Big Blue and You: An Interdisciplinary Look at Science and the Ocean, a Students Teaching Students Course

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Students Teaching Students

Alexa Kretsch  Benjamin Negrete Jr.
Megan Nepshinsky  Brian Stack
Starting STS at URI

• Bridget Griffith, Class of December 2011
  • Honors Project 2010-2011 entitled “Students Teaching Students: Changing the URI Honors Program Pedagogy”

• Based on a similar program at the University of Vermont.
STS: The Basics

• Students choose a unique topic and create a basic syllabus outlining their proposed course
• Students apply during the fall of their Junior year
• One STS taught course per semester.
• Team of Mentors: Content, Pedagogy, and Personal
Advisors: Content

**LGBTQ History**
Dr. Joelle Rollo Koster  
Dr. Robert Widell  
Dr. Annmarie Vaccaro  

**History**  

**Big Blue and You**
Dr. Patrick Logan  
Dr. Arthur Spivack  

**Communication**  

**Graduate School of Oceanography**
Advisors: Pedagogy

*LGBTQ History*
Dr. Cheryl Foster  Philosophy

*Big Blue and You*
Jane Murray  Music

Including personal Honors Project Advisors
### Advisors: Personal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advisor</th>
<th>Field</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Cheryl Foster</td>
<td>Philosophy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Charles Collyer</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Ric McIntyre</td>
<td>Honors Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Kathleen Torrens</td>
<td>Communication Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. David Bengtson</td>
<td>Fisheries and Animal Veterinary Science</td>
</tr>
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Student Benefits

• Interactive atmosphere

• Instructors that relate to the student experience

• Breaks student/instructor barrier
Our Benefits

• Learning the technicalities and organization of putting together a course

• Experience in teaching and developing pedagogical techniques

• Immersion into research of course content
Why Teach a Class?
HPR 110: Big Blue and You:

An Interdisciplinary Look at Science and the Ocean

Spring 2012
Purposes

Create informed citizens

Interdisciplinary look at the relationship between the ocean and its people

Teach the science involved

Why we have these issues

What the world is currently doing to remedy the situations

What can be done, from the highest public official to the everyday citizen
This is the generation that will be deciding ocean policy in a few years
Goals

1. Gain an appreciation for the ocean’s role in their lives.
2. Become informed as to the issues facing the ocean and what is currently being done to address them.
3. Learn about the political process in enacting protective legislation
4. Improve writing and speaking skills
5. Develop skills in research.
6. Learn to think critically while reading complex texts, such as scientific articles.
7. Use creative thinking and writing to disseminate scientific information to the public.
Preparation

-- Previous teaching experience
  -- Researching topics for interdisciplinary inputs

-- Syllabus and Reading List

-- Assignments
  Individually developed
  Group developed
Pedagogical Techniques

-- Lectures

-- Discussions

-- Guest lectures

-- Films

-- Assignments
Guest lectures

**Guest Speakers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chip Young</td>
<td>Science Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Scott Nixon</td>
<td>Marine Pollution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Pam Rubinoff</td>
<td>Climate Change, Social Impacts &amp; Involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Kathy Castro</td>
<td>Fisheries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike Marchetti</td>
<td>Fisheries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rodman Sykes</td>
<td>Fisheries</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Films**

“Storm That Drowned a City”

+ Documentary assignment
Assignments/Grading

* Current Events 10 %
* Documentary Review 15 %
* Mock Discussion 15 %
* Public Awareness 15 %
* Final Presentation 25 %
* Participation 20 %

(Attendance and Discussion)
Public Awareness Project

Showers < 5 min
Save 1,000 gal Per Month
@TalkwithChalk
Can You Tell the Difference? Cause They Can’t! 
Consider the Consequences of Failing to Recycle!

- The average American will throw away approximately 185 pounds of plastic per year.
- Plastic constitutes approximately 90% of all trash floating on the ocean's surface, transported by water from landfills and sewer drains.
- It takes 500-1000 years for plastic to degrade.
- Over 100,000 marine mammals and one million seabirds die each year from ingesting or becoming entangled in plastic.

What would you do if cod disappeared?

Fishing fleets, globally, are 250% larger than the oceans can support.

Go to: [http://www.montereybayaquarium.org/cr/seafoodwatch.aspx](http://www.montereybayaquarium.org/cr/seafoodwatch.aspx) to find out if your favorite fish is in danger.
Public Awareness

Three of the students, Danny Savage, Sandra Fogg, and Ianna Leshin posted an article in The Good 5 cent Cigar distributed on April 26th.
Analysis

- Student Survey
- Challenges
- Our goals
January: “What does the ocean mean to you”?

- A: “The ocean means sunny weather, sand in between your toes, visually a tropical place involving vacation. Also, it means a vast array of unknown plants and animals”. – Sophomore, Business Administration
- B: “Ocean = Vacations, since I don’t live near one and swimming, boating, etc.” – Freshman, Communications
April: “What does the ocean mean to you”?

- **A:** “The ocean to me means a sustainable source of both food and entertainment. The ocean serves as a commercial place, as well as, a place for solitude. The ocean is filled with so many different types of fish and organisms that serve specific purposes”. - Sophomore, Business Administration

- **B:** “The ocean is something that we have a say in and can take care of and change and preserve. I learned a lot of things about the ocean, but mostly, that we are a part of it. The ocean is a way bigger thing than I thought and so many things go into it and affect it”. - Freshman, Communications
What other students said...

- “The ocean means diversity, as well as, unity – it’s something that can be so vastly different from place to place but at the same time it’s something we all have in common”. - Freshman, Spanish and Film Studies

- “The ocean to me means life! It is probably one of the most diverse ecosystems that is not only interconnected to its species but to humans as well”. – Sophomore, Animal Science

- “The ocean represents an area of both beauty and habitat battling the human race”. – Sophomore, Anthropology and History