work collaboratively within and across multiple social and environmental contexts, and engage ethically with their subject and with others.

Students will use inquiry skills to articulate a question; engage in an inquiry process; and situate the concepts, practices, or results within a broader context.

Students will design and carry out an individual or collaborative project that explores an original question, seeks a creative solution to a problem, applies knowledge to a professional challenge, or offers a unique perspective.

Students engage deeply in this original work.

Students will communicate knowledge from their project through presentation, publication, or performance to an audience beyond the classroom.

II.

I affirm that I have attached the following using the syllabus and attachment buttons provided above: (see “?” for help with submission)

III.

Syllabus Containing:

Mason Impact Logo

Description of how your course connects with the Mason Impact.

Mason Impact Learning Objectives. Feel free to use our language or write your own. Please make the pertinent objectives bold for ease of review.

IV.

Narrative Statement Containing:

(A) What is the rationale for designating this course as Entrepreneurship?

(B) Explain how this course meets the course criteria?

(C) How does your course fit into the educational career of an average student enrolled in the course?

(D) How will student work meet the project criteria?

(E) How does student learning progress through the course to aid students in the development of the skills needed to complete their project?

(F) Scaffold Map

V.

Letter of Support from chair or dean

Green Leaf Course Designation

The proposed course is requesting (choose one):

Sustainability-related designation

Below, include a brief statement regarding how this course meets either the “sustainability focused” or “sustainably related” criteria.

Sustainability-related courses help build knowledge about a component of sustainability or introduce students to sustainability concepts during part of the course. They may complement sustainability-focused courses by providing students with in-depth knowledge of a particular aspect or dimension of sustainability (such as the natural environment) or by providing a focus area (such as renewable energy) for a student’s sustainability studies, or they may broaden students’ understanding of sustainability from within different disciplines.

previously approved

Attach Syllabus

Additional Comments:

The course has been previously approved as MI + Civic Engagement (CECL) and as a Green Leaf Course.

**Reviewer
Comments**

Key: 6192