Environmental Education & Community Engagement

Online course 2022

- **Website**: https://www.civicecology.org/eece
- **Dates**: May 16 – June 12, 2022 (4 weeks). Assignments must be submitted by June 9, 2022.
- **Instruction**: The course is asynchronous; instructional materials are provided on EdX Edge
- **Weekly zoom webinars**: Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays at 9-10am. Webinars will be recorded
- **Office hours**: Fridays at 9-10am
- **Main instructor**: Alex Kudryavtsev
- **Co-instructors**: Marianne Krasny and Yue Li
- **Teaching assistant**: Fish Yu, Wanying Wu
- **Questions? Ask our course administrator**: Kim Snyder civicecology@cornell.edu

Overview

Imagine school students and community members designing a new garden to address food justice in their neighborhood. Or a parent-teacher association helping students reach out to elected officials to discuss environmental regulations that impact their school. Or an environmental education center that collaborates with community members to advance local climate action.

This course is about creating partnerships between environmental education programs and community members who aim to achieve shared goals through stewardship or advocacy. By involving youth and adults in environmental stewardship, environmental educators enhance environmental quality, social equity, and human well-being. They also engage local residents in advocacy to transform social systems that influence the environment.

The course materials, webinars, and interaction with each other, course participants will explore to engage community members in stewardship and environmental decision-making and action as part of environmental education.

During this 4-week course, you will:

1. **Explore and create** new ideas for community engagement goals and strategies by synthesizing practical experiences and theoretical frameworks,
2. **Exchange** practical ideas for community engagement with peers and receive feedback from the instructors, and
3. **Develop** a plan for community engagement in your own educational program.

The final project is creating a 1-page community engagement plan for your organization or coming up with new ideas for community engagement in environmental education, stewardship, and advocacy. Selected final projects will become part of an ebook that will be featured on the Civic Ecology Lab website and made available to other environmental educators.

This course is largely asynchronous. All materials are provided on the EdX Edge online learning platform. Course participants will learn from video lectures, readings, discussion posts, and case studies. The course also includes live/recorded webinars with experts in community engagement. On average, coursework takes about 5 hours per week each of 4 weeks (total 20 professional development hours)

Instructors

Your will be guided by an experienced team from Cornell University Civic Ecology Lab:

- **Alex Kudryavtsev**, Research Associate, who will be your main instructor. Alex's research focuses on urban environmental education and civic engagement. You will communicate with Alex often http://alexruss.org
- **Marianne Krasny**, Professor. Marianne is the Director of Civic Ecology Lab. She contributed to the development of this course. https://cals.cornell.edu/marianne-elizabeth-krasny
- **Yue Li**, Research Associate, who is experienced in environmental educator training and leading online courses. Yue will come to the course webinars, and coordinate course TAs. https://cals.cornell.edu/yue-li
- **Xin Yu (Fish) and Wanying Wu**, Chinese teaching assistants. Fish and Wanying, along with other Chinese language assistants, will assist participants in China.
- **Kim Snyder**, Course Administrator. Kim is experienced in helping course participants. Kim will be your main point of contact for any technical and logistical questions about the course. Email her at: civicecology@cornell.edu

Participants

Environment and education professionals, volunteers, university students, community leaders, and any citizens from any country. Discussions will be in English and Chinese.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this course, participants will:

1. Critically reflect on the Community Engagement Environmental Education Guidelines for Excellence, and apply their principles to your environmental education programs and communities;
2. Expand your understanding of community engagement by synthesizing new ideas from weekly readings, lectures, webinars, and case studies;
3. Develop new ideas for community engagement by synthesizing practical and theoretical ideas through the final project. Some final projects will be included in an ebook;
4. Participate actively in a global online network of environmental educators who focus on community engagement.

Workload

4 weeks (4-5 hours of work per week). During the course time, we will release most of the course materials including pre-recorded video lectures, readings, and discussion questions every Monday morning (time in New York). You can choose anytime during each week to review these materials and respond to discussion questions. Each week, we will host two webinars via ZOOM (Tuesdays and Wednesdays at 9am-10am NY time) and office hours (Thursdays at 9am-10am). Webinars will be recorded for participants who are unable to attend them synchronously. During the course, you will be working on final projects that apply "Community Engagement" Guidelines for Excellence to your own programs, or add new ideas to these guidelines. During the last week, you will submit your final projects by Thursday (June 9, 2022).

Educational approach

The course is based on two principles: (1) Learning is social: participants learn by discussing ideas and sharing resources; (2) Learning should lead to action: participants will apply course content to their communities and environmental education programs, or add new ideas about community engagement to advance other environmental education programs.

Tips for successful learning: (1) If you have any questions, please email the course admin. (2) Ask content-related questions and share your ideas in zoom chat and on discussion boards. (3) Connect and collaborate with other course participants. (4) Finish and submit all assignments before deadlines. (5) Start working on your final assignment early, follow its formatting requirements, and be creative and generate new ideas. (6) Optional: exchange ideas and stay connected on our social media.

Technology

EdX Edge (BNU Site for Chinese) for pre-recorded lectures, readings, and discussion questions (asynchronous). We will also use Facebook, WhatsApp and Wechat for optional informal discussions and sharing. We will host weekly webinars via ZOOM and post recordings on EdX Edge and BNU Site for participants unable to attend in person.

Certificates

Participants who complete the course assignments and submit the final 1-page project are awarded a Cornell University certificate (PDF). Weekly assignments include watching lectures, completing readings, and responding to discussion questions. Participants are required to participate in a minimum of one course webinar (or watch a recorded webinar). The required course project is an essay that applies or expands the guidelines for community engagement.

Course Outline

Each week includes recorded lectures, readings, case studies, and short assignments. During the course, we will also hold live webinars to allow course participants to hear from experts, ask questions, and discuss ideas with other participants and instructors.

Weekly topics	Lectures	Case studies	Webinars	Assignments
Week 1 **Foundations** Review the foundations of community engagement in EE, and explore community engagement principles.	1. Community definition 2. EE overview 3. EE and communities 4. Community Engagement Guidelines	• El Yunque Forest • Transformative learning (Arjen Wals) • Intro to the Guidelines (podcast with Bora Simmons)	5/17 — **Running Grass** (Three Circles Center, Antioch University Seattle), *presentation title TBA* 5/18 — **Susan Clark** (Slow Democracy), *Slow democracy and the art of inclusion* 5/19 — **Marcos Trinidad** (Audubon Center at Debs Park, Los Angeles), *Investigating access, inclusion, and the changing roles of conservation organizations*	• Discussion board • Ebook: Start writing your chapter
Week 2 **Action** Explore how you can engage communities in environmental education through partnerships, collaboration, and achieving shared goals.	1. Community assessment 2. Civic engagement	• Vermont case study (Simon Jorgensen) • Alberta, Canada case study (Sofie Forsstrom)	5/24 — **Kimi Waite** (California AEOE), *Partnerships between teachers, students, and STEM professionals to advance EE* 5/26 — **Mary Ford** (Roots & Shoots USA), *Inspiring, empowering and supporting young people to take action in their communities* 5/27 — **Fish Yu** (Duck Gaga, Shenzhen, China), *Top-down vs bottom-up community engagement in EE and stewardship: Case studies from China*	• Discussion board • Ebook chapter writing
Week 3 **Expanding** Exchange your experiences and create new approaches for community engagement in EE.	1. Enhancing civil society and democracy 2. Social capital 3. Advancing SDGs 4. Novel forms of community engagement 5. Global engagement 6. Partnerships	• Engaging communities (Martha Monroe and Gabby Salazar) • Lentol Garden, NYC (Bethany Kogut, Tina Cuevas)	5/31 — **Victoria Derr** (CSUMB), *Re-awakening bio-cultural memory: Reflecting on engaging diverse middle schoolers in the transformation of their school grounds* 6/1 — **Kei Kawashima-Ginsberg** (Tufts University), *Learning in and about local communities through content- and practice-based civic inquiry* 6/2 — **Vince Meldrum** (Earth Force), *What is environmental action civics (and why it is important right now?)*	• Discussion board • Work on ebook chapters
Week 4 **Final projects** Synthesize what you learned and developed by writing a 1-page final project, which may become an ebook chapter.	n/a		6/7 — **Frances Black** (Generation Citizens), *Environmental action civics* 6/8 — **Renae Cairns** (Teens For Food Justice), *School-based urban agriculture programs as a vehicle for community engagement* 6/9 — **Frances Moore Lappé** (Small Planet Institute) Hope in tough times, digging to the roots of our global challenges	• Discussion board • Submit your final project (ebook chapter)