NEW YORK UNIVERSITY  
Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development  
M.A. Program in Environmental Conservation Education  

SYLLABUS  
ENYC-GE XXXX  

Sustainable Places: A Field Studies Approach (Spring 2015)  

Instructor: Raul Lejano (lejano@nyu.edu) Office:  
East Building Room 424, 239 Greene Street Office  
Hours: 9-11 am Tuesdays and by appointment.

![Photograph: Sai Kung Geopark](http://www.geopark.gov.hk/en_s1k.htm)

**Catalogue Description:** Students will learn and practice the design and organization of the nature park experience. In so doing, they deepen their awareness of human-nature relationships and develop professional skills in environmental advocacy. The course involves class meetings on campus, followed by a required field visit to the study site, and production of a final deliverable consisting of key elements of a nature park master plan. Students in Environmental Conservation Education will evaluate and design environmental education elements, and students from other disciplines can develop a sustainability reporting plan for the site.

**Course Overview:**
In this class, students will take on skills in developing eco-tourism education and master planning for ecological sites. These skills include: sustainability reporting, nature tour design, program evaluation, and site planning. Instruction, involving lectures and self-guided group work, occurs during the first six weeks of the semester. At the same time, the students will be introduced to the field site and project partners (using online material, skyping with international colleagues, etc.). Two weeks prior to spring break, the students will begin planning field work designed to gather data or do site analysis-program evaluation while in the field. The fieldwork will occur during spring break (time off earlier and later in the course will be provided to compensate for the hours in the field). At the end of the semester, groups will present their respective deliverables (described below) and make a presentation to the department.

Students will choose one of four possible deliverables for the project (the first three being tailored for the MA ECE students, and the last track more suited for non-ECE students):
Element 1  Educational Program Design I  (Coastal Environment)
Element 2  Educational Program Design II  (Inland Environment)
Element 3  Program Evaluation
Element 4  Sustainability Reporting Plan

Note: During the initial offering of the course in Spring 2015, the field site will be the Sai Kung Geopark in Hong Kong. Our project partners will be Prof. Lawal Marafa and Prof. Sai Leung Ng of the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), who will be conducting a parallel graduate class on Eco-Tourism at CUHK. The trip to Hong Kong will occur during Spring Break, March 15-22, 2015. Profs. Lejano and Marafa will arrange for lodging and travel while in Hong Kong.

Course Objectives:
By the end of the course, students will be able to:
1. understand, in concept and in practice, how human-nature relationships can be enhanced through nature parks.
2. learn and describe the organization and management of nature parks.
3. evaluate the effectiveness of environmental tours and other educational experiences at parks.
4. design elements of environmental education and evaluation programs at parks.
5. understand and discuss ecologies in contexts other than their own.
6. explain and present, to the public, how nature parks and eco-tourism programs are designed and run.
7. gain and employ professional skills in client interface, product preparation and delivery, and project management.

Course Materials and Requirements: Course Reader, Park brochure/reports/online material.
A copy of the course reader will be kept in the Wallerstein Center (4th Floor East Building). Non-proprietary and open-access material will be uploaded into NYU Classes.

Attendance and Lateness Policy: All students must attend classes/meetings, work with their respective groups in between meetings, and attend the field/site visit. Two (2) absences (with an explanation or not) will result in a grade deduction. The only exceptions will be cases of documented illness or other family emergency. Also, every student must make an effort to be in class on time. Attendance and tardiness will be counted in the calculation of your final grade.

Field/Site Visit: Visiting the site is required of all students in the class. To the extent possible, any available school or other financial support will be used to offset some of the cost of travel and lodging in the form of a stipend, but in general, students may be asked to provide part or all of these expenses. First year MA ECE students will have priority when disbursing any available financial support to up to 10 students. The duration of the site visit will be seven days (including travel).

Assignments/Requirements:

1. Mid-Project Report  (Fulfills Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4)
Due by the end of Week 5, the mid-project report presents a summary of information and data gathered by the group. This data is used as background information to help them plan their field activities. The mid-project report will present the goals of their project element, as well as a preliminary method.
2. Field Visit and Report (Fulfills Objectives 3, 4, 5)
The Field Visit will entail inspection of the site, participating in the available tours, hikes, and available educational activities. Each group will meet with their counterparts (if any) to finalize plans for fieldwork. By day 3 in the field, each group will be implementing their fieldwork. This will be documented and presented in a Field Report, to be presented to the instructor by the Friday following the Field Visit.

3. Final Report (Fulfills Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 7)
The Final Report delivers the project element specified for each group. It should describe, in detail, how project goals were met, findings, and recommendations. The report will also have an action plan for implementing the proposed program. The instructor will provide specifications for the content, format, and standards for the Final Report, with an eye to producing professional output.

4. Group Presentation (Fulfills Objectives 6 and 7)
During the week of May 5, a presentation session will be held, giving each group a chance to present their work and findings to interested people in the department. If possible, project partners will join the proceedings via skype.

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<tr>
<th>Assessment/Grading Criteria:</th>
<th>Attendance and Participation</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mid-Project Report</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Field Visit/Ledger</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Final Report</td>
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<td>Group Presentation</td>
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Note: Specific rubrics for these assignments will be available on NYUClasses.

(i) Attendance and Participation:
Classroom meetings are meant to be as much dialogue as they are lecture. So being, these meetings are meant to be occasions for students to raise questions, discuss concepts and practical implications, and exchange new ideas. They are asked to come to class already having done the readings for that day and prepared to take up the subject matter beyond the readings. Each student is asked to participate in class discussions. In terms of rote information, half of the foundational concepts are to be found in the readings—the other half is part of the ‘magic’ that happens in class.

(ii) Mid-Project Report:
Two primary criteria for the report are: (i) that available evidence be used to support the group’s plan of action, and (ii) that the proposed plan for the fieldwork be thoroughly thought out, to the level of a step-by-step implementation plan. The methodology will be reviewed for how feasible it is for implementation, and how likely it will lead to the desired output.

(iii) Field Visit/Ledger:
Activities during the field visit should be efficiently done, according to a pre-conceived plan of action. Progress should be made each day, again following the plan. The Field Ledger should provide a detailed, daily account of activities, information gathered, progress made, and challenges faced and resolved.
(iv) Final Report:
The Final Report will be judged for how likely the proposed plan is to improve activities and educational opportunities at the site, to highlight the rich potential of the site for eco-tourism and environmental education, and for how professional and high quality the product is. The instructor will provide some specifications regarding product content and quality, and the deliverable will be compared against these specs (e.g., use of figures or maps, use of program evaluation methods, adequacy of evidence used to support recommendations). A good deliverable is tightly focused, ready-to-implement, and evidence-based. A primary criterion will be the extent to which the product improves on existing programs at the site.

(v) Group Presentation:
Students should practice communicating their project results, learning effective ways of educating a mixed audience in 20-30 minutes. Effectiveness of communication and clear linkage of research to output are key elements of a good presentation. Groups will present their work in class during the week of May 5.

NOTE: It will be made clear to all project participants that NYU and students/instructors of this class are in no way legally obligated to provide clients/stakeholders with deliverables or services. We at NYU will strive to deliver a project and project deliverables professionally without incurring any legal or contractual commitment.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism: All students must be familiar with the NYU Steinhardt School definition of plagiarism and the policy on academic integrity. The NYU Steinhardt Statement on Academic Integrity is available at: http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/policies/academic_integrity

The Steinhardt School defines plagiarism as follows:

Plagiarism, one of the gravest forms of academic dishonesty in university life, whether intended or not, is academic fraud. In a community of scholars, whose members are teaching, learning and discovering knowledge, plagiarism cannot be tolerated.

Plagiarism is failure to properly assign authorship to a paper, a document, an oral presentation, a musical score and/or other materials, which are not your original work. You plagiarize when, without proper attribution, you do any of the following:

- Copy verbatim from a book, an article or other media;
- Download documents from the Internet;
- Purchase documents;
- Report from other's oral work;
  - Paraphrase or restate someone else's facts, analysis and/or conclusions;
  - Copy directly from a classmate or allow a classmate to copy from you.
Grading Scale/Rubric:

A—Outstanding Work
An "A" applies to outstanding student work. A grade of "A" features not simply a command of material and excellent presentation (spelling, grammar, organization, writing style, etc.), but importantly, sustained intellectual engagement with the material. This engagement takes such forms as shedding original light on the material, investigating patterns and connections, posing questions, and raising issues.

An "A" paper is excellent in nearly all respects:
It is well argued and well organized, with a clear thesis
It is well developed with content that is specific, interesting, appropriate and convincing
It has logical transitions that contribute to a fluent style of writing
It has few, if any, mechanical, grammatical, spelling, or diction errors
It demonstrates command of a mature, unpretentious diction

B—Good Work
A "B" is given to work of high quality that reflects a command of the material and a strong presentation but lacks sustained intellectual engagement with the material.
A "B" paper shares most characteristics of an "A" paper, but
It may have some minor weaknesses in its argumentation
It may have some minor lapses in organization and development
It may contain some sentence structures that are awkward or ineffective
It may have minor mechanical, grammatical, or diction problems
It may be less distinguished in its use of language

C—Adequate Work
Work receiving a "C" is of good overall quality but exhibits a lack of intellectual engagement as well as either deficiencies in the student's command of the material or problems with presentation.
A "C" paper is generally competent; it is the average performance. Compared to a "B" paper, it may have a weaker thesis and less effective development.
It may have serious shortcomings in its argumentation
It may contain some lapses in organization
It may have poor or awkward transitions
It may have less varied sentence structures that tend toward monotony
It may have more mechanical, grammatical, and diction problems

D or F—Unsuccessful Work
The grade of "D" indicates significant problems with the student's work, such as a shallow understanding of the material or poor writing.
It presents no clear thesis
It displays major organizational problems
It lacks adequate support for its thesis
It includes irrelevant details
It includes confusing transitions or lacks transitions altogether
It fails to fulfill the assignment
It contains ungrammatical or poorly constructed sentences and/or demonstrates problems with spelling, punctuation, diction or syntax, which impedes understanding

An "F" is given when a student fails to demonstrate an adequate understanding of the material, fails to address the exact topic of a question or assignment, or fails to follow the directions in an assignment, or fails to hand in an assignment. Pluses (e.g., B+) indicate that the paper is especially strong on some, but not all, of the criteria for that letter grade. Minuses (e.g., C-) indicate that the paper is missing some, but not all, of the criteria for that letter grade.
Incomplete Policy: Incompletes will only be granted in extreme cases such as serious illness or family emergency and only where almost all of the work for the semester has already been completed. A request for an incomplete must be in writing and documentation (such a note from a doctor or clergy) must be provided.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:
Any student attending NYU who needs an accommodation due to a chronic, psychological, visual, mobility and/or learning disability, or is Deaf or Hard of Hearing should register with the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at 212 998-4980, 240 Greene Street, www.nyu.edu/csd. We should also discuss, with them and others, arrangements that will ensure the field visit portion of the course is also similarly accommodating.

Finally, please regularly check the NYU Classes course page on NYU Home (https://home.nyu.edu). Announcements, updates, the syllabus, and items of interest will be posted on NYU Classes. Copies of key course documents such as the syllabus and paper guidelines will be available on NYU Classes.
**Weekly Schedule**

**Week 1**  **Introduction to Field Course and Study Site** (Obj. 2, 5)  Jan. 27
Introduction to the project and plan of study. Discussion of mode of operation of the class and interface with project partners. Cursory look at online and written material about the site.

Reading: Information Packet on the Project Site (Spring 2015: Sai Kung GeoPark).


**Week 2**  **Discussion of Elements of Eco-Tourism Programs** (Obj., 1, 2, 4)  Feb. 3
Further discussion of the site and already existing eco-tourism, nature guide, and educational activities on-site. Discussion of approaches to evaluating the efficacy and impacts of these activities. Closer examination of resources and programs already existing at the study site.

Readings: Walkabout Creek Master Plan  

Design of Nature Reserves.  
http://darwin.eeb.uconn.edu/eeb310/lecture-notes/reserves.pdf


**Week 3**  **Design of Human-Nature Interactions in Parks** (Obj. 1, 2, 4)  Feb. 10
Discussion of needs of city residents for ecological awareness, translation to specific educational goals, and discussion of how these goals are translated into learning activities in parks. Guided analysis of quality of interactions in various examples of park programs. Invited speaker.

Available online: http://resources.spaces3.com/3725a5c0-f0ab-4039-9bd2-c5dbd9bcb34f.pdf


**Week 4**  **Evaluation of Educational Activities at Parks** (Obj. 2, 3)  Feb. 17
Guide to formal evaluation of environmental education at parks. Discussion of how evaluation might be conducted at the site, goals of evaluation, and ways of translating evaluation to program design. Invited speaker.

Reading: Emerging Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation Programs in Two Ecotourism Projects,  
Week 5  **Designing Sustainability Reporting Programs** (Obj. 1, 2)  Feb. 24  
Discussion of objectives and approaches to sustainability reporting. Critique and analysis of typical reporting programs. Discussion of how to design a novel sustainability indexing program at the site.

Reading: Global Ecotourism Sustainability Criteria  ([http://www.gstcouncil.org/sustainable-tourism-gstc-criteria.html](http://www.gstcouncil.org/sustainable-tourism-gstc-criteria.html))


Week 6  **Planning for the Field Visit** (Obj. 4, 7)  March 2  
Groups to meet separately and to begin designing their methodology for the field visit. They will each prepare a preliminary action plan for the weeklong site visit.

Reading: Elements of a Field Project Plan (to be provided by the instructor).

Week 7  **Joint Planning Session** (Obj. 4, 6, 7)  March 9  
Groups will skype with project partners and exchange notes on plans for field activities. The rest of the week will be spent incorporating suggestions from partners and finalizing activity plans.

Week 8  **FIELD VISIT** (Obj. 1, 2, 3, 5)  March 15 – 22  
The instructor will prepare a day-to-day schedule of activities, including introduction to the site, facilities, and programs. The first two days will include instructional sessions on the goals, mechanics, and delivery of eco-tourism programs, as well as familiarization with the tours and other activities at the site. Fieldwork will begin in day 3 and continue till day 6 of the field visit.

Week 9  **Group Meetings** (Obj. 3, 4, 7)  March 23  
Groups will meet independently, back at NYU, to organize and reflect on the field experience. They should prepare an information management system to store and manage data, catalogue field notes and other material, etc. They should assess the information at hand to begin deciding what analyses the material will afford. No meeting in class.

Week 10  **Analysis of Field Data** (Obj. 3, 4, 5, 7)  April 6  
The class meets to compare notes, then each group meets with the instructor to begin analyzing data and other material gathered during the field visit. This includes an examination of analytical methods contemplated by each group. Each group should, prior to meeting with the instructor, prepare a one-page description of the information gathered and proposed methodology for analysis and design.

Week 11  **Analysis and Project Element Design** (Obj. 3, 4, 5, 7)  April 13  
Class to meet to discuss overall project, then break into groups to further work on preparing the project deliverable. Each group will also schedule a meeting with the instructor during the week.

Week 12  **Independent Groupwork** (Obj. 2, 4, 7)  April 20  
Groups to meet separately and begin preparing a preliminary draft of their project deliverable. No meeting in class.

Week 13  **Joint Deliberation** (Obj. 6, 7)  April 27
The class will skype with project partners and present preliminary results and progress thus far. Each group should prepare for a 15 minute presentation of progress thus far. The class will then solicit feedback from project partners.

**Week 14  Final Presentations**  (Obj. 3, 4, 6, 7)  May 5
Group presentations may be scheduled for a day other than May 5, depending T&L scheduling issues and availability of space. A final report (in digital format as well as hard copy) will be prepared and three hard copies submitted to the instructor by May 8. Presentations will be open to the public.