Communicating Climate Change
Solutions to Environmental Problems (STEP)
ENVS 398 (3 credits)
AIB, Bonn, Germany

Location: International Academy, Bonn, Germany
Proposed Date: June 2nd-July 1st, 2016
Dr. Elizabeth Coffman, LUC
School of Communication

Institutional Partners in Bonn:
Heinrich Boll Foundation (Green Political Foundation)
WHO European Centre for Environmental and Health
United Nations Bonn, Institute for Environment and Human Security
ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability
Brot fur die Welt (Bread for the World)

Course Overview:

STEP (Solutions to Environmental Problems) is an interdisciplinary and hands-on course in which students develop and implement local solutions to complex global problems. From predictions of sea level rise for coastal cities to communicating with NGO’s and policymakers, STEP: Communication students assess the different and convergent roles that print, photography, radio, film, television and new media play in helping to address the most pressing areas of global climate change. How much does depicting catastrophe and fear help to gain audience to address climate change issues? How can we visualize data to better persuade, inform and include general audiences? What is the role of communication for NGOs, non-profit and corporate entities?

Students will produce (both individually and in small groups) their own multimedia projects for potential and actual clients or NGOs, for conferences, events, for broadcast or the web. Students will visualize data and create narrative and informational contexts around climate change issues. Strategies for the implementation of media campaigns and plans will be researched and developed during a month of class. Students will go on field trips to several NGOs and attend one climate change event or conference. Visits and discussions will include interviewing, strategies for reporting and crafting stories, promoting events, advocacy, broadcast media, and case studies of guerilla media, lobbying, and non-violent actions.

Readings:

Course Objectives:

The objectives of this course relate to the course topic and Loyola’s Civic Engagement and Leadership Value Area of the Core Curriculum. By the end of the semester, students should be able to:

1. Articulate a practical, current, and well-rounded understanding of local, national and global issues relating to communication surrounding climate change research, policy, politics and implementation.
2. Demonstrate effective teamwork, practical skills, and knowledge germane to project topics and course labs.
3. Engage in the community through activities effecting positive change in society and the environment.
4. Apply analytical and reflective tools to assess situations and recognize leadership possibilities and opportunities for civic engagement.
5. Exercise greater knowledge about media and presentation skills in relation to communicating environmental policy issues.

Course Excursions:

- Visit of energy-efficient buildings in Bonn (DHL/ Post Tower)
- Trips to mining region; Emscher Park
- Composting/recycling facilities
- Tours of local rail yard; allotment gardens; green roof tour
- Solar power plant /Solar production site
- Meetings with NGOs working in the field of sustainability

- 6-day Berlin Study Tour
- Berlin-Adlershof: sustainable architecture & energy management; green roof; landscape park
- Self-sustaining community “UFA Fabrik”
- Urban Walking Tour “Sustainable Development”
- Potsdamer Platz & Storm Water Management
- Sanssouci Palace and gardens
- City tour; various museums; Sachsenhausen Memorial

Physical Demands: all travel should be wheelchair accessible.
Course Expectations:

- **Critical responses (4)**
  4 Research reflections on course-related material will be due on multiple occasions through the semester. Reflections will include outside research as well as course readings on policy issues.

- **Climate Change Policy in the News**
  Each student will have an opportunity to briefly present (3-5 minutes) on a news story about climate change policy in class. The story will involve an interview surrounding an international story on sustainability issues.

- **Projects**
  A significant portion of student work in the course will focus on semester-long group and individual projects. A policy plan is due at midterm; plan implementation by finals. Project requirements include a sustainability proposal and presentation, implementation (which may include attending relevant NGOs or meetings), final project materials, report and a final presentation. Details for these requirements will be outlined in separate documents. Each group will work with a mentor, based in Germany and AIB staff.

Grade Distribution:

- **Critical responses, 3 (30%) WEEK TWO, THREE, FOUR**
- **Discussions and Policy in the News (20%) WEEK THREE, FIVE**
- **Projects (50%)**
  --Proposal (10%) **WEEK TWO**
  --Revised Proposal & Presentation (5%) **WEEK THREE**
  --Final products and Presentation (15%) **WEEK FOUR**
  --Final report (20%) **WEEK FIVE**

Weekly Schedule:

**Week One: Environmental Communication Theories**
Storytelling structure, interviewing and reporting techniques--print, radio, TV, web

**Week Two: Tools for Distributing Knowledge**
Microphones, Cameras, Web sites—overview; Case studies

**Week Three: Networking**
Finding partners; developing connections; implementing production plans

**Week Four: Refining and Editing**
Finishing projects, editing and revising

**Week Five:**
Final presentations—on the road