



DAY 21: SCHOOL

Greenest

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PART I

CORNELL UNIVERSITY



Cornell University offers a unique variety of sustainability initiatives, courses and minors, and is ranked second in the country for its emphasis on sustainable global enterprise.

Their Environment & Sustainability also has core courses providing students with a broad awareness of the many dimensions of environment and sustainability issues. One course that piqued our interest is the Student-Designed course, where students work with an advisor to develop a plan of study aligned with their personal interests and professional goals. We find this really interesting, as you can shape your own education! Additionally, the program is very hands on; Student get opportunities to work with decision makers, as well as experience in the field!

Founded in 2013, the program set out to “make environmental sciences more visible to Cornell students and give students more direct access to the breadth of environmental sciences at Cornell,” according to Prof. Max Pfeffer, developmental sociology, senior associate dean of College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

One class that interest us is part of the Environmental Biology and Applied Ecology concentration, called Introduction to Conservation Biology. The course description states:

"Topics include species and ecosystem diversity, values of biodiversity, causes of extinction, risks facing small populations, simulation modeling, design of nature preserves, the Endangered Species Act, conservation priority-setting, species recovery, ecosystem restoration and management, implications of climate change, and our ecological footprint."

We think this is course is our dream class already! The personalized course seems like an amazing path to take, and overall there's a wide selection of classes to choose from!

PART I

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA



The University of Pennsylvania offers a Masters in Environmental Studies, which is a top ranked course and said to be the best of it's kind!

Students can tailor their degrees towards a specific area of sustainability, and there's a multitude of resources and support offered! It teaches students the interdisciplinary knowledge needed to address complex environmental issues. MES student also select four courses from four different disciplines, include environmental biology, environmental chemistry, environmental geology, environmental sustainability, and more all of are very interesting to us!

Penn first began offering the MES program 24 years ago in 1996. According to their website. "The heart of the Master of Environmental Studies program is the passion of our students and faculty to create change in the world, from helping to preserve habitats to implementing energy-efficient policies at the local and national levels."

One class that piqued our interest was the class of Leading Change for Sustainability. The course description states:

"Students will learn leadership competencies and practices to help them more effectively lead change efforts for sustainability. Readings and discussions will explore the application of positive psychology to leverage the human technologies of creativity and collaboration in the pursuit of a more balanced and sustainable relationship with others and our ecosystems, and to shift the sustainability dialogue from the current problem-oriented approach to a vision of human wellbeing and planetary flourishing."

And finally, one tweak we would make to turn this into our dream course would be to maybe change the final project from just a research poster to real world change, such as reaching out to other organizations and possibly incorporating that into our research!

PART I

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN



The University of Michigan School for Environment and Sustainability is ranked as the top public research university in the country by The National Science Foundation! A relatively small department, the Sustainability concentration allows students to benefit from the tiny class sizes but also receive access to large institutional research projects and facilities!

Their Masters of Science program allows students to specialize in one of six fields of study, including Environmental Justice, Ecosystem Science and Management - Conservation Ecology, and Sustainability & Development and Sustainable Systems. The program's hallmarks are Field-based learning, with applied professional training and the use of scientific knowledge to inform management decisions and learning more practical, effective approaches to changing behavior.

The SEAS school was founded in 1903, and from then it's continually evolved its curriculum to match the advances in science and societal values. It's considered the birthplace of modern environmental education, and pushes for global environmental consciousness and action!

One specific class, "Ecology: Concepts and Applications," which is a course we think will provide the foundational knowledge and skills that will prepare us for our environmental careers!

The Syllabus: https://seas.umich.edu/sites/default/files/EAS_509_Fall_2019.pdf

One thing we'd adapt about this class is maybe to have more of a focus in linking ecology and sustainability, though it does do that to some extent in the syllabus! For example, this course reviews "Climate Change Causes and Consequences!"

PART II: SEMESTER SYLLABUS

The Four Leaf Clovers

About This Class:

This course would aim to teach students about sustainability and environmental awareness. From personal themes such as home and body to more collective ideas such as climate justice and biomimicry, the possibilities are endless. There would be hands on experience and activities that help students become informed consumers and take action. This course would inspire students to be more conscious of their impact on the environment and be the change the Earth needs.

Themes & Topics:

- **Conscious Living:**
 - Carbon Footprint
 - Waste Awareness
 - Personal Care
 - Energy Usage
 - Food & Water
 - **Humans & Nature**
 - Climate Justice
 - Biomimicry
 - Biodiversity
 - Reconnection with Nature
 - Informed Consumerism
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Engagement and Collaboration:

To help students stay engaged and make the class personal and interesting, we'd incorporate hands on activities such as calculating their carbon footprint. Teaching students more about how their habits impact the world they live in will inspire them to strive for change! From watching inspiring videos that spark discussion to presentation on each students findings about their exploration and research.

SCHEDULE

FOUR LEAF CLOVERS COURSE EXAMPLE

WEEK 1: PERSONAL CARE

Intro to environment and sustainability:

What is it?

- Inspiring TED Talk:
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4-4Nif5FcAA>

Why is it important?

- United Nations
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3WODX8fyRHA>
- Class Discussion & Activity

What are ways you can be sustainable?

- Discussion and Activity: Peardeck
- Good resource:

<https://sustainability.asu.edu/sustainabilitysolutions/programs/teachersacademy/teacher-resources/>

WEEK 2: WASTE AWARENESS

Personal Waste

- Video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BxKfpt70rLI>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pF72px2R3Hg>

- Activity: Collect a day of trash
- **Speaker: Lauren Singer, author of Trash is For Tossers**
- Discussion: How can students cut down on waste?

Food Waste

- **Video:** <https://youtu.be/tUFlvhx40R0>

Clothing Waste

- Research fashion industry

WEEK 3: PERSONAL CARE

Wellness:

Meditation exercise:

- Reconnection with nature
- Hike/Nature walk

Personal Care Products:

- Explore: Students take note of the ingredients in their products
 - Is the product "fair trade"
 - Discuss: What did they find?
 - Dangerous Chemicals?
 - Find alternatives: What products could you swap out with

WEEK 4: CLIMATE JUSTICE

Climate Justice

- Research: What is Climate Justice?
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aOP-EVuUNJ8>
- **Speaker: Mackenzie Feldman, founder of Herbicide-Free Campus**
 - Banned use of glyphosate from UC
- **Lia Harel, organizers behind Minnesota Can't Wait**
 - brought other youth, Indigenous communities, business people and politicians to stand together

PART II: SPEAKERS & EVENTS

The Four Leaf Clovers

Speakers:

Lauren Singer authors the blog called Trash is For Tossers. Lauren started living Zero Waste in 2012, went viral for fitting a year's worth of all of the waste she'd created in one 16oz mason jar. She gave a Ted Talk in 2015, and launched "Package Free" in 2015 to create a united space for makers of sustainable products that helped to reduce waste.



Mackenzie Feldman is the founder of Herbicide-Free Campus, a campaign to ban herbicides at schools. Mackenzie achieved a major success when the use of glyphosate was temporarily banned from all University of California campuses. She received the Brower Youth Award in 2019 for her achievements and work.

Lia Harel is one of the founders and main organizers behind Minnesota Can't Wait, a youth-led movement pushing for bold climate action in the state of Minnesota. She brought together her community to stand together for the environment. She hopes to shift the conversation in Minnesotan communities and set a stronger expectation for the state to pass climate legislation for a just and sustainable economy.



PART II: TEACHER FEEDBACK

The Four Leaf Clovers

Teachers:

Mrs. Kaminsky: French Teacher

Wow this looks amazing! Way more detailed and beautiful than any college syllabus I ever had. I think your details and your resources are specific and relate to the topic well. You thoroughly detail the course expectations and curricular content and the layout is easy to read. I think this looks fantastic! Very impressive! If I were to nitpick anything at all, maybe remove some of the exclamation points and make the language a little more direct. "Students will be engaged through activities such as ... /students will be expected to... " instead of more passive language like "we hope students will be engaged" etc. Otherwise, this looks like a fantastic syllabus. Bon travail!

Mrs. Rinaudo: AP Chemistry Teacher

I love this idea! One suggestion I have for you to make it more curriculum based is to review either the national science standards (Next Generation Science standards) or the New York State science standards. Tying lessons to established curriculum will give you more clout in terms of why this course is important. I would also focus on a specific range of grade levels. I think this is a really great idea. What class is this for? Will you hold these classes if approved?

INSTAGRAM

