

# Landscape Conservation in the Center-West Ecoregion of Vermont

## COMMUNITY-ENGAGED ENVIRONMENTAL PRACTICUM

ENVS 401 A

Fall 2019

Class: Tue & Thu, 11:00am – 12:15pm (Hillcrest 200)

Lab: Tue, 1:30pm – 4:15pm (Hillcrest 200)

Colloquium: Thu, 12:30pm – 1:20pm (Hillcrest 103)

### INSTRUCTORS

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Office Hours:  
Monday 2p-4p  
Th 1.30p-2.30p  
and by appointment

Office Hours:  
Wednesday 10-noon  
Thursday 9-11am  
and by appointment

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This section of the community-engaged practicum will build on work done by students in one of last spring's sections of 401. Their project focused on common resources—air, water, and wildlife—in the center-west ecoregion of Vermont, working with Vermont Family Forests. This semester we will continue to focus on this center-west ecoregion (or greater Addison County), working on a number of issues from the landscape level perspective. Community partnerships will center on building healthier natural and cultural communities in the region. Our main goal in our projects and partnerships will be to help our community partners further advance goals for integrative land management, improved water quality, and improved land access for the Abenaki.

### SENIOR SEMINAR: CAPSTONE FOR ALL ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES MAJORS

This class is organized around four community-based projects you will undertake in small teams with and for our community partners. This year, we will be working with Vermont Family

Forests, Representative Amy Sheldon, and University of Vermont researcher Elizabeth Doran. A general goal for this course every semester is to bring seniors from the various ES foci together to examine a specific topic in depth and from an interdisciplinary perspective. The course is designed to help you develop skills associated with real-world problem solving, project planning, creativity, and communication. By coming together with your peers in an interdisciplinary way, you will learn collaborative approaches that require all your different expertise from biophysical and social sciences to the arts and humanities. As an ES major, there are large, diverse, and inter-connected problems out there waiting for you (in this sense, we are a growth field!) and we want you to stride out into that world well prepared. Working together with your partners—with humility, with respect, and with all the knowledge, skills, experience, analytical intuitions, creativity, compassion and courage you can muster, and which you have spent so many days and nights cultivating through your studies at Middlebury—you will endeavor to think through, carefully and systematically, about building the capacity to manage landscapes, updating land use regulation in a time of dramatic environmental change, understanding private forests landowner decisionmaking and its affects on water quality, and seeking ways to help the Abenaki people access land. Combined, these projects seek to help our community partners move this landscape toward a more just and sustainable future.

Please see project statement document for a full description of the projects.

### **STRUCTURE & PROCESS FOR THE CLASS**

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During the first 3 weeks of the semester, project teams will work on developing approaches to their project by designing a project work-plan in collaboration with our community partners. During the first 6 weeks project work will complement reading and conversation about the theoretical concepts and practical concerns that drive our course theme. The final 6 weeks of the semester will revolve around project work. For further background on ENVS 401, or to review past projects, see: <http://sites.middlebury.edu/envs0401/>

Over the course of the semester each group will engage in fieldwork, produce project deliverables step-by-step together with our community partners, and prepare for the culminating written and oral presentations. One key goal is to integrate key concepts and skills from our readings and group discussions into your projects.

## CLASS COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION

We will upload essential course documents (such as readings, assignments, and other course documents) for you to download in our Canvas site. We have also created a Google Drive with project-specific readings and resources that we anticipate you will engage with over the course of your project work. We encourage you to use Sheets and Google Docs as you work with each other and your partners. The instructors will be relying mostly on old-fashioned email to communicate with you.

## GRADES AND ASSIGNMENTS

**1. Class Attendance and Active Participation** (20% of grade). Attendance in ES Colloquium, Class, and Lab are all required. While class time is scheduled Tuesday/Thursday with a Tuesday afternoon lab, we will not pre-schedule every lab period (especially after Week 6). In Weeks 8-13, lab time slots will be a common time that you all have available in your schedules to work on your projects, conduct research, go to field sites, and so forth and that we have available to help guide/support you.

- (a) This class is discussion-based with occasional mini-lectures provided by the instructors and several invited guests. Dialogical learning is central to this format; please be ready to participate in each class meeting. That means attending, showing up on time, asking questions, and engaging one another constructively and with friendliness, curiosity, and a collaborative spirit as we move through occasionally challenging material during our meetings.
- (b) With respect to evaluation, we will be noting the commentary you provide in class but also your efforts to listen, respond thoughtfully (and respectfully) to your peers, and help build an inclusive, stimulating learning experience for everyone. If you do not feel comfortable speaking in class for any reason, please come see us during office hours and we will work something out.
- (c) Your participation in groups will also be critical to your success in this course. In your groups, participation means communicating conscientiously and responsibly with your project group, community partners, and instructors; meeting group project obligations and deadlines; and contributing a constructive, collaborative, and team-oriented role.
- (d) Once the projects are up and running, each group will provide oral progress reports in class (see schedule for dates). This may include discussing project-specific readings that your group reads beyond class readings, describing obstacles your group encounters, sharing helpful contacts, etc. You will also provide feedback on other groups' projects.
- (e) You are required to attend the weekly ES Colloquium on Thursdays 12:15pm – 1:20pm in Hillcrest 103. The colloquium does not provide lunch. Feel free to bring food from the dining hall to eat during the colloquium. We will dedicate time to discuss the colloquium presentations in class.

**2. Peer Evaluation** (5% of grade). You will have the opportunity to provide feedback to your team-members twice in the semester: once mid-way, and again at the end.

**3. Individual Assignments** (15% of grade). Further details regarding your two individual assignments will be provided in class.

**4. Working Documents for Group Projects** (20% of grade).

As part of your group project, you will prepare and submit to your instructors a series of working documents, including work plans, progress reports, and drafts, among others.

**5. Final Products from Group Projects** (40% of grade). Each of the four project groups will work with one of our four community partners. Depending on where your collaboration leads, you will collect and analyze information, data, and materials related to your group's project and ultimately produce a report delivered to our community partners. Projects may require travel within the region and substantial time outside of formally scheduled class. Interim progress reports, a public presentation, multiple drafts, and a professional-quality final report are required. Your Final Presentations will be on Thursday December 5 during the weekly ES Colloquium. However, most teams will also give an off-campus presentation in a forum relevant to the project partners. The final written report is due on the last day of exams, December 15.

## **GROUND RULES**

At Middlebury, we strive to make our campus a respectful, engaged community that embraces difference, with all the complexity and individuality each person brings. Each student in this course must contribute to an inclusive and respectful class environment. Students of all backgrounds including gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, and religion shall treat each other fairly and with honesty, integrity, and respect. Civil discourse, reasoned thought, sustained discussion, and constructive engagement without degrading, abusing, harassing, or silencing others is required of all students in this class.

We will talk more about norms and ground rules we would like to establish in the first week of class such that it suits our different learning styles.

## **ACCOMMODATIONS**

Students involved in sports or other extracurricular activities will need to notify the instructors at the beginning of the semester about any scheduling conflicts. Students with disabilities who need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact Chris and Diane as early in the semester as possible to ensure that such accommodations can be implemented in a timely fashion. Assistance is available to all eligible students through the ADA Office. Please contact Jodi Litchfield, the ADA Coordinator, at [litchfie@middlebury.edu](mailto:litchfie@middlebury.edu) or (802) 443-5936 for more information. All discussions will remain confidential.

## **HONOR CODE**

Adherence to the College honor code is expected and, as seniors, we expect that you are all familiar with its policies (<http://www.middlebury.edu/studentlife/doc/honorcode>). In this course, much of the work is collaborative by design and thus, your classmates and project groups often represent “authorized [and wildly encouraged!] aid.” Work on your individual assignments, however, must be an individual effort and honesty in reporting and assessing both your own and your teammates’ contributions is expected. In the project work and presentation, pay careful attention to appropriate paraphrasing and attribution of credit for quotations, ideas, information, graphics, and so forth. Please come talk to us if you are ever unsure about the ethical course of action in this course.

While we’re here: definitely do not plagiarize. Beyond being unethical, academic dishonesty is a serious offense with some pretty awful consequences, including but not limited to disciplinary action if a case of academic misconduct is found. If you are feeling stressed or are under too much pressure, please come talk to us before considering anything so unwise. For guidance on proper citation, grammar, and writing style, you can consult Middlebury College Library’s resources on the subject (<https://middlebury.libguides.com/citation/plagiarism>).

## **EMAIL POLICY**

If you have questions regarding the course please schedule a time to see or email Chris or Diane. If you send us an email, please allow enough time to respond. We will do our best to respond to email inquiries within 24 hours during the week and within 48 hours on weekends.

## ENVS 0401 (Tuesday Lab) F19 COURSE SCHEDULE

Week #1	Tues 9/10	Class Intro – overview, the flow and the why
	Lab 9/10	Discussion of partners and projects
	Thurs 9/12	<p><b>Reading Discussion #1: Introduction and Overview</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Future of the Northern Forests: The Role of Commoning in Vermont’s Center-West Ecoregion</a> (one S’19 401 final project).</li> <li>• Christopher McGrory Klyza and Stephen C. Trombulak, 2015, <i>The Story of Vermont: A Natural and Cultural History</i>, 2d ed., Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, pp. 1-4, 141-214.</li> </ul>
<b>Friday 9/13: Complete Project Selection Survey</b>		
Week #2	Tues 9/17	<p>Teaming exercises</p> <p>Begin project work planning &amp; develop questions for partner</p> <p>Discussion of project supporting logistics</p>
	Lab 9/17	<p><b>Meet and discuss projects with community partners</b></p> <p>Continue project work planning</p>
	Thurs 9/19	<p><b>Reading Discussion #2: Landscape Level Conservation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Christopher McGrory Klyza, ed., <i>Wilderness Comes Home: Rewilding the Northeast</i>, Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, pp. 3-26, 275-278.</li> <li>• Stephen C. Trombulak and Robert F. Baldwin, 2010, “Introduction: Creating a Context for Landscape-Scale Conservation Planning,” in <i>Landscape-scale Conservation Planning</i>, edited by Trombulak and Baldwin, New York: Springer, pp. 1-15.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Rensselaer Plateau Alliance, 2018, 2017 Annual Report</a>, (16p).</li> <li>• Eric Sorenson and Robert Zaino, 2018, <a href="#">Vermont Conservation Design: Maintaining and Enhancing an Ecologically Functional Landscape</a>, Montpelier, VT: Agency of Natural Resources, (38p).</li> </ul>
<b>Monday 9/23 @ 8 am: Project Work Plan and Timeline Due</b>		
Week #3	Tues 9/24	Project working session, provide feedback on timeline and work plan
	Lab 9/24	<b>Field Trip to Watershed Center</b>

	<b>Thurs 9/26</b>	<p><b><u>Reading Discussion #3: Act 250</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Robert Sanford and Hubert B. Stroud, 1997, “Vermont’s Act 250 Legislation: A Citizen-Based Response to Rapid Growth and Development,” <i>Land Use Policy</i> 14: 239-256.</li> <li>• <a href="#">“Report of the Commission on Act 250: The Next 50 Years,”</a> 2019, Montpelier: Vermont General Assembly, pp. 1-53.</li> </ul>
<b>Week #4</b>	<b>Tues 10/1</b>	Project working session
	<b>Lab 10/1</b>	<b>Field Trip to New Haven River Watershed</b>
	<b>Thurs 10/3</b>	<p><b><u>Reading Discussion #4: Forests and Water Quality</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lake Champlain Basin Program, 2018, <a href="#">2018 State of the Lake and Ecosystem Indicators Report</a>, Grand Isle, VT (36p).</li> <li>• Kirsten Underwood and David Brynn, 2015, <a href="#">Enhancing Flood Resiliency of Vermont State Lands</a>, report to Vermont Forests, Parks &amp; Recreation, pp. 1-17, 24-29, 30-33.</li> <li>• William S. Keeton et al., 2018, <a href="#">Vermont Forest Carbon: A Market Opportunity for Forestland Owners</a>, pp. 1-31.</li> <li>• Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation, 2015, <a href="#">2015 Vermont Forest Fragmentation Report</a>, Montpelier, VT: Agency of Natural Resources, pp. 3-4, 23-44.</li> </ul>
<b>Friday 10/4 @ 5pm: First Discussion Paper Due</b>		
<b>Week #5</b>	<b>Tues 10/8</b>	Oral progress reports for peer feedback, project working session
	<b>Lab 10/8</b>	<b>Panel Discussion on Landscape Level Challenges</b>
	<b>Thurs 10/10</b>	<p><b><u>Reading Discussion #5: The Abenaki</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hilda Robtoy, Dee Brightstar, Tom Obomsawin, and John Moody, 1994, “The Abenaki and the Northern Forest,” in <i>The Future of the Northern Forest</i>, edited by Christopher McGrory Klyza and Stephen C. Trombulak, Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, pp. 27-35.</li> <li>• Christopher McGrory Klyza and Stephen C. Trombulak, 2015, <i>The Story of Vermont: A Natural and Cultural History</i>, 2d ed., Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, pp. 27-34, 52-60, 143-144, 185.</li> <li>• Peter Forbes, <a href="#">“First Light Learning Journey”</a>.</li> <li>• Deonna Anderson, 2019, <a href="#">“These Indigenous Women Are Reclaiming Stolen Land in the Bay Area,”</a> <i>Yes! Journalism for People Building a Better World</i>.</li> </ul>
<b>Friday 10/11 @ 5pm Project Progress Report Due</b>		

<b>Monday 10/14: Indigenous Peoples Day Events</b>		
<b>Week #6</b>	<b>Tues 10/15</b>	Project working session – provide feedback on progress report
	<b>Lab 10/15</b>	<b>Check-in w/ community partners</b> Project working session
	<b>Thurs 10/17</b>	<b>ES Faculty and EA staff visit</b>
<b>Friday 10/18 @ 5pm: Second Discussion Paper Due</b>		
<b>Week #7</b>	<b>Tues 10/22</b>	Fall Break
	<b>Lab 10/22</b>	
	<b>Thurs 10/24</b>	Project working session
<b>Week #8</b>		
<b>Week #8</b>	<b>Tues 10/29</b>	Project Group Work
	<b>LAB 10/29</b>	Project Group Work
	<b>Thurs 10/31</b>	Oral progress reports for peer feedback, project working session
<b>Saturday 11/2: VFF Conservation Congress</b>		
<b>Week #9</b>	<b>Tues 11/5</b>	Project Group Work
	<b>Lab 11/5</b>	Project Group Work
	<b>Thurs 11/7</b>	Oral progress reports for peer feedback, project working session
<b>Friday 11/8 @ 5pm: First Draft Due</b>		
<b>Week #10</b>	<b>Tues 11/12</b>	Project Group Work
	<b>Lab 11/12</b>	<b>Week 10 check-in with community partners</b> Draft feedback
	<b>Thurs 11/14</b>	Project Group Work

Week #11	Tues 11/19	Final presentation brainstorming and prep
	Lab 11/19	<b>Oratory Now Workshop</b> Work in teams on colloquium and long-format presentations
	Thurs 11/21	First rehearsal of colloquium presentation
Week #12	Tues 11/26	Second rehearsal of colloquium presentation
	Lab 11/26	First rehearsal of long-format presentation*
	Thurs 11/28	<b>Happy Thanksgiving!</b>
<b>Tuesday 11/26 @ 5pm: Second Draft Due</b> <i>(individual team meetings will be scheduled during week 13 to provide feedback on second draft)</i>		
Week #13	Tues 12/3	Class debrief, evals, assessment survey, etc.
	Lab 12/3	Potential time slot for off-campus presentations
	Thurs 12/5	Dress rehearsal of colloquium presentation (short form)
		<b>Colloquium Presentation</b>
Week #14	<b>Monday 12/9: Third Draft Due</b>	
	<b>Sunday 12/15: ALL Final Products Due</b>	

***\*A note on presentations: Short-format presentations (5-7 min per team) will be given in the last Thursday Colloquium on 12/5. Long-format presentations (15-20 min per team) will be scheduled with our community partners during the week of December 3 or the first week of exams. We will schedule individual team meetings to practice long-format presentations for the second time.***