Teaching Socio-Environmental Synthesis with Case Studies 2018

Deadline:
Apr 17, 2018

Preparing students to tackle urgent and complex environmental problems is a critical challenge. Problems such as global climate change, water resource management, and sustainable development are dynamic, multi-faceted issues that require interdisciplinary and collaborative approaches to solve. Socio-environmental synthesis is a problem-solving approach that considers the integrated nature of the environment and human society, and combines insights, methods, and data from the natural and social sciences to produce knowledge and inform solutions. The National Socio-Environmental Synthesis Center (SESYNC) is dedicated to educating about this approach and its broad relevance, and to teaching the core concepts and competencies necessary to understand, research, and address socio-environmental problems.

The Teaching Socio-Environmental Synthesis with Case Studies initiative aims to deepen our collective understanding of the teaching and learning of relevant concepts and competencies, define and adapt the case study approach [1] for use in the socio-environmental context, and create a collection of high quality teaching case studies (SESYNC case study collection [2].) The essential components of these case studies include: a clearly defined case problem and story, a set of teaching notes describing activities and pedagogies to use in teaching the case, and any materials needed to implement the case in a classroom.

The main component of this initiative is a four day short course that brings together a diverse group of scholars and educators to develop a socio-environmental synthesis teaching case study. SESYNC invites applications for the Teaching Socio-Environmental Synthesis with Case Studies short course to be held July 30-Aug 2, 2018 at SESYNC in Annapolis, MD. The goals of the short course are to:

1. Introduce participants to socio-environmental synthesis (S-E synthesis) as a problem-solving approach.
2. Engage participants in advancing the teaching of S-E synthesis and related concepts and competencies.
3. Enable participants to use a powerful and effective teaching approach, the case study method, to teach S-E synthesis.
4. Support participants in developing their own case study classroom activity that can be used in their classrooms and shared on the SESYNC website.

We seek a diverse group of participants, including faculty, postdocs, and graduate
students from both the social and natural sciences. Participants should have a strong interest in learning about and teaching socio-environmental synthesis and be willing to commit to writing a case study about a socio-environmental issue for use in the classroom. We welcome applications from individuals or small teams (4 people max.) that will collaborate on writing a teaching case study. Teams are strongly encouraged, but not required.

Costs: Registration fees are $250 for faculty and $100 for graduate students and postdocs. Flights and hotel costs for non-local participants will be pre-paid by SESYNC in accordance with our travel policies [3]. All eligible travel expenses (e.g., meals and ground transportation) will be reimbursed by SESYNC upon receipt of a completed socio-environmental synthesis case study that meets SESYNC requirements and can be shared online. All participants are expected to create and submit a completed case study focused on teaching about S-E synthesis by December 1, 2018. Please note that writing a case study is a time consuming process, and completion of the case will require additional time beyond the duration of the course.

To Apply: Applicants should submit an application online [4]. The online application includes questions about your interests and expectations for the course, your background, and a brief resume or CV.

Deadline for applications is Tuesday, April 17, 2018 at 5pm EST. Participants will be selected based on fit of their background, interests, expectations, and idea for a case study. Additional factors will also be considered to ensure diversity of participants and topics. Applicants will be notified in early May.

Additional Considerations:

- Applications from teams are encouraged but not required. We also welcome individuals to apply. We do try to facilitate opportunities for individuals to team up or join existing teams, but typically, individuals in the course write a case on their own.
- Participants are expected to stay for the entire duration of the course (course ends Thursday at 5pm, followed by a group dinner). Please note that the course is intensive and includes evening sessions.
- All participants are expected to complete a case study focused on socio-environmental synthesis (S-E synthesis), either individually or as a team (no more than four members) by December 1, 2018. The case must meet the guidelines for an S-E synthesis case (this will be explained during the course, but for a sense of what this entails, please visit the SESYNC case study collection [2].), and all qualified cases will be posted on the SESYNC website (cases may be revised by authors at a later date, and we will replace the post with the revised version). Completion of case studies will require a substantial amount of time beyond the course. In our experience, individually written cases take longer to produce than team cases, but much depends on the level of familiarity of the author(s) with the case details.
- We ask all case study authors to include a creative commons license on their case studies. Participants will retain copyright for their cases and are free to submit their cases to other collections as long as the case can remain in the SESYNC collection. We require acknowledgement of SESYNC and NSF support, and permission to share the case on our website.
- In preparation for the course, participants will be asked to develop topic ideas for their case studies in advance. Preference will be given to participants who have a case study topic in mind. Readings about S-E synthesis, the case study method, and other relevant topics will also be provided prior to the course.
- Following the course, participants will be asked to complete follow up surveys about their experiences with writing and teaching their case studies. We strongly encourage all participants to seek opportunities to test their cases in a classroom.
Overview of Tentative Course Agenda

- S-E synthesis and SESYNC
- Teaching S-E synthesis
  - Defining S-E synthesis learning goals
  - Why the case study approach?
- Designing a teaching case study
- Assessing S-E synthesis learning goals
- The Case Study Approach: methods and considerations
- S-E Synthesis Case Studies:
  - Examples and lessons learned
  - What makes for a “good” S-E synthesis case?
- Writing case studies: Stories, teaching notes, and student handouts
- Challenges and strategies for developing S-E synthesis cases

The University of Maryland is an Equal Opportunity Employer Minorities and Women Are Encouraged to Apply

Source URL:

Links
[1] https://www.sesync.org/for-you/educator/teaching-resources/resources-case-study-approach
[5] mailto:cwei@sesync.org