Environmental Health in a Global World

Class code: UGPH-GU 9050 – 001

Instructor Details
Dr Jane Elkington
jane.elkington@nyu.edu
Phone: 0425 200194
Office Hours: Consultation by appointment
Please allow at least 24 hours for your instructor to respond to your emails.

Class Details
Fall 2017

Environmental Health in a Global World

Monday 3:30 – 6:30pm
4 September to 18 December
Room 302
NYU Sydney Academic Centre

Prerequisites
None

Class Description
This course will examine some of the key issues, achievements, shortfalls and principles of environmental health practice. It will focus on the how environmental health issues are defined, how they interact with other factors to impact health and how they are approached by civic groups, governmental officials and researchers. It will highlight how environmental threats come to the attention of the public and weigh the options for addressing these threats. Finally, it will underscore the need for multi-disciplinary approaches in understanding these threats and crafting solutions.

Desired Outcomes:
- Define and describe the field of environmental health.
- Introduce students to the different roles and responsibilities of government agencies in monitoring and addressing environmental health.
- Consider aspects of environmental health issues both domestically and internationally.
- Acquaint students with the origins of the field, and with some of the current issues facing it today.
• Understand the relationship between social movements and efforts to address environmental health threats.

Learning Objectives:
• To acquaint learners with the various dimensions of the field of environmental health.
• To examine the roles of different agencies in addressing such threats, and the roles of social movements in defining such threats.
• To understand some of the larger social forces that affect environmental health.
• To encourage careful and reflective analysis in proposing solutions to environmental health threats.

Assessment Components

Homework 1: 10% Due by 3:30pm, Week 3  
Midterm 1 (1hr): 20%  Week 5  
Midterm 2 (1hr): 20%  Week 11  
Homework 2: 10% Due by 3:30pm, Week 13  
Final Exam (2hrs): 30%  
Class Participation: 10%

Homework Assignments: Students will complete assignments posted on NYU Classes throughout the semester, generated from the readings and further research.

Midterm Exams: Two in-class midterms will consist of multiple choice questions which cover understanding of key terms, and short answer questions designed to apply concepts to real world problems of environmental health and environmental risk.

Final Exam: The final will emphasise essays to synthesise concepts learned in the course.

Class Participation: Students are required to demonstrate accountability and responsibility in their preparation for, and engagement with, the course and its readings. Students are expected to engage in active discussion and to listen to and respect other points of view.

Failure to submit or fulfil any required course component will result in failure of the class.

For this course your total numerical score, calculated from the components listed above, is converted to a letter grade without rounding.

Extra Credit: Site policy does not allow grading of work outside of the assignments included in the syllabus. The final grade will only be calculated from the assessment components listed here and no other work, whether additional or substituted, is permitted.
**Assessment Expectations**

**Grade A:** Excellent performance showing a thorough knowledge and understanding of the topics of the course; all work includes clear, logical explanations, insight, and original thought and reasoning.

**Grade B:** Good performance with general knowledge and understanding of the topics; all work includes general analysis and coherent explanations showing some independent reasoning, reading and research.

**Grade C:** Satisfactory performance with some broad explanation and reasoning; the work will typically demonstrate an understanding of the course on a basic level.

**Grade D:** Passable performance showing a general and superficial understanding of the course’s topics; work lacks satisfactory insight, analysis or reasoned explanations.

**Grade F:** Unsatisfactory performance in all assessed criteria. Work is unfinished or not submitted.

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**Grade Conversions**

Your total numerical score, calculated from the components listed above, correspond to the following letter grades:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Numerical Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>45 to &lt; 50</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>40 to &lt; 45</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0 to &lt; 40</td>
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</tbody>
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**Submission of Work**

Assignments (excluding in-class presentations and exams) must be submitted electronically via NYU Classes. It is the student’s responsibility to confirm that the work has been successfully been uploaded. In the unlikely event that a submission to Classes fails, students must immediately submit the work to the Academic Programs Coordinator via email before the original submission deadline accompanied by an explanation of the issue. All in-class presentations and exams must be completed during the scheduled class time. An assessment component is considered completed when the student has met all the terms for that assessment component as outlined by the instructor.

An assessment component completed after the deadline without an agreed extension receives a penalty of 2 points on the 100-point scale (for the assignment) for each day the work is late. Work completed beyond five weekdays after the due date without an agreed
extension receives a mark of zero, and the student is not entitled to feedback for that piece of work. Because failure to submit or fulfil any required assessment component will result in failure of the course, it is crucial for students to complete every assignment even when it will receive a mark of zero.

Plagiarism Policy

The academic standards of New York University apply to all coursework at NYU Sydney. NYU Sydney policies are in accordance with New York University’s plagiarism policy. The presentation of another person’s words, ideas, judgment, images or data as though they were your own, whether intentionally or unintentionally, constitutes an act of plagiarism.

It is a serious academic offense to use the work of others (written, printed or in any other form) without acknowledgement. Cases of plagiarism are not dealt with by your instructor. They are referred to the Director, who will determine the appropriate penalty (up to and including failure in the course as a whole) taking into account the codes of conduct and academic standards for NYU’s various schools and colleges.

Attendance Policy

Study abroad at Global Academic Centres is an academically intensive and immersive experience, in which students from a wide range of backgrounds exchange ideas in discussion-based seminars. Learning in such an environment depends on the active participation of all students. And since classes typically meet once or twice a week, even a single absence can cause a student to miss a significant portion of a course. To ensure the integrity of this academic experience, class attendance at the centres is mandatory, and unexcused absences will affect students' semester grades. The class roster will be marked at the beginning of class and anyone who arrives after this time will be considered absent. Students are responsible for making up any work missed due to absence.

For courses that meet once a week, one unexcused absence will be penalised by a two percent deduction from the student’s final course grade. For courses that meet two or more times a week, the same penalty will apply to two unexcused absences. Repeated absences in a course may result in failure.

Faculty cannot excuse an absence. Requests for absences to be excused must be directed to the Academic Programs Coordinator. Students must provide appropriate documentation for their absence. In the case of illness, students must contact the Academic Programs Coordinator on the day of absence. They must provide medical documentation to Academic Programs Coordinator within three days of the absence in order to be medically excused. The note must include a medical judgement indicating that the student was unfit to attend class/work on the specific day or dates of the absence. Faculty will be informed of excused absences by the Academic Programs staff.

Classroom Expectations

This is a seminar subject and requires the active participation of all students. It also requires engaged discussion, including listening to and respecting other points of view. Your behaviour
in class should respect your classmates’ desire to learn. It is important for you to focus your full attention on the class, for the entire class period.

- Arrive to class on time.
- Once you are in class, you are expected to stay until class ends. Leaving to make or take phone calls, to meet with classmates, or to go to an interview, is not acceptable behaviour.
- Phones, digital music players, and any other communications or sound devices are not to be used during class. That means no phone calls, no texting, no social media, no email, and no internet browsing at any time during class.
- Laptop computers and tablets are not to be used during class except in rare instances for specific class-related activity expressly approved by your instructor.
- The only material you should be reading in class is material assigned for that class. Reading anything else, such as newspapers or magazines, or doing work from another class, is not acceptable.
- Class may not be recorded in any fashion – audio, video, or otherwise – without permission in writing from the instructor.

**Religious Observance**

Students observing a religious holiday during regularly scheduled class time are entitled to miss class without any penalty to their grade. This is for the holiday only and does not include the days of travel that may come before and/or after the holiday. Students must notify their professor and the Academic Programs Coordinator in writing via email one week in advance before being absent for this purpose.

**Provisions to students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in a class are encouraged to contact the Moses Centre for Students with Disabilities at (212) 998-4980 as soon as possible to better ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion. For more information, see Study Away and Disability.

**Required Texts**

It is a course expectation that you have done the required reading and have prepared sufficiently to discuss them in class.


Additional required readings are identified under each lecture, outlined below.

**Week 1**

**Monday 4 September**
Overview: What is Environmental Health?
Required Reading:
- Chapter 1; ‘Introduction to Environmental Health’, in Frumkin, 2016.
  Read: Summary (p. vii), Introduction (p.1-6), Understanding the relationship between environment and health (p.7-8).

Economic Context of Health
Required Reading:

Week 2
Monday 11 September

Environmental Justice
Required Reading:

Assessing and Citing Evidence
Required Reading:

Week 3
Monday 18 September

In class presentations - Homework Assignment 1 (10%)
Topic: Environmental justice and mining in Australia
An examination of the issues and stakeholders of mining in remote areas of Australia

Principles of Toxicology
Required Reading:

Week 4
Monday 25 September

Principles of Epidemiology
Required Reading:
- Chapter 4: ‘Environmental and Occupational Epidemiology’, in Frumkin, 2016.

**Guest lecturer: Dr Vanessa Lee**

**The Health of Indigenous Australians**

Required Reading:

**Week 5**

**Friday 6 October (Make up class for Monday public holiday)**

**Mid-Term Exam 1 (20%)**

**Food**

Required Reading:
- Chapter 19, ‘Food systems, the environment, and public health’, in Frumkin, 2016.

**Week 6**

**Monday 9 October**

**Climate Change**

Required Reading:

**Disasters & Disaster Preparedness**

Required Reading:
- Chapters 23, Frumkin

**Week 8**

**Monday 23 October**

**Children’s Health and Lead**

Required Reading:
- Taylor M, Winder C, Lanphear B (2014): Australia's leading public health body delays action on the revision of the public health goal for blood lead exposures. *Environment International*, 70, 113–117. (Locate this article through NYU online library)

Children’s safety at home
Required Reading:

Week 9
Monday 30 October

Guest lecturer: Dr Jennifer Kent

Urban planning for health
Required Reading:

Air and health
Required Reading:

Week 10 Field Trip
Monday 6 November

Field Trip - The built environment & health
The field trip will enable the students to see and consider different aspects of planning for health in an urban environment. We will travel to an inner-west suburb of Sydney to wander through a community garden, set up by local residents in conjunction with the local council to create a space and activity to help residents socialise, engage in a physical and outdoor activity (gardening) and take home herbs, fruit and vegetables. Two other activities on the field trip will be undertaken by splitting the class in two: one group will complete the National Heart Foundation’s Walkability Checklist (which looks at how pedestrian friendly and age friendly a neighbourhood is); the other group will complete KidSafe’s playground safety audit on a public playground. We will discuss in next week’s class the findings from these two audits.

Week 11
Monday 13 November

Mid-term Exam 2 (20%)
Hazardous Waste  
**Case study:** Asbestos – the Australian and global situation  
**Required Reading:**  

### Week 12  
**Monday 20 November**

**Guest lecturer:** Dr Ross MacKenzie

**Tobacco and environmental health**  
**Required Reading:**  

**Injuries and the environment**  
**Required Reading:**  

### Week 13  
**Monday 27 November**

**Homework Assignment 2 (10%) - In class presentations**  
Topic: Examining legislation for gun control in Australia

**Genes & the environment**  
**Required Reading:**  
- Collaborative on Health and The Environment (webpage) “Gene-environment interactions & epigenetic”. Last access 9 June 2017  
  [https://www.healthandenvironment.org/what-we-know/overview/gene-environment-interactions](https://www.healthandenvironment.org/what-we-know/overview/gene-environment-interactions)

**Water & health**  
**Required Reading:**  

### Week 14  
**Monday 4 December**

**Exposure Assessment & Risk Assessment**  
**Required Reading:**

Occupational Health & Safety

Required Reading:
• Chapter 21; ‘Work, health, and well-being’, in Frumkin, 2016.

Examination of Australia’s tobacco plain packing legislation - the issues and stakeholders

Week 15

Monday 11 December

The environment and health behaviour – global and local issues

Required Reading:

Course Wrap up

Exam Week

Final Exam: Monday 18 December 2:00 – 4:00pm (30%)

Your Instructor:

Dr Jane Elkington (Ph.D., University of Minnesota) has worked in public health research, planning and policy development for many years. She has worked in policy development for the state health department, undertaken research for a global health organisation, and been a consultant to a variety of government and non-government organisations on a range of health issues including road safety, mental health, occupational health and safety, infectious disease prevention, and environmental planning for falls prevention. Her research interests are in injury prevention and workplace health and safety. Jane also works at Neuroscience Research Australia on studies investigating the safety of children in cars.