

ENVS 197 Students-Teaching Students (STS) Courses Guidelines for Review and Approval

ENVS 197 STS course option offers an opportunity for students to design, propose, and facilitate a seminar course as an approved ENVS for-credit academic course. The course number has been officially approved by the curriculum committees of the College of Arts and Sciences, the Rubenstein School, and the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. STS courses have now been offered at UVM since 1996 and have covered a number of topics. Senior thesis write-ups and course readers are available at the Bittersweet for reference.

For a specific course to be approved for a given semester, student proposers should follow the guidelines below. Only full-time students who are in good academic standing (not on trial) may be student teachers. STS instructors may not enroll in the course while they are teaching, although they may receive either ENVS 202 or 291 credit for their efforts.

1. Developing the course idea

All students interested in proposing an STS course as a senior thesis capstone should enroll in ENVS 201 to develop their proposal and draft syllabus. They should consult with their 201 instructors and with the Director of the Environmental Program for assistance and resources. We highly recommend that courses be co-taught by two students who most often are ENVS majors and seniors (others are also welcome). It is very helpful if proposers have had teaching experience, particularly service as Teaching Assistant for a UVM course, especially ENVS 1 or 2. A draft syllabus should be developed, based on previous STS syllabi, and then reviewed by both the 201 instructor and the Director for preliminary approval before taking it forward for full faculty approval.

2. Securing faculty approval

Once a syllabus draft has been developed, student proposers will present their course idea to the ENVS faculty at its monthly meeting in either mid-October for spring courses or early March for fall courses. The following materials should be sent via email in a single attached pdf or word doc to the Director one week in advance of the faculty meeting:

(a) Syllabus, including

- course objectives
- schedule of class meetings with topics and assignments
- draft list of proposed texts and readings
- teaching plan for a typical week or session
- evaluation plan and assignment descriptions in brief

(b) Student facilitator bios, including

- copy of resume
- one page description of teaching and course experience relevant to the STS topic and methods
- explanation of role in the course and whether it will serve for a senior capstone experience

(c) Faculty sponsor agreement, i.e. who will supervise the student instructors

Students will then have 20-30 minutes to present their course ideas and answer faculty questions. Faculty may request additional information or revision before approval. Not all courses are automatically approved; they must meet faculty standards of critical thinking, challenging readings and assignments, and balanced viewpoints from multiple perspectives.

3. Course implementation

Once the course is approved, student instructors should continue to refine the course elements and prepare for teaching the course the following semester. They should meet regularly with their faculty sponsor(s) until they have received faculty sponsor approval for the final syllabus. STS instructors are responsible for:

- promoting the course to encourage student enrollment
- reviewing student applications
- planning and conducting all class sessions
- soliciting student feedback on course effectiveness
- managing course budget expenditures
- evaluating student assignments
- determining final grades with the faculty sponsor