SYLLABUS
EnvS 6840/7840

Course Reference Numbers 42356 (6840) or 42365 (7840)

ENVS GRADUATE ORIENTATION SEMINAR

Fall Semester, 2013
1 credit hour

Meeting Time and Place: Mondays, 10:30 - 11:20 AM; BNR 360

Instructor: Dr. Layne Coppock, Professor (EnvS)
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Office Hours: By appointment

Course Overview:

For those who are new to graduate school—or for those who are new to Utah State University or the Department of Environment & Society (aka ENVS)—getting settled-in can be a daunting process. Lots of questions emerge. For example: What are graduate students expected to do? How are graduate students expected to behave? How can graduate students thrive and be happy? How does a graduate student begin his or her research, and how can such research experience shape a career? What types of projects do ENVS faculty members engage in, and can the faculty help provide professional guidance? How can graduate students become more effective at networking? The purpose of this course is to help answer these and related questions so that graduate students can make connections and get a head start on their time here.

Unlike most conventional university departments, the ENVS department has faculty members that are diverse and emphasize inter-disciplinary approaches in their work. Such approaches are focused on the integration of social science with natural resource fields. New knowledge is generated and applied to help solve or better manage practical problems. The ENVS summary mission statement is: “Bringing people and science together for healthy communities and enduring ecosystems.”

Major Course Objectives:

1. Learn how to be a successful graduate student in ENVS;

2. Understand distinctions between academic and non-academic careers related to ENVS;

3. Learn what EnvS faculty members and alumni do and how it relates to real-world problem solving.

By fulfilling these objectives, as a student you should better understand your role in the research process, how you fit in the ENVS department and the university community, and how an ENVS graduate degree can help shape your career path.
**IDEAS Learning Objectives:** USU has recently adopted 12 IDEAS learning objectives across campus that instructors may rely on to help shape their course material and focus the course-evaluation process. For this course the following are proposed as the priority IDEAS learning objectives:

1. Gaining factual knowledge about research as well as about EnvS and related fields;
2. Developing skills, competencies, and points of view needed by EnvS professionals; and
3. Acquiring an interest in learning more by asking questions and seeking answers

These three Learning Objectives are weighted more heavily in the course-evaluation process. This process is online and will occur near the end of the semester. Details will be forthcoming.

**Course Organization:**

We will meet weekly. See the accompanying provisional class schedule.

- **The first six meetings** include review of practical things students need to know about graduate school as well as ENVS-related professions.
- **The second six weeks** are founded on guest visits by ENVS faculty, young professionals engaged in ENVS-related careers, and seasoned ENVS graduate students who have experiences to share.
- **The last couple of weeks** are devoted to synthesis of seminar materials. Students will be asked to write a short essay to reflect on the most important things that have been learned. Essays will be discussed in class following the Thanksgiving break.

Prior to each weekly meeting a reading and associated discussion topic may be made available to students via email. These materials will be contributed by the instructor or guests.

Students are expected to have thoroughly read any assigned material and come to class ready to engage. In some cases students may be asked to prepare questions or comments from readings to help stimulate class discussion. Students may be assigned to introduce guests or facilitate discussions.

**Grading:**

Grading will be pass/fail. *There are expectations for a passing grade.* If a student is not meeting these expectations the instructor will promptly let him or her know. Expectations include:

- **Attendance**—students should attend at least 12 of the 14 class periods (*the instructor should be informed in advance about planned absences*)
- **Participation**—students should be active participants in class discussions. Students must submit written materials as requested. Written materials must be submitted on time and be of a suitable quality in terms of content and composition.
- **Service as introducers and discussion facilitators**—students may be asked to introduce guests or facilitate a discussion.
Disability Resource Center:

The university is required by law to help disabled students participate fully in all programs, activities, and services. If you have a disability documented by the Disability Resource Center (DRC) that requires note-takers, interpreters for the deaf, extended testing time, etc., let the instructor know as soon as possible. The DRC may also help provide course material in alternative formats like large print, Braille, and diskette. Please see the DRC website for details (www.usu.edu/drc/)

Academic Integrity:

USU students are expected to exhibit high standards for academic integrity and classroom behavior. Visit the Student Code website for details (www.usu.edu/studentservices/pdf/StudentCode.pdf.)

END OF SYLLABUS