General Education Annual Course Assessment Form

Course Number/Title CEGHM 168 A/B GE Area R

Results reported for AY 2014/105 # of sections 9 # of instructors 3

Course Coordinator: Alexander Gershenson E-mail: alexander.gershenson@sjsu.edu

Department Chair: Shawn Spano College: Social Sciences

Instructions: Each year, the department will prepare a brief (two page maximum) report that documents the assessment of the course during the year. This report will be electronically submitted, by the department chair, to the Office of Undergraduate Studies, with an electronic copy to the home college by October 1 of the following academic year.

Part 1

To be completed by the course coordinator:

(1) What SLO(s) were assessed for the course during the AY?

Area R: SLO 2: Distinguish science from pseudo-science

   ii. To understand and be able to articulate the implications and uncertainties related to our changing climate.

   Distinguishing science from pseudo-science is critical when we tackle the subject of climate change. Although these discussion occur throughout the course, there is a specific two lecture module focused on climate change denial, that consists of a lecture, discussion, and a viewing of the movie “Cool It” that focuses on arguments made by one of the top denialists, Bjorn Lomborg. The module includes a class discussion, as well as the following follow-up questions:

1. Bjorn Lomborg argues in “Cool it” that:

   a. Climate change is not happening

   b. Climate change is happening, but people are not the cause

   c. Climate change is happening, people are to blame, and we need to fix it fast

   d. Climate change is happening, but we can easily fix it with new technology

   e. Climate change is happening, but there’s nothing we can do

2. One of his key arguments is that...

   a. We haven’t done our research yet
b. We fixed all the other environmental problems already with technology

c. The arguments from climate change scientists are exaggerated

d. The current approach will not work and will be too expensive

e. all of the above

f. a, b, and c

g. b, c, and d

. Imagine you come across four articles regarding Climate change and effects of rising temperatures on pacific fish populations:
2. Article written on RealClimate.org by one of the leading authors of the IPCC
3. Article written in the National Geographic written by a famous science writer who has been covering Climate Change issues for the National Geographic for 20 years
4. Article in a peer-reviewed journal Global Change Biology written by a first-year graduate student

They all say varying things about the effects of climate change on pacific fish populations. In order of reliability, rank these sources of information (most reliable first, least reliable last)
a) 1, 2, 3, 4
b) 3, 1, 2, 4
c) 3, 1, 4, 2
d) 4, 1, 2, 3
e) 4, 2, 3, 1

Area V: SLO 1: Compare systematically the ideas, values, images, cultural artifacts, economic structures, technological developments, and/or attitudes of people from more than one culture outside the U.S.
i. To be able to compare international policy responses and cultural perceptions of climate change.

The course includes a comprehensive policy analysis paper that examines policy approaches to mitigating climate change. Among other things the paper requires an examination of approaches that other countries have taken to deal with Climate Change.

Text of assignment:

**Policy Analysis: Climate Change**

1000 words (≈ 4 pages) 150 points/15% Due Thursday, **March 5th** Required revision (1000 words) due Thursday, **April 9th**

The political reality in the United States is that cap-and-trade is, effectively, dead. There are two options being talked about with various levels of seriousness, and in some cases being implemented, to
some extent. One is a carbon tax policy, and one is a feed-in tariff policy. There are many examples of feed-in tariffs out there, and there are some examples of carbon taxes.

You are a science aide to Senator Boxer. Senator Boxer asks you to draft a short 1000 word memo, addressed to her, that would give her a brief insight into whether she should push for a national carbon tax, or a national feed-in tariff in this session of Congress. She's retiring soon, she wants to go out with a bang. She has heard of the carbon tax approach, but wants to make sure she understands how it works really well. She has also heard that the feed-in tariff has really changed the way electric grids operate in many countries around the world, so she’s wondering if maybe it’s a better way to go. Your task is to:

1. Briefly describe how a carbon tax works, discussing the recognized drawbacks and benefits, as well as explaining how it works: who pays, who benefits, why is it effective and efficient, why not

2. Briefly describe how a feed-in tariff works, discussing the recognized drawbacks and benefits, as well as explaining how it works: who pays, who benefits, why is it effective and efficient, why not

3. Discuss which tool would be more politically feasible in the United States, and which would be better for climate change mitigation

You may want to bring in the recently implemented California feed-in tariff to give Senator Boxer something US-based to work from. You also want to give the Senator an example for each policy, and briefly discuss them.

Attribution & Direct Quotes: You should consult at least two peer-reviewed sources, and at least two major newspaper news sources, and you should use each source at least once in your paper. Provide a bibliography of these sources with your paper. You are free to use any citation format you are comfortable with, as long as it is a valid citation format. Please indicate the format in the title of your bibliography.

Format: Answer the questions listed here, in coherent essay form, with transitions between indented paragraphs. Single-space your name, the date, and “CEGHM 168B” in a header at the top of page 1. Follow this header with the title of your paper. Do not use a separate title page. Use a double-spaced, 12-point font, preferably Times or Times New Roman (please use a serif font), and leave 1-inch margins around the entire paper. Please provide a total word count of your essay.

Grading: Your paper will be assigned a grade in two parts: a content and a mechanics grade.

PLEASE LET ME KNOW IF THIS SUBMISSION TOOL WILL NOT WORK ASAP! IF YOU CAN’T SUBMIT, EMAIL THE PAPER TO ME!

I suppose you want a good grade on the paper? Ok, I’ll tell you a secret. Here’s what I’ll be looking for:

1. Description of mechanism, drawbacks, and benefits of carbon tax (not cap and trade... different stuff). If you want a really good grade- describe examples!

2. Description of mechanism, drawbacks, and benefits, of feed-in tariffs. If you want a really good grade- describe examples!

3. YOUR take on things

4. USE AT LEAST 2 peer-reviewed sources and 2 newspaper sources!

5. Proofread!
Area S: SLO 2: Students will be able to identify the dynamics of ethnic, cultural, gender/sexual, age-based, class, regional, national, transnational, and global identities and the similarities, differences, linkages, and interactions between them.

ii. To be able to describe the processes of the fossil fuel economy that creates structured inequalities in the United States.

The course includes a 2 lecture series on environmental justice, and a corresponding 2 lecture simulation of the UNFCCC process where students are divided into representatives of various developing and developed world countries and they have to discuss their perspectives and learn to find common ground. Students are assessed on their participation and on several final exam questions, listed below:

1. True (a) or false (b): A basic indicator of a nation’s vulnerability to climate change is its wealth.
2. Which does NOT affect nations’ institutional capacities to address climate change?
   a. environmental regulations
   b. economic power
   c. military power
   d. knowledge production
   e. all of the above affect nations’ ability to address climate change
3. True (a) or false (b): Marginalized populations’ capacity for adaptation to climate change effects is high.
4. Which of the following is NOT a form of environmental discrimination discussed in class
   a. enforcement of environmental rules and regulations
   b. siting of polluting industries in poor and minority communities
   c. exclusion of people of color and the poor from boards and commissions
   d. exclusion of environmentalists from public hearings
   e. all of the above are methods of environmental discrimination
5. Which was NOT a claim made against Chem Waste’s proposed toxic waste incinerator in Kettleman City:
   a. public hearings were held 35 miles from Kettleman City
   b. documents were not translated into Spanish
   c. meetings were conducted in English
   d. all of the above are claims made against Chem Waste
6. The discussed event in Warren County, 1982, is important in climate change history as it coined the term
   a. toxic landfill
   b. environmental racism
   c. public health frame
   d. polychlorinated-biphenyl
What were the results of the assessment of this course? What were the lessons learned from the assessment?

We have implemented a clicker system in the course, so we are able to get results on the basis of individual exam questions to better assess student performance on specific topics.

Area R. 76/111 completed with a b or above (answering all questions correctly) 89/111 with a C or above (answering some of the questions correctly) 22/97 did not master (failed to answer any of the questions correctly)

Area V 71/97 completed with a b or above 93/97 with a C or above 4/97 did not master

Area S 74/100 completed with a b or above (answering all questions correctly) 97/100 with a C or above (answering some of the questions correctly) 3/100 did not master (failed to answer any of the questions correctly)

What modifications to the course, or its assessment activities or schedule, are planned for the upcoming year? (If no modifications are planned, the course coordinator should indicate this.)

This year the instructional makeup of the course has changed. Alexander Gershenson is no longer teaching the course, and has been replaced by David Wrathall. Overall, the emphasis is stronger on the adaptation and management aspects of climate change, and on practical implications of scientific understanding, including a revised community action project schedule. No changes to assessment activities are planned.

Part 2

To be completed by the department chair (with input from course coordinator as appropriate):

Are all sections of the course still aligned with the area Goals, Student Learning Objectives (SLOs), Content, Support, and Assessment? If they are not, what actions are planned?

Yes, the course coordinator and instructors are doing a good job keeping the goals, SLOs, content, support, and assessment consistent across sections. Regular communication between the coordinator and instructors and between the instructors maintains continuity within and across sections.

If this course is in a GE Area with a stated enrollment limit (Areas A1, A2, A3, C2, D1, R, S, V, & Z), please indicate how oral presentations will be evaluated with larger sections (Area A1), or how practice and revisions in writing will be addressed with larger sections, particularly how students are receiving thorough feedback on the writing which accounts for the minimum word count in this GE category (Areas A2, A3, C2, D1, R, S, V, & Z) and, for the writing intensive courses (A2, A3, and Z), documentation that the students are meeting the GE SLOs for writing.

168A/B typically enrolls 100 or so students each year. The three instructors who team-teach the course divide the papers among themselves, resulting in a manageable enough number each so that students receive thorough instructor evaluation and feedback on their written work. Additionally, students are
required to do a “substantial revision” (as stated on the syllabus) on each of the papers in the course, and they also receive peer-editing suggestions from their classmates on these assignments. Finally, instructors have developed a fairly robust bank of writing comments over the past few years that they cut and paste into student papers.