

Capstone Course: Environmental Problem Solving

UCSC 8-Week Summer Session, June 24-August 16, 2024

The course will meet synchronously via Zoom with materials and assignments on [Canvas](#).

Instructor: Prof. Adam French (he/him), akfrench@ucsc.edu

Office hours: Please see Canvas

Course description

Official: “A synthetic course that draws on the knowledge and skills students bring from other courses in the major. Focuses on written and oral individual and group projects in which students must take the initiative. Emphasizes developing skills critical for students in their future careers.”

In other words: This course combines discussion, hands-on work in class, and minimal lecture to help you synthesize aspects of your learning from your tenure as an Environmental Studies student and to prepare you for leaving UCSC. We will explore practical skills such as project funding and job searching, we will engage in discussion and critical analysis of problem solving in current environmental issues, and we will analyze our own and others' oral and written presentation of ideas.

Learning objectives

At the end of the course, you will be able to:

- Write a critical review of a current environmental topic, summarizing the field of relevant literature in an organized manner and applying critical analysis to describe the field's strengths and weaknesses.
- Evaluate your own interests, skills, knowledges, and working preferences to help determine what potential jobs may suit you and to describe them well for a potential employer.
- Write a succinct and informative resume and cover letter that shows your experiences and how you would be an asset to a potential employer.
- Approach a job search and a job interview knowing some of the key aspects to making them good experiences.
- Write a succinct, detailed, and informative grant proposal for obtaining funding for research or a project.
- Prepare and deliver a strong, interesting presentation on an environmental topic for an audience of your peers, balancing detail with clarity and focus.

Course components

*****All assignments must be completed for a passing grade in the course*****

Participation:

Our class meetings will include lecture, discussion, and in-class activities, including peer reviews and other collaborative work in small group formats. There are also a number of quizzes and discussion assignments on Canvas that will contribute to your overall participation grade. Your attendance and engagement in class meetings and activities are important and contribute significantly to your final grade. I know that being engaged in class looks different for different students, and that it is a skill that can be developed. A goal for this course is to help you develop your skills in participation, based on what's important to you.

We will discuss “Zoom etiquette” and expectations in further detail; but, in general, please plan to turn your cameras on during discussion portions of the class and mute your microphone whenever you are not speaking.

The reading load for this class is light, as you are expected to devote much time to preparing the drafts and final versions of the core assignments. However, when we do have readings, completing them will help keep us on the same page in the material (literally), and allow us to have the richest time together as we work through developing materials, connections, and insights for the next steps of your journeys.

Overall, participation is **20%** of your final grade.

Written assignments:

You have four major written assignments:

1. an assessment of your transferable skills, knowledges & preferences for job hunting (**10%**),
2. a resume and cover letter for a particular job (**10%**),
3. a short grant proposal (**10%**), and
4. an individual STRIVE paper of 8-10 pages (**35%**: 5% for the outline; 5% for the first draft and 25% for the final draft).

The resume & cover letter and STRIVE paper will go through drafts. Your final submissions of these two assignments should include a) your rough draft with instructor comments, b) your final draft, and c) a cover letter describing how you addressed reviewer comments.

An important note on timeliness: Timeliness is a form of self-care for you, to help avoid being overwhelmed by accumulated work later. It's also care for others around you, including instructors.

Late assignments will receive a deduction of 10% per day (24 hours or portion thereof) to a 50% penalty, so it's always worth it to still turn in an assignment late! If something comes up that is going to cause a problem with submitting an assignment on time, please talk with Adam.

Oral assignments:

You have two oral assignments: a short STRIVE project proposal (**5%**) and a final STRIVE project presentation (**10%**).

Case study as finals work:

The final presentation and the final STRIVE paper submission are the culmination of the coursework and replace the final exam. Note that although these two assignments account for 35% of your final course grade, you will have been working on the case study from the first day of the course, and you will have received extensive feedback on your STRIVE draft, giving much time and guidance for development and improvements.

Course materials

The required text for the course is *What Color Is Your Parachute?* by Richard N. Bolles (Ten Speed Press). Any recent edition is fine; it is updated every year. We have electronic and print copies available in the library (thank a librarian!). If you would like your own copy, please consider purchasing from a local bookstore or the UCSC bookstore.

I will post additional readings on Canvas, particularly short articles for discussion. As noted above, keeping the readings condensed allows you to focus on your written work.

Student hours for the class

This 5-unit class requires approximately 150 hours of work over the summer session. This includes approximately 15 hours of weekly readings, quizzes, and discussion/reflection activities; 35 hours of scheduled class time, including lecture, small group work, and peer review activities; 50 hours of preparing and revising a self-assessment, cover letter & resume, and grant proposal, and 50 hours of preparing the STRIVE paper and presentation.

Important deadlines, resources, and policies

Deadlines:

- Add/Swap Course: Thursday, June 27
- Drop Course: Monday, July 8 (tuition reversed)
- Request "W": Sunday, July 28 (no tuition reversal)
- Change Grade Option: Sunday, August 11
- Grades Due: Thursday, August 22

Academic accommodations: UC Santa Cruz is committed to creating an academic environment that supports its diverse student body. If you are a student with a disability who requires accommodations to achieve equal access in this course, please submit your Accommodation Authorization Letter from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) to me privately during my office hours or by appointment, preferably within the first week of the quarter. At this time, I would also like us to discuss ways we can ensure your full participation in the course. I encourage all students who may benefit from learning more about DRC services to contact the DRC at 831- 459-2089, or at drc@ucsc.edu.

Inclusivity: It is my intent that students from all backgrounds and with all perspectives feel included and are able to learn and achieve their goals in this course. The diversity that all students bring to this class is a resource, strength, and benefit to us all. It is my intent to bring to class materials and activities that embrace a diversity of perspectives, experiences, and positions. Your suggestions for making this learning community as inclusive as possible are encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know if you identify ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or student groups. If any of our class meetings conflict with your religious or cultural events, please let me know so that we can work together to make alternative arrangements.

CARE: UCSC Campus Advocacy, Resources & Education (CARE) believes that all people deserve to live and engage in an environment free from violence. The CARE program provides support, advocacy, resources and violence prevention education to the UC Santa Cruz community. We respond to the needs of students and others impacted by stalking, dating/domestic violence and sexual assault by providing free and confidential services. CARE also works collaboratively with students, faculty and staff to educate the campus community about the vital role that each of us has in preventing violence and creating social justice locally and globally.

Title IX: Title IX prohibits gender discrimination, including sexual harassment, domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. If you have experienced sexual harassment or sexual violence, you can receive confidential support and advocacy at the Campus Advocacy Resources & Education (CARE) Office by calling (831) 502-2273. In addition, Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS) can provide confidential, counseling support, (831) 459-2628. You can also report gender discrimination directly to the University's Title IX Office, (831) 459-2462. Reports to law enforcement can be made to UCPD, (831) 459-2231 ext. 1. For emergencies, call 911.

Faculty and Teaching Assistants are required under the UC Policy on Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment to inform the Title IX Office should they become aware that you or any other student has experienced sexual violence or sexual harassment.

Academic Integrity (*thanks to UCSC's Center for Innovations in Teaching and Learning and UC Berkeley's Center for Teaching and Learning for structure & language*)

Academic integrity is the moral code of academia, the trust that researchers, scholars, and creative artists put in each other to do what is right and honest, even when no one is looking.

Plagiarism & self-plagiarism: To copy text or ideas from another source (including your own for other courses and work purchased or copied from others) without appropriate attribution is plagiarism. This also applies to the discussion forums. For additional information on plagiarism, self-plagiarism, and how to avoid them, see, for example:

<https://guides.library.ucsc.edu/citesources/plagiarism>

Please refer to <https://ue.ucsc.edu/academic-misconduct.html> for the university's policy on Academic Dishonesty. Acts of academic dishonesty in this class will be reported to the department, to the Provost of your college, and to the Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education, and may result in an F on the assignment, dismissal from class with a final grade of F, and even suspension or expulsion from the university, depending upon the severity of the violation.

Course schedule

subject to change; version on Canvas will be current

Overview: Most of our course meetings will involve a combination of full-group engagement (lecture, group discussion, etc.) as well as a small group exercise (discussion, short assignment, peer review of coursework, etc.). These components will usually be separated by a short break.

Date	Topics	Reading & Assignments
June 25	Course introduction; personal introductions; STRIVE project introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Small groups</u>: STRIVE project brainstorm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read syllabus and explore course Canvas site • Complete student survey on Canvas
June 27	Critical Reviews: Purpose and examples <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Small groups</u>: “What Makes a Review” exercise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete What Makes a Review on Canvas
July 2	11:00 a.m.—Alex Jones <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Small groups</u>: Strive project discussions in peer groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STRIVE topic research ideas due to Canvas discussion thread
July 4	HOLIDAY—NO CLASS MEETING	

Date	Topics	Reading & Assignments
July 9	Introduction to the Flower Exercise: Personalities and personal objectives and purpose <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Small groups:</u> Holland Code assessment *Individual check-ins on STRIVE progress with Adam during office hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bolles, chap. 1-5 • Bolles background assignment due on Canvas
July 11	Flower Exercise continued: Transferable skills and preferred working conditions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Small groups:</u> Sharing and evaluating stories *Individual check-ins on STRIVE progress with Adam during office hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bolles chap. 6 • “Story when you were enjoying yourself” exercise due on Canvas
July 16	STRIVE project overview presentations Introduction to job/graduate school resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STRIVE Project outline due
July 18	Resumes and cover letters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Small groups:</u> Resume review exercise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bolles chap. 7-8 • Flower due
July 23	Perspectives on job hunting and identifying graduate schools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Small groups:</u> Resume/Cover letter peer review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft resume & cover letter due
July 25	Grants & grant writing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Small groups:</u> Grant brainstorming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work on STRIVE
July 30	Strive paper draft peer review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STRIVE Paper Draft due • STRIVE paper peer review due on Canvas

Date	Topics	Reading & Assignments
Aug. 1	Interviews questions and strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Small groups</u>: discussion of interview experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final resume and cover letter due
Aug. 6	Presentation skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Small groups</u>: Grant proposal peer review *Individual check-ins on STRIVE progress with Adam during office hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grant proposal peer review due on Canvas
Aug. 8	Wrap-up and time for questions/reflections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • *Individual check-ins on STRIVE progress with Adam during office hours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final grant proposal due
Aug. 13	STRIVE project presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-class STRIVE presentations
Aug. 15	STRIVE project presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-class STRIVE presentations
Final STRIVE paper due on Canvas by end of August 16.		