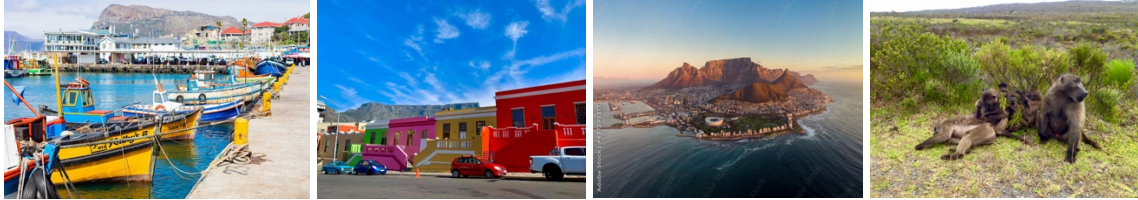


South Africa Field Course: Biodiversity, Climate Change and Social Justice

ENV 474 (Spring 2024 | April 27-May 5)
(0.5 Credits)



Course instructors

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Course overview

This interdisciplinary field course integrates a range of science and policy perspectives and field-based interactions designed to understand South Africa's Cape region as a dynamic and linked system of people and nature. In doing so, course activities will emphasize how social justice issues (historical and present day) intersect with ongoing experiences of climate change, and human-induced threats to some of the world's most significant biodiversity resources. The field course will provide you with a unique opportunity to engage with a wide range of sustainability challenges, and to see first-hand how local communities, scientists and government organizations are approaching these challenges in some novel ways.

Course location

The course will centre on the Cape region of South Africa with a further focus on several distinct areas, including: 1) the Cape Malay Quarter, Kalk Bay, Lwandle and Simons Town where we will engage with diverse spatial histories (i.e., the spatial geographies of Apartheid) and present day social justice issues; 2) Kirstenbosch, Cape Point and Boulders beach areas which provide a fascinating context to explore terrestrial and marine biodiversity of global significance (i.e., Fynbos systems); and 3) the City Bowl, Stellenbosch, Table Mountain and University of Cape Town areas which have experienced a wide range of water resource issues, fire events and the effects of climate change. While these areas are reflective of the main themes in the course, they do not exist in isolation. Numerous human-nature connections across these regions will be evident.

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The Cape Region of South Africa

Learning outcomes

The course is designed to provide the following learning outcomes:

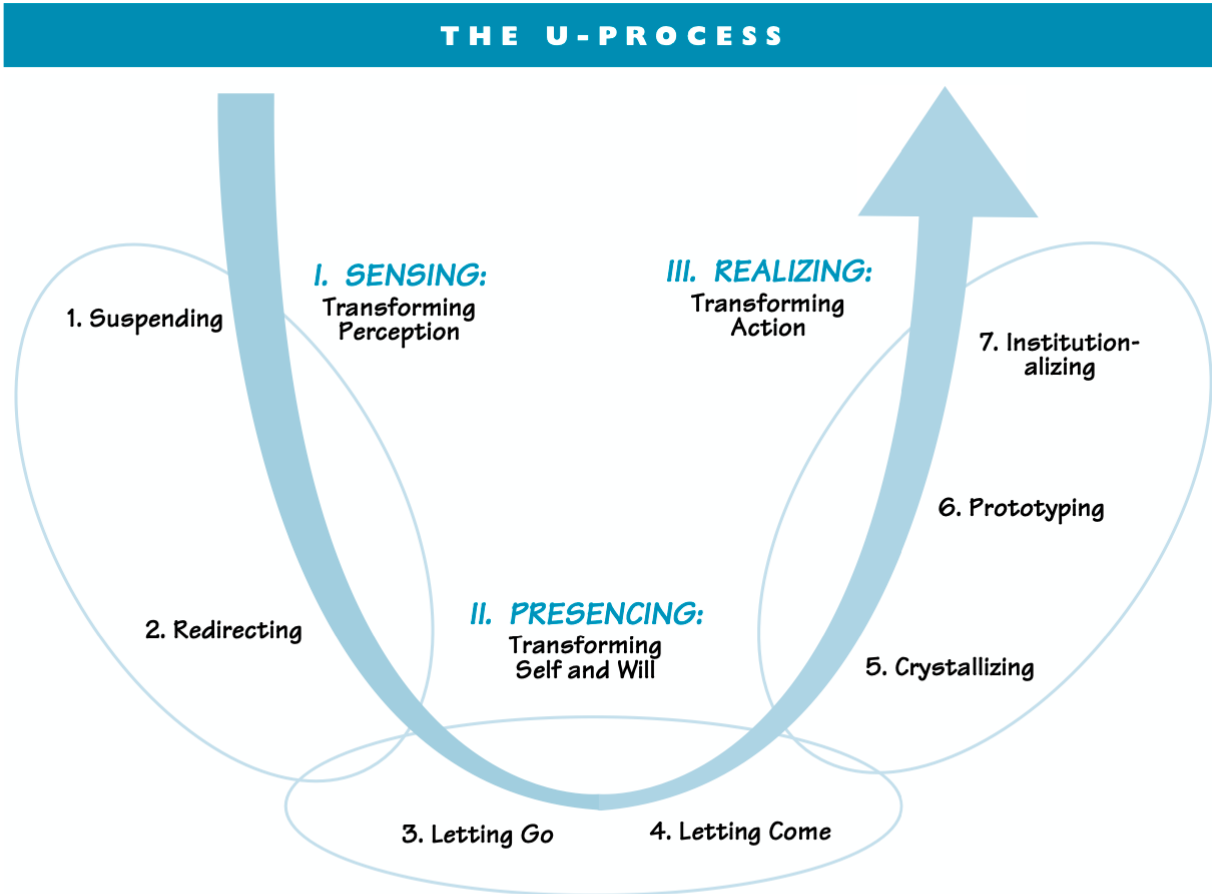
1. Understand and engage directly with a reflective method (the U-Process) as a way to engage with complex system challenges and intersecting drivers of change (i.e., such as social justice, climate and biodiversity)
2. Understand key elements of the Cape region human-nature system and how these elements interact to create a wide range of social and ecological outcomes that can be observed and reflected upon in the field.
3. Reflect critically on some of the core concepts and ideas we often explore in the Faculty and their implications, such as 'sustainability', 'conservation', 'nature' and 'social justice'.

Assessment

The foundational principle for assessment in this field course will be "learning-by-doing". Specifically, we will employ the spirit and elements of the "U-process" as a way to catalyze observation, reflection, discussion and deeper engagement with course themes. The U-process can help us to focus on key sustainability questions and is structured around three learning phases and the development and utilization of seven capacities (see the figure below). The

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various course activities are organized to support these three learning phases and the development and utilization of the related capacities: 1) Sensing – transforming perception; 2) Presencing – transforming self; and 3) Realizing – transforming action.



In order to create the conditions for regeneration to happen, the U-Process outlines three “phases” that involve the creation of specific environments in support of particular types of learning. To move through these phases, we must develop and utilize seven “capacities.”

Source: Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski, and Flowers

Course participants will be responsible for engaging with two tangible assessment activities:

Participation and Daily Discussions: Throughout the field course we will engage with a number of researchers/managers, community representatives and/or organizations. Course participants are expected to be *active* listeners and learners during these experiences. That means you should take notes, interact with these individuals, be prepared to ask questions, and ultimately reflect on the lessons from each activity. We will set aside time, typically at the end of each day, to reflect on the day, what we learned, what surprised us and generally share our ideas and thoughts.

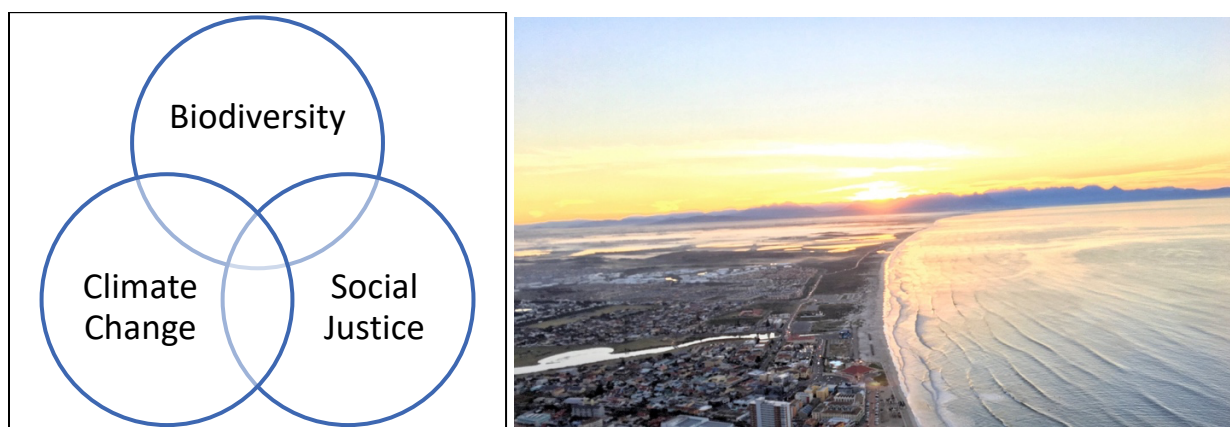
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Journals/Field Notes: Course participants are asked to keep a daily field journal to record key reflections of experiences in the Cape region. Journals entries can include reflections on some of the activities related to the pre-trip plans, although the focus will be on the field component. The journal is also a place to capture summaries of resources (e.g., readings), information on the people or organizations met, as well general notes and questions. A minimum of 10 dated reflection should be included in the journal. The length, scope and content is flexible – ultimately the journal is your resource and learning outcome. You can choose to have a digital or physical journal and feel free to include photos and or video entries as well. Creativity in how you choose to capture your experience is encouraged.

Overall course assessment will be based on appropriate completion of the field journal and meaningful engagement with course content during the field component.

Course themes and schedule of activities

Course themes and activities are designed to highlight the complex intersections of biodiversity, climate change and social justice. These issues are particularly evident in the Cape region but are relevant in many other parts of the world, including Canada.



A summary of daily themes and activities is outlined below.

Date and Location	Theme	Primary activities (will be adjusted as needed to accommodate guest speakers, etc)
Saturday, 27 April Kalk Bay	Overview	Introductions and overview of course; situating the course context and the agenda for the week Peninsula drive and reconnaissance of Cape Town; Guided tour of waterfront (e.g., Seapoint and Green Point Stadium area); Lunch visit to Noordhoek village; Kalk Bay fish harbour evening dinner and orientation
Sunday, 28 April	Social justice	Understanding spatial geographies of the Cape region; viewing the spatial histories of Apartheid from Signal Hill.

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Cape Town – Signal Hill, Bo-Kaap and city centre		Guided trek from Signal Hill through bo-kaap; engaging in a local lunch/cooking course with focus on food histories. Visit to the company gardens; District 6 museum tour with Graffiti tour time permitting in Woodstock
Monday, 29 April Stellenbosch	Social Justice	Museum/tour at Lwandle Migrant Labour Museum; Understanding the food, land and social justice dimensions of South Africa’s vineyards; travel through Stellenbosch University region and potential meet and greet
Tuesday, 30 April Simons Town	Social Justice and Biodiversity	Understanding history of Kalk Bay fishing community heritage and Simonstown- forced relocation and living with baboons; discussing links between social justice and biodiversity in Cape region (conservation, fines and fences)
Wednesday, 1 May Simonstown & Scarborough	Biodiversity and Climate Change	Experiencing underwater seascapes and biodiversity; Diving morning and marine biodiversity day; Save Our Seas Shark Education Centre visit
Thursday, 2 May Cape Point	Biodiversity	Fauna and flora walk at Cape Point National Park; biodiversity exhibition; Cape Vineyard community market for dinner
Friday, 3 May Kirstenbosch & UCT	Biodiversity and Climate Change	Biodiversity walk and transect at Kirstenbosch Garden; UCT tour and impact of fire; climate, water and drought in Cape Town; Opportunity to meet UCT students and engage in group reflection
Saturday, 4 May Scarborough	Biodiversity, Climate and Social Justice	Foraging for food, land use and food security; Final dinner (braai) and evening gathering
Sunday, 5 May Kalk Bay and fly out	Summary	Morning synthesis and wrap-up discussions; next steps and plans for departure; time for local shopping in Kalk Bay prior to departure

Course resources and readings

For a popular entry into the historical and present-day realities of South Africa, course participants are encouraged to read Trevor Noah’s autobiography, “Born a Crime”. Available in most local bookstores (or available on Amazon).

Topic-specific readings will be posted in advance (LEARN) and will include a small selection of peer-reviewed papers and popular articles. Participants are also encouraged to read the short

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summary of the U-Process (Hassan, Z. 2006. Connecting to the Source: The U-Process. Systems Thinker. 17(7): 1-7). This article will be posted as a .pdf on the course LEARN site.

Contact details and logistics

All course participants must stay at the pre-arranged hotel accommodations for the duration of the field course (April 26-May 5 inclusive). Breakfast is provided by the hotel each day. Lunches and dinners are the responsibility of course participants but various options will be provided. Field excursions and travel will be by pre-arranged van or small bus. Most sites are relatively accessible and within a maximum ~1.5 hour drive. In an emergency, course instructors can be contacted via email or text/Whatsapp (to be provided). The emergency contact in Waterloo is Dr. Johanna Wandel, Associate Dean (Undergraduate): jwandel@uwaterloo.ca.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- All course participants must complete the UW 'safety abroad training' and be prepared to follow guidelines provided by the course instructors regarding safety and wellbeing.
- Inappropriate behaviour that undermines the positive experience and wellbeing of other course participants will not be tolerated.
- Each participant is responsible for arranging their own travel to Cape Town for the start of the field course, as well as any travel documents (e.g., valid passport), including visas as required.
- Travel to and from Pearson International Airport is the responsibility of each participant.
- One checked bag (23kg max) is typically allowed per passenger – a happy traveler is a light traveler. Guidelines on what to bring will be provided.