SYLLABUS
EnvS 6840/7840

Course Reference Numbers 42116 (6840) or 42125 (7840)

ENVS GRADUATE ORIENTATION SEMINAR

Fall Semester, 2015
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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Email: Layne.Coppock@usu.edu
Office Hours: By appointment

Course Overview:

For those who are new to graduate school, Utah State University, or the Department of Environment & Society (ENVS)—getting settled-in can be daunting. 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? What role does a graduate student play in the research process? What types of projects do ENVS faculty members engage in? What career paths can be pursued? The purpose of this course is to help answer these questions and more so that graduate students can make useful connections and get a head start on their programs.

The ENVS faculty and graduate students are very diverse. Faculty members often employ interdisciplinary perspectives in their research and teaching. A core ENVS theme is integrating social science with natural resource fields. New knowledge is generated and applied to help solve, or at least 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;

2. Understand distinctions between academic and non-academic careers; and

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

IDEA Learning Objectives:  USU has recently adopted 12 IDEA learning objectives across campus that instructors can use to help shape their course material and better focus the course-evaluation
process. For this course the following are proposed as the priority IDEA Learning Objectives:

1. **Gaining factual knowledge** about graduate study, ENVS, and ENVS-related careers;

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 Learning Objectives are weighted more heavily in the course-evaluation process. This process is online and will occur near the end of the semester. The IDEA Learning Objectives will also be supplemented with questions from the instructor in the course evaluation form. This is because this class is very informal and non-traditional.

**Course Organization:**

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

- **About five class periods early on** are focused on a review of practical things students need to know about graduate school, the academic world, non-academic world, etc.

- **About six class periods in the middle of the term** are founded on guest visits by ENVS faculty, local professionals engaged in ENVS-related careers, a USU Career Services staff member, and veteran ENVS graduate students.

- **The last couple of class periods** are devoted to a synthesis of material covered during the semester. Students will be asked to write a short essay to reflect on the most important things they have learned. Essays will be discussed in class before the end of the term.

Prior to each weekly meeting a reading and associated discussion topic may be sent to students via email. There is no Canvas site for this course.

Students are expected to have thoroughly read any assigned material and come to class ready to engage. Students may be assigned to introduce guests or facilitate discussions.

There is no graduate teaching assistant formally assigned to this course. In some cases, however, a veteran graduate student in ENVS may oversee a class period on behalf of the instructor.

**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.

**Other Topics:**

In a few cases students have already been exposed to all or most of the topics covered here, and thus they may be able to justify not taking this course. Your time is valuable—even for one credit. Reasonable arguments to skip the course will thus be heard. Please see the instructor and the ENVS department head with such requests soon after the semester begins. The major professor for the student may also be consulted. Some faculty members strongly feel that the benefits of attending this course include building a sense of community among ENVS graduate students, and hence they may encourage all of their students to take the course regardless of content repetition.

If you are new to the USU campus, you should have had a campus tour as part of the general orientation process for new graduate students as coordinated by the School of Graduate Studies. However, you may not have had a tour of the Quinney College of Natural Resources (QCNR). If you desire a college tour, please contact Ms. Mykel Beorchia of the QCNR Academic Service Center at mykel.beorchia@usu.edu. The tour needs to be done outside of our class time because we already have a full slate of activities. Mykel is happy to coordinate a tour time that best works for you.

**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 and Appropriate Classroom Behavior:**

USU students are expected to exhibit high standards for academic integrity and classroom behavior. Visit the website of the Office of Student Conduct for details (http://www.usu.edu/studentconduct)

**END OF SYLLABUS**