

UEP 411

Senior Comprehensive Seminar in Urban and Environmental Policy

Spring 2021

Tuesdays and Thursdays at 3:15pm-4:40pm PST

Professor Bhavna Shamasunder bhavna@oxy.edu

Office hours: Tuesdays 11:30-1pm and Thursdays 9:30-11. Sign up [here](#)

Professor Mijin Cha mcha@oxy.edu

Office hours: Tuesdays 1:30-3pm PT, Wed. 11:30-1pm PT Sign up [here](#)

Professor Seva Rodnyansky srodnyansky@oxy.edu

Office hours: Wednesdays 11am-1pm PT. Sign up [here](#)

[Zoom link: https://occidental.zoom.us/j/82180120399](https://occidental.zoom.us/j/82180120399)

[\(shouldn't need it, but just in case: Meeting ID: 821 8012 0399, Passcode: 867667\)](#)

Course Description: The senior comprehensive seminar in Urban and Environmental Policy (UEP 411) is a capstone course that facilitates the research, analysis, and writing necessary to complete your senior comprehensive project. The majority of the semester is dedicated to your independent research, analysis, and writing. Class meetings are opportunities to take stock of your progress, share your accomplishments and challenges, and learn from your colleagues. Participation is important and bears on your final course grade (20%). At the end of the semester, students will publicly present their work as a culmination of the semester.

The full comps paper will build on the work done in UEP 410. The final paper for UEP 411 will contain the following sections: Introduction, Background, Literature Review, Methods, Data / Findings, Discussion, Policy Recommendations, Conclusion, Bibliography, Appendix

Key Dates

Tuesday, January 19	First session of the semester
Friday, February 12	Data/Findings and Analysis Section draft due on Moodle

Friday, March 5	Full Draft of 2nd Half of Comps due: Data/Findings, Discussion, Policy Recommendations, Conclusions sections
March 8 - 12	Spring Break
Wednesday, April 7	Final Comps paper due
Monday, April 19	Senior Comps grades due (for distinction)
Week of April 12-16,	Comps Public Presentation
TBD	End of Year Awards / Seniors Ceremony
Thursday, April 29	Final Comps PDF due for UEP Website

Detailed Weekly Schedule

Week	Date	What's Going on that Day
1	January 19	Synchronous- free write on progress to date, structure of semester
1	January 21	One on ones
2	January 26	One on ones- mandatory
2	January 28	One on ones- mandatory
3	February 2	Summarizing, Visualizing, and Presenting Data
3	February 4	Summarizing, Visualizing, and Presenting Data
4	February 9	One on ones- mandatory
4	February 11	One on ones- mandatory
5	February 16	Synchronous- Policy recommendations, writing a conclusion
5	February 18	One on one sign-ups
6	February 23	One on one sign-ups
6	February 25	One on one sign-ups
7	March 2	Troubleshooting- one on ones

7	March 4	Troubleshooting- one on ones
8	March 9	Spring Break
8	March 11	Spring Break
9	March 16	Synchronous- final paper and presentation
9	March 18	Alumni panel (tentative)
10	March 23	Alumni panel (tentative)
10	March 25	One on ones- sign ups
11	March 30	One on ones- sign ups
11	April 1	Troubleshooting- one on ones
12	April 6	Troubleshooting- one on ones
12	April 8	No class
13	April 13	Presentations
13	April 15	Presentations
14	April 20	Founder's Day - No Class
14	April 22	No class
15	April 27	No class
15	April 29	No class
16	May 4	No class
16	May 6	No class

Course Grades for UEP 411

UEP 411 Professor(s) will assign a final course grade based on the following:

Participation (20%)

- Virtual attendance, engagement, and participation at synchronous sessions
- Engagement and meaningful participation in breakout rooms and with peer groups

- Engagement, timeliness, and attendance in 1-on-1s with professors
- Communication with instructors

Written assignments (60%)

- 1) Data/Findings & Analysis Sections;
- 2) Full Draft
- 3) Final Comps Paper

Public presentation of comps (20%)

- Pre-recorded presentation
- Online live Q&A in panel format

Grading Rubric for Final Paper

UEP Senior Comps Grading Rubric

The UEP senior comps project is a significant applied research project that captures the breadth and also depth of the coursework, internships, and experience in the UEP major.

UEP professors (Rodnyansky, Cha, and Shamasunder) will work with you to ensure that you accomplish a project that reflects UEP, your interests, and your work in the major.

“Pass” or “B” designation will be given to comps that meet the following baseline criteria:

- § Present a clear, relevant and researchable topic
- § Articulate a clear research question and methodology
- § Represent a strong grasp of the relevant literature
- § Present clear evidence/data that addresses the research question
- § Reflect a well-defined and organized structure
- § Contain strong, analytic writing, clear arguments, and a clear audience.
- § Include relevant recommendations
- § Capture your passion and engagement in an applied research project.

An “A” will be awarded to projects that reflect the criteria above and excel in the following:

§ Level of complexity and depth of analysis

§ Writing, readability, and narrative quality including ease of reading and an argument that carries from introduction through the conclusion

§ Consistent flow and transitions between sections

§ Clear reflection on the research process, limitations, and next steps

Papers turned in with missing or truncated sections or lacking in the main categories required for a B will be given a B-, or C. Papers that are missing main components of a comps project will not receive a passing grade.

Distinction on Comps

The professor(s) teaching the comps courses (in consultation with other UEP faculty) will read and evaluate each comps project. Students will receive one of the following:

- 1) Pass only;
- 2) Pass w/Distinction only, or
- 3) Pass w/Distinction + Honors

“Pass” designation will be given to comps that meet the following baseline criteria:

§ Present a clear, relevant and researchable topic

§ Articulate a clear research question and methodology

§ Represent a strong grasp of the relevant literature

§ Present clear evidence/data that addresses the research question

§ Reflect a well defined and organized structure

§ Contain strong, analytic writing, clear arguments, and a clear audience.

§ Include relevant recommendations

§ Capture your passion and engagement in an applied research project.

“Distinction” (rare) will be awarded to projects that reflect the criteria above and excel in the following:

§ Level of complexity and depth of analysis

§ Relevance and applicability of recommendations

Departmental Honors

UEP faculty will also designate “Honors” to students if they have a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or higher and have been awarded “Pass with Distinction” on their Comps project. In some cases, UEP faculty may decide to grant Honors to a student with GPAs between 3.25 (the College baseline) and 3.49 in cases where a students’ comps projects reflects an extraordinary effort and research product.

UEP faculty will notify students of Distinction and Honor awards following the comps presentations.

College designated Graduation Honors

The College awards graduation honors based on overall GPA based on the following:

- Ø Summa cum Laude: Grade point average of 3.90 or above.
- Ø Magna cum Laude: Grade point average of 3.75 or above.
- Ø Cum Laude: Grade point average of 3.50 or above.

Grade point averages for Honors are based on work completed at Occidental College only.

Course/College Policies and Support Services

Classroom Responsibilities

Teachers and students share the responsibility of learning and teaching. We see our responsibilities as creating the space and stimulating enthusiasm for learning, coming prepared to class, creating the goals and structure for a course, introducing concepts and ideas, and facilitating the sharing of knowledge amongst the students and between the professors and the students. Students are responsible for attending and participating in class, completing assignments in a timely manner, and being prepared to discuss readings and material in class.

Classroom Community and Online Learning

The comps class is designed to facilitate a co-learning community of students as researchers. Students are responsible for engaging in respectful, open, and thoughtful discussion with each other and the professors; faculty are responsible for ensuring that discussions in the classroom are inclusive and productive.

As a student participating in an online learning environment, you must abide by all College rules and regulations including, but not limited to, rules in the applicable course syllabus/outline, the Student Code of Conduct Policy, the Policy on Sexual Harassment and Discrimination, as well as any applicable laws. Any violation of these rules may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion from the College, and/or legal action.

Academic Integrity

Occidental College assumes that students and faculty accept and respect the principle of academic honesty. Academic misconduct, including cheating and plagiarism, is not tolerated. The policies for cheating, plagiarism, and academic misconduct are outlined in the Student Handbook available online [here](#) and the policies on academic ethics [here](#).

Title IX and Role of Faculty member as Mandatory Reporter ([Link](#) to Title IX)

In the event that you choose to write or speak about having experienced sexual or interpersonal violence, including sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, sexual exploitation or any other form of sexual harassment, as a designated Responsible Employee, I must notify the Title IX Office. They will contact you to let you know about accommodations and support services at Oxy and reporting options both on and off-campus.

If you do not want the Title IX Office notified, instead of disclosing this information to your instructor, either through conversation or a class assignment, you can speak confidentially with the following people on campus:

- Marianne Frapwell, Survivor Advocate, Project SAFE
(survivoradvocate@oxy.edu)
- Emmons Counseling (For appointments, call: 323-259-2657)
- Rev. Dr. Susan Young, Office of Religious and Spiritual Life
(young@oxy.edu)

The sexual misconduct policy, along with additional resources, can be found at: <http://www.oxy.edu/sexual-respect-title-ix/policies-procedures>. If you would like to contact the Title IX Office directly, you can email Title IX Coordinator Alexandra Fulcher at afulcher@oxy.edu or call 323-259-1338.

Language on Special Accommodations/Learning Differences ([Link to Disability Services](#))

No matter the mode of course instruction, approved academic accommodations remain in effect. Students with documented disabilities and learning differences who are registered with Disability Services are required to present their accommodation letter to the instructor at the beginning of each semester, or as soon as possible thereafter. Any student who has, or thinks they may have, a physical, learning, or psychological disability may contact Disability Services at accessibility@oxy.edu to learn about available services and support. More information is available at <http://www.oxy.edu/disability-services>.

Accommodations for Reasons of Faith and Conscience ([Link to the policy in Catalog](#))

Consistent with Occidental College's commitment to creating an academic community that is respectful of and welcoming to persons of differing backgrounds, we believe that students should be excused from class for reasons of faith and conscience without academic consequence. While it is not feasible to schedule coursework around all days of conviction for a class as a whole, faculty will honor requests from individual students to reschedule coursework, to be absent from classes that conflict with the identified days. Information about this process is available on the ORSL website:

<https://www.oxy.edu/office-religious-spiritual-life>

Support Services

The college provides a set of resources to students to support them in learning. The [Writing Center](#) provides writing assistance to students to develop ideas, draft, and revise papers.

Students with documented disabilities who are registered with [Disability Services](#) are required to present their accommodation letter to the instructor at the beginning of each semester or as soon as possible thereafter. Any student who experiences significant physical or mental impairments may contact Disability Services at (323) 259-2969 to learn about available services and support. More information is available at <http://www.oxy.edu/disability-services>

Your health and well-being has always impacted learning and academic success, and this reality is only heightened as we learn and live through a global pandemic. Symptoms such as anxiety, depression, loss of motivation, difficulty concentrating, and strained relationships can occur. Emmons Counseling staff are committed to supporting the mental health needs of all of our students, regardless of where you're located.

The [Emmons Wellness Center](#) also provides important support services and can help you address issues of stress, medical and mental health, and overall well-being.

Emmons provides virtual walk-ins, crisis support, and consultation to all students, and ongoing individual telecounseling to students residing in California. All students residing outside of California will have access to ongoing telecounseling through a national telecounseling service. Emmons also assists students with finding local therapy referrals. All students continue to have access to the 24/7 confidential hotline at (323) 341-4141. To get connected to any of the free, confidential services at Emmons call (323) 259-2657 or schedule an appointment online at <https://myhealth.oxy.edu> using your Oxy login credentials.

If you'd like to take advantage of the [College's Academic Coaching](#) resource, which offers one-on-one sessions focused on supporting your time management skills, online learning strategies, and other study skills, you may schedule an academic coaching meeting by sending an email to academiccoaching@oxy.edu. Share what you'd like to work on, and an academic coach will schedule an appointment with you within a few days.

The [Center for Digital Liberal Arts \(CDLA\)](#) offers [library research consultations](#) and [discipline-specific peer tutoring for coursework](#) and [language learning](#). We also offer peer-to-peer [support for learning technologies](#) from Moodle and Zoom to Adobe, app making, and ProTools.

The [Intercultural Community Center \(ICC\)](#) seeks to uplift and support the experiences of students who identify as BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, low income or first generation college students. The ICC also aims to reduce institutional barriers for minoritized groups through intersectional programming, identity-specific services and structural resources. To learn more, contact icc@oxy.edu, or reach out directly to Chris Arguedas, at carguedas@oxy.edu.

Family Involvement

As many of you are learning from home this semester, you may have family around who are willing and able to provide you with support. While general support is necessary and welcomed by many, in order to protect your academic growth and ensure the integrity of this course, this statement serves as a reminder that your work must be your own. While office hours are always available for students, they will not be available for parents/guardians/family members. As always, if your parent/guardian has concerns, they are welcome to [contact the Dean of Students office](#).

Recordings

Online classes may be recorded by your instructor. This means that the audio-visual and chat portions of each class may be recorded and then stored on the College's servers. Recordings will be made available through Moodle (or another secure platform), but only for the express and sole use of those registered in the course. The recorded material will be removed at the end of the semester. No other recording of classroom instruction is permitted. The sharing, altering, or distorting of any audio-visual capture of a class session is not permitted. All content contained in the records shall be subject to the College's Policy on Intellectual Property.