

## Leadership in Community-Based Conservation

NRE4695 Section 003: Special Topics (1 credit)

Spring Semester 2022

Wednesday, 4:40 – 5:30 pm

Virtual: <https://uconn-cmr.webex.com/meet/lmc07015>; In-Person: YNG 132

**Instructor:** Laura Cisneros, PhD  
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Office hours: By appointment

### Course

**Description:** This course is open to students from diverse majors that have an interest in leadership in community-based conservation, which requires **authentic community engagement, culturally relevant environmental education and mentorship, equitable and inclusive practices**, and basic **knowledge of local environmental issues**. An introduction to the following topics will be covered in this course:

- Instinctual leadership & leading for change;
- Principles of authentic community engagement;
- Co-designing community conservation with (not for) community stakeholders;
- Culturally relevant environmental education;
- Trauma informed mentorship approaches;
- Environmental education approaches that promote collective environmental action; and
- Community conservation issues relevant to Connecticut communities.

Undergraduate students enrolled in this course will have the opportunity to apply for 10-month paid environmental education leadership positions through the Natural Resources Conservation Academy (NRCA), as NRCA Difference Maker Mentors. Four undergraduate NRCA Difference Maker Mentors, under the support and guidance of NRCA faculty and a graduate student, will have the unique opportunity to co-facilitate the summer 2022 NRCA field experience and mentor a subset of NRCA teen participants during their community conservation project in the following fall and winter. This opportunity will provide students with experience with leadership, authentic community engagement, environmental education, mentorship, and implementation of on-the-ground conservation projects. This position will provide professional development in soft skills (e.g., building relationships, teamwork, communication) that are critical for workforce success.

### Course

**Format:** Students will be expected to come prepared to each class period by reading or viewing materials and writing short responses to discussion prompts prior to class. Students will submit their written responses in class and be encouraged to discuss the prompts in small groups and with the class, as a whole. Some class periods will comprise a brief lecture and planning the course project (culturally relevant recruitment strategy).

## Learning

### Objectives:

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Gain familiarity with environmental issues relevant to Connecticut communities.
- Recall ten culturally relevant and trauma informed instructional and mentorship approaches.
- Describe essential components to co-designing conservation with community stakeholders.
- Discuss and critically reflect on approaches and practices that may or may not facilitate authentic community engagement, inclusive and culturally relevant environmental education, and collective environmental action.
- Plan, develop, and implement a culturally relevant recruitment strategy.

## Readings &

### Viewings:

Supplementary readings and videos will be used throughout the class and open-source materials will be provided through HuskyCT.

## Assignments

### & Grading:

**Discussion Prompt Responses**—Discussion prompts/questions will be provided with class reading/viewing materials one week before the class period in which they are due. Students will be expected to read or view materials and write short responses to discussion prompts prior to class and submit their responses in class or before class via email ([laura.cisneros@uconn.edu](mailto:laura.cisneros@uconn.edu)).

**Culturally Relevant Recruitment Event**—Student pairs or teams will plan, develop, and deliver an inclusive and culturally relevant recruitment event at a Connecticut high school aimed to promote diverse applicants for an environmental action program within UConn’s Natural Resources Conservation Academy. A detailed guideline and description of the team project will be distributed in a separate document.

Assignment	% Grade	Week Due
<b>Discussion Prompt Responses</b>		
Submitted Responses (5pts each)	50	Weekly ( <i>except for weeks with team culturally relevant recruitment demos</i> )
<b>Culturally Relevant Recruitment Event</b>		
Presentation Approach (25pts)	25	Part 1: Mar 7; Part 2: Mar 28
Executed Event (25pts)	25	Between Mar 29 & May 2

### Grading:

A ≥ 95%; A- 90-94; B+ 87-89; B 83-86; B- 80-82; C+ 77-79; C 73-76; C- 70-72; D+ 67-69; D 63-66; D- 60-62; F < 60

**Schedule:** This is a guideline—changes will be announced in class or on HuskyCT.

Date	Activity	Readings/Viewings & Assignments
<b>Week of 17 Jan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to Course &amp; NRCA Difference Maker Mentor Opportunity               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Structure of discussion prompts</li> <li>○ Description of culturally relevant recruitment event</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Building Community Agreements (<i>discussion</i>)</li> </ul>	—
<b>Week of 24 Jan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building Community Agreements (<i>discussion cont</i>)</li> <li>• 5 Leadership Lessons for Leading for Change (<i>lecture</i>)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equity Lab (2020) REDI Agreements.</li> <li>• Jones (2021) An Invitation to Brave Spaces, Holding Change.</li> <li>• <i>Discussion Prompts Due</i></li> </ul>
<b>Week of 31 Jan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key Principles for Authentic Community Engagement (<i>discussion</i>)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• North Am. Association for Enviro. Ed. (2000) Guidelines for Excellence in Community Engagement (Summary).</li> <li>• Knowledge Works Foundation (2005) 10 Principles of Authentic Community Engagement.</li> <li>• Minnesota Department of Health (2018) Principles of Authentic Community Engagement.</li> <li>• Voices for Racial Justice (2014) Authentic Community Engagement.</li> <li>• <i>Discussion Prompts Due</i></li> </ul>
<b>Week of 7 Feb</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-designing Community Conservation (<i>discussion</i>)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cranston (2020) 5 Principles of Co-Designing Conservation <i>with</i> (not for) the Community, Antioch University CPI Webinar Series.</li> <li>• <i>Discussion Prompts Due</i></li> </ul>
<b>Week of 14 Feb</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Culturally Relevant Instructional Approaches (<i>lecture with discussion prompts intermixed</i>)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bell et al (2018) How to Avoid Possible Pitfalls Associated with Culturally Responsive Instruction, STEM Teaching Tools.</li> <li>• Paris (2012) Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy: A Needed Change in Stance,</li> </ul>

		Terminology, and Practice, Educational Researcher. • <i>Discussion Prompts Due</i>
<b>Week of 21 Feb</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Culturally Relevant Instructional Approaches (<i>lecture cont.</i>)</li> <li>• Team Brainstorm for Culturally Relevant Recruitment Event</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Benavides et al (2017) Promoting Equitable Access to STEM in a Summer Herpetology Fieldwork Program, NSTA.</li> <li>• Balcos (2019) Decolonizing Environmental Education.</li> <li>• <i>Discussion Prompts Due</i></li> </ul>
<b>Week of 28 Feb</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trauma Informed Mentorship (<i>potential guest lecture by Dr. S Chafouleas</i>)</li> <li>• Team Brainstorm for Culturally Relevant Recruitment Event</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SAMHSA's Trauma &amp; Justice Strategic Initiative (2014) SAMHSA's Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach.</li> <li>• <i>Discussion Prompts Due</i></li> </ul>
<b>Week of 7 Mar</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demo of Recruitment Presentation #1</li> </ul>	• <i>Presentation Demo Part 1 Due</i>
<b>Week of 14 Mar</b>	<i>Spring Recess</i>	—
<b>Week of 21 Mar</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research-based Environmental Education Approaches that Promote Collective Environmental Action (<i>discussion</i>)</li> <li>• Teamwork for Culturally Relevant Recruitment Event</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Krasny (2020) Collective Environmental Action: Advancing Environmental Education Outcomes.</li> <li>• <i>Discussion Prompts Due</i></li> </ul>
<b>Week of 28 Mar</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demo of Recruitment Presentation #2</li> </ul>	• <i>Presentation Demo Part 2 Due</i>
<b>Week of 4 Apr</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to CT Community Conservation Issues (<i>lecture and discussion</i>)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore <a href="#">Save the Sound</a>, <a href="#">Groundwork Bridgeport</a>, <a href="#">Keney Park Sustainability Project</a>, <a href="#">CT Land Conservation Council</a>, <a href="#">Green Village Initiative</a>, among others.</li> <li>• <i>Discussion Prompts Due: Research Issues Important to Local Community Orgs</i></li> </ul>
<b>Week of 11 Apr</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to CT Community Conservation Issues (<i>field techniques &amp; visits</i>)</li> </ul>	• <i>Discussion Prompts Due</i>
<b>Week of 18 Apr</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to CT Community Conservation Issues (<i>field techniques &amp; visits</i>)</li> </ul>	• <i>Discussion Prompts Due</i>
<b>Week of 25 Apr</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open Discussion &amp; Course Wrap-Up</li> </ul>	—
<b>Week of 2 May</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final: Culturally Relevant Recruitment Event Completion</li> </ul>	—

**Late Policy:** All assignments are due at the time indicated on the syllabus and in the assignment directions. It is your responsibility to complete and submit assignments in accordance with the due date and submission location. For assignments to be submitted via HuskyCT, we receive a confirmation from HuskyCT that illustrates the date and time of receipt. Late individual writing assignments received within 24 hours of the due date and time automatically will receive a 15% absolute deduction (i.e., highest score possible = 85%, equivalent to a drop of one full letter grade). Unless prior permission is received from the instructor as a result of an extenuating circumstance, assignments will not be accepted more than 24 hours after the assigned deadline. Students (or groups) have up to 2 weeks after a particular assignment is handed back to ask questions about the grade. ***I reserve the right to change due dates as needed to accommodate issues that might arise. Changes will be communicated in class, via email, or announced on HuskyCT.***

**Course Communication & Contacting the Instructor:** I will use UConn student email accounts for all course communication that occurs via email. ***Therefore, it is very important that you check your UConn account regularly.*** If you primarily use a different email account (e.g., yahoo, gmail, hotmail), the UConn email can be linked to it. It is your responsibility to remove appropriate filters so that email messages from this course are not filtered, and to make sure communication via UConn email is working properly. I will strive to post announcements in HuskyCT as well.

To accommodate your schedules, my office hours will be by appointment. ***Please contact me by email to set up office hour meetings. I encourage you to email me about course material beyond office hours as well.***

Remember to create a good impression via email. Think of me as your boss, and prepare your email as you would in a formal job setting—NOT as you would address your friends in email or text. A formal salutation, complete sentences, capital letters where appropriate, proper grammar, punctuation, etc. are expected. I will not respond to emails that are inappropriate or incomprehensible. I always intend to treat students with courtesy and respect, and expect courtesy and respect in return.

**Classroom Environment:** My goal is to make the classroom environment a safe and welcoming space for all students, without threat or discomfort. We are a diverse collection of individuals with a variety of backgrounds, values, and opinions. This provides great opportunity to learn from each other's perspectives and experiences. I encourage students to push themselves out of their individual comfort zone as related to the course material. ***Students are expected to demonstrate general respect for all other individuals involved with this course in class, outside of class, and within the HuskyCT environment. There will be no exceptions to this rule. I strongly encourage and greatly appreciate if you would inform me if you feel threatened or uncomfortable about a situation in the classroom or related to the course. I will address it directly, promptly, and appropriately at my discretion.***

**University Policies:** Students in this course are held to standards and policies of the University of Connecticut. Make sure you are familiar with: <http://provost.uconn.edu/syllabi-references>

- [Absences from Final Examinations](#)
- [Class Attendance](#)
- [Credit Hour](#)
- [People with Disabilities, Policy Statement](#)
- [Discrimination, Harassment and Related Interpersonal Violence, Policy Against](#)
- [The Student Code](#)
- [Academic Misconduct Procedures for Instructors](#)