

**Environmental Studies Program
Assessment Report
Spring 2019**

This document serves as the 2018/2019 Annual Assessment Report for the Environmental Studies (EVST) interdisciplinary program at Hendrix.

EVST Program Learning Goals (LGs):

The Hendrix College EVST program strives toward providing a broad and interconnected learning experience in the expansive field of the environment. As such, the learning goals of the EVST program are:

- (1) To understand the structure and dynamics of the natural world,
- (2) To understand ways in which human beings are a part of and interact with the natural world,
- (3) To understand worldviews and values that guide humans as they interact with the natural world,
- (4) To explore forms of sustainable community life, and
- (5) To understand methods of data collection, synthesis, interpretation and analysis acquired from natural sciences, social sciences and humanities.

Rubric Development and Assessment:

During the 2018 Fall Faculty Conference, individual departments met to workshop grading rubrics. As the EVST program is an interdisciplinary program, EVST faculty met on a separate date to continue the development of the capstone thesis and presentation rubrics as outlined in the 2018 EVST Annual Assessment Report. Specific activities included (1) simplifying the rubric, (2) adding an open-ended response for faculty to identify “strengths” and “weaknesses” of the papers for streamlined student feedback, and (3) adding additional assessment of the thesis papers with respect to the EVST learning goals to determine whether each thesis demonstrates that the students are meeting the program learning goals. Initial results of the new learning goal assessments suggest that the thesis rubric is an effective direct assessment tool. For example, when asked to rate the degree to which the thesis indicated that the student achieved each of the above learning goals (1 = not at all, 5 = achieved to a very high degree), EVST faculty evaluators report an average of 4.10, with LG#4 receiving the lowest score of 3.57. This result supports previous indirect assessment results reported in the 2018 EVST Annual Assessment Report. The revised EVST Thesis Grading Rubric is attached as a supplement to this document.

In addition to the thesis rubric, the EVST program faculty have also revised the EVST capstone presentation rubric used to assess the thesis presentations. Although our grading rubric for the presentation has worked well to ensure consistency in grading across all faculty members involved, we have begun to use the presentations to directly assess the EVST program learning goals, in a similar manner to the thesis rubric. We have also added an open-ended response for faculty to identify “strengths” and “weaknesses” of the presentations for streamlined student feedback. When asked to rate the degree to which the presentations indicated that the student achieved each of the above learning goals (1 = not at all, 5 = achieved to a very high degree), EVST faculty evaluators report an average of 4.12, with LG#5 receiving the lowest score of 3.64. The revised EVST Presentation Grading Rubric is attached as a supplement to this document.

The revisions to the EVST thesis and presentation rubrics were planned for the 2018-2019 AY as outlined in the 2018 EVST Annual Assessment Report and have shown to be an effective direct assessment tool of the EVST program learning goals. However, due to the limits of the sample size, identification of a specific learning goal to begin assessing will occur following further data collection during the 2019-2020 AY. Initial spring 2019 results of the LG assessment using the EVST thesis and presentation rubrics as outlined here are attached as a supplement.

Action Plan for Assessment:

After developing methods to indirectly assess the EVST learning goals during the 2017/2018 AY, the goal of this year’s work revising the EVST program thesis and presentation rubrics was to establish a sustainable set of direct assessment measures of the EVST program learning goals. Since adoption of the current EVST learning goals in the fall of 2014, they have yet to be individually assessed. The action plan for future learning goal assessment is to adopt a cycle of assessment of each of the five individual learning goals. Below outlines a timeline for the EVST program’s action plan for assessment of program learning goals based on results of the recently developed direct (AY 18/19) and indirect (AY 17/18) LG assessment tools.

Timeline	Assessment Activity
Fall 2019	Review and discuss new direct and indirect LG assessment results from F2017-F2019 collected as outlined in the 2018 and the 2019 EVST Annual Assessment Reports.
	Discuss the rubrics’ ability to gauge learning goal attainment and identify potential alternative methods of assessment (i.e., counting # of majors that achieve each learning goal).
	Develop rubrics for new capstone project presentations and final report to community partners to assess rigor and project outcomes with respect to program learning goals.
Spring 2020	Continue to collect data using revised thesis rubrics, new capstone project rubrics, and indirect survey assessment tools.
	Identify one learning goal based on the learning goal with the lowest assessment score to assess by mapping to all EVST program core courses, including EVST 110, EVST 310 (new), and EVST 497.
2020/2021 AY	Based on 2019/2020 LG assessment data, make recommendations for improving achievement of selected learning goal within core EVST courses.
	Select a second learning goal for assessment based on the learning goal with the second lowest assessment score
Beyond 2020/2021	Continue the cycle through all five program learning goals. Using assessment data to identify areas within the curriculum where we can explicitly address each learning goal.

Based on the newly revised curriculum for the EVST program, the above learning goal assessment plan will allow for a thorough assessment of the effectiveness of the revised major with respect to the learning goals and will inform future development of the core EVST program courses, including EVST 110 Introduction to Environmental Studies, EVST 310 Environmental Studies Colloquium (a new course), and EVST 497 Senior Seminar.

Student Assessment Plan (SAP):

The student assessment plan for the EVST program available on the web includes the program learning goals and our curriculum mapping, however a previous version of the SAP had been removed from the website this past year. We have added our SAP back into the document containing the LGs and curriculum map and have included it as a supplement for upload to the web. The attached SAP includes:

- The EVST program learning goals
- Curriculum map
- Formal data collection and assessment of data

The curriculum map has been updated to be based on the revised EVST major curriculum passed in the fall of 2018 and to be initiated next academic year. Based on a rating of 0-3 (0 = LG not achieved, 3 = LG achieved to a high degree), the average rating of achievement of learning goals within the entire EVST curriculum increased from an average score of 1.58 based on original program learning goals revised in 2014, to 1.6 based on the LGs adopted in 2014 and the 2018/2019 AY catalog for the EVST curriculum, to a 1.79 for the new major that will begin during the 2019/2020 AY and current LGs. This LG map assessment suggests improvement of the EVST program over the past decade from continued development and decision making based on program assessment data.

Response to Targeted Feedback:

Targeted feedback requested from the 2018 EVST Assessment Report included the following questions/requests:

- Provide additional information on how the capstone rubric is used.
- Has the rubric helped you assess students' achievement of your learning goals?

We believe the information provided above address both of these issues from the previous assessment report. Specifically, as mentioned, the capstone rubrics serve two purposes, including assessment of the quality of student outcomes of the capstone thesis and the use of these outcomes as tools for assessing our program learning goals. Results of the initial use of the rubrics to assess program learning goals are included as a supplement to this document. Additionally, the rubrics used to address both of these goals are attached as a supplement to this document.

Student Name: _____

Senior Seminar Spring 2019 Environmental Studies

Presentation Grading Rubric

Components:

	Benchmark (1)	Proficient (2)	Capstone (3)	Score
Introduction	Too little provided to orient audience	Some provided but not organized to properly orient audience	Adequate length and organization to orient audience	
Thesis statement	None obvious	Present but underdeveloped or difficult to ascertain	Present, well developed, and obvious	
Background Information/ Theory	Too little information or not connected	Amount provided adequate but not connected to other information or to thesis	Adequate amount provided and information connected to thesis	
Conclusions	None apparent	Some apparent but not well developed	Adequate and well developed including thoughts about future work	

Comments:

General features:

	Benchmark (1)	Proficient (2)	Capstone (3)	Score
Organization	Presentation difficult to follow, jumps around	Sequence of presentation mostly logical, audience can mostly follow	Logical sequence to presentation, audience can follow	
Subject Knowledge	Appears uncomfortable with information	Appears mostly comfortable with information	Is comfortable and confident with information	
Questions	Answers only rudimentary questions	Answers all questions but no elaboration	Answers all questions and elaborates	

Comments

Audio-visual features:

	Benchmark (1)	Proficient (2)	Capstone (3)	Score
Graphics	Uses some slides that don't always support presentation	All slides relate to presentation	All slides explain and reinforce presentation	
Quality of Graphics	Some slides contain too much information/difficult to read	Most slides easy to read	All slides easy to read and attractive	
Grammar	2 or more grammatical errors or misspellings	1 grammatical error or misspellings	no grammatical errors or misspellings	
Eye contact	Mostly reads report (either from notes and/or from screen); rarely establishes eye contact	Frequently reads notes but establishes eye contact with audience	Maintains eye contact with audience; infrequently returns to notes	
Speaking Voice	Mumbles, mispronounces words, and/or speaks too quietly	Voice is clear, pronunciation correct, most audience members can hear speaker	Clear voice, pronunciation correct, all audience can hear	

General Comments:

Comments on strengths of presentation:

Comments on improvements to presentation:

Overall Grade: _____ (letter grade or percentage)

Learning Goal Direct Assessment: The below exercise is designed to aid assessment of EVST Program Learning Goals. It is not factored into the final oral defense grade. To what extent does the student appear to have achieved each of the following learning goals based only on their oral defense of the thesis? 1 = Not achieved and 5 = achieved to a high degree. Place an X in one box for each learning goal.

Learning Goal	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
To understand the structure and dynamics of the natural world						
To understand ways in which human beings are a part of and interact with the natural world						
To understand worldviews and values that guide humans as they interact with the natural world						
To explore forms of sustainable community life						
To understand methods of data collection, synthesis, interpretation and analysis acquired from natural sciences, social sciences and humanities						

Environmental Studies - Senior Symposium - Spring 2019

Learning Goal Direct Assessment

Oral Presentations

5 Presentations - 18 Reviews

Learning Goal	1	2	3	4	5	n/a	Average Score	Average
To Understand the structure and dynamics of the natural world	1	1	3	8	5		3.83	4.12
To understand ways in which human beings are a part of and interact with the natural world				4	14		4.78	
To understand worldviews and values that guide humans as theyh interact with the natural world		2	2	4	8	2	4.13	
To explore forms of sustainable community life		1	3	5	9		4.22	
To understand methods of data collection, synthesis, interpretation and analysis acquired from natural sciences, social sciences and humanities	1		6	3	4	4	3.64	

Thesis Papers

5 Theses - 7 Reviews

Learning Goal	1	2	3	4	5	n/a	Average Score	Average
To Understand the structure and dynamics of the natural world			1	6			3.86	4.10
To understand ways in which human beings are a part of and interact with the natural world			1	1	5		4.57	
To understand worldviews and values that guide humans as theyh interact with the natural world		1		3	3		4.14	
To explore forms of sustainable community life			4	2	1		3.57	
To understand methods of data collection, synthesis, interpretation and analysis acquired from natural sciences, social sciences and humanities			1	2	3	1	4.33	

Environmental Studies Capstone Thesis Grading Rubric
 2018/2019 Academic Year
 Draft

Student Name: _____

Faculty Evaluator Name: _____

Reader (circle one): 1st 2nd

Category	Basic (1-4)	Competent (5-7)	Exemplary (8-10)	Score
Thesis Statement & Title	Topic is not identifiable, statement is vague, does not take a position, is too broad, or is not debatable. Title does not identify or agree with the thesis statement.	Thesis statement is clearly identifiable, but is too broad or does not take a position on the topic. The title identifies the topic, but not the thesis.	Thesis statement is clearly identifiable, debatable, specific, and takes a clear position on the topic. The title identifies the thesis statement.	/5
Abstract	No abstract present or does not provide insight into thesis, argument or methodology Significantly exceeds word limit.	Abstract present and provides basic overview of the topic. Abstract missing one of the following: thesis (purpose), argument (context), or methodology (content).	Abstract present and provides comprehensive overview of the thesis. Describes context, purpose, and content. Engages the reader. <250 words.	/10
Introduction & Background	The problem is not clearly articulated. Does not connect to the “big picture.” Too technical for lay reader to follow. Does not define critical terms. Is incompletely and/or inaccurately referenced.	Problem is identified, but not supported by context or significance. Ambiguous or brief understanding of the “big picture” demonstrated. Most fundamental concepts and critical terms are described. Mostly accurate and complete referencing.	States the thesis, its context and significance. Demonstrates complete, clear and accurate understanding of the “big picture.” Includes well-organized description of basic knowledge necessary to follow content and arguments within the thesis. Critical terms and abbreviations are defined. Completely and accurately referenced.	/10
Analysis	No synthesis and/or analysis of information presented. Supporting information is noticeably one-sided. Evidence/data is not presented to support major claims/arguments.	Some synthesis and analysis of information from multiple sources and perspectives is evident. Evidence/data is presented to support major claims/arguments, but is not critically assessed.	Creatively synthesizes and compares/contrasts relevant information from multiple primary sources. Critically and accurately assesses information presented. Evidence/data from primary literature is used to support major claims/arguments.	/10

<p>Argument and Reasoning</p>	<p>Arguments are not supported by evidence/data. Argument does not support the thesis statement and/or conclusions presented. Argument contains false information. The conclusion of the argument does not agree with the goal of the argument.</p>	<p>Most arguments are sensible and support the thesis statement, but do not completely convince the reader due to lack of evidence to support claims. Most arguments contain accurate information</p>	<p>Major arguments presented are supported by evidence/data. All arguments are accurate and support the thesis statement and/or conclusions presented. The conclusion of the argument is relevant to the goal of the argument.</p>	<p>/10</p>
<p>Summary & Conclusions</p>	<p>Conclusions are unoriginal and/or are not supported by the arguments and evidence presented in the paper. Limitations, significance, and feasibility of position presented not addressed.</p>	<p>Conclusions are not novel, yet provide additional insight on the topic based on a reasoned assessment of the information presented. Feasibility of individual contribution and future directions not fully addressed.</p>	<p>Creates and defends a new position based on a reasoned synthesis and assessment of the information presented. Presents significance and limitations of conclusions. Presents future directions that are salient, plausible and insightful.</p>	<p>/15</p>
<p>Writing Clarity & Organization</p>	<p>Paper contains excessively long sentences or paragraphs, undefined obscure terms or concepts, confusing sentences, erratic paragraphs, and/or no headings/subheadings. Few transitions used to aid information flow from one point to another. Organization exhibits consequences of inadequate active planning for the clarity and organization of the presented material.</p>	<p>Most key concepts and terms are clearly defined. Organization is somewhat choppy, but not erratic. Most sections differentiated by headings/subheadings and connected by transitional statements. Some active organizational planning is evident.</p>	<p>Carefully edited and proof-read. Sentence and paragraph structure clear and well-organized. Informative subheadings that aid comprehension and organization. An organizational strategy illustrating evidence of active planning for presenting information clearly and effectively Effective transitions to aid flow of information from one main point to another. All key concepts and disciplinary language are clearly defined.</p>	<p>/10</p>
<p>Writing Mechanics & Grammar</p>	<p>Paper does not meet specifications of required formatting. Many grammar and spelling errors. Paper does not meet the minimum required number of pages (25). References not cited in correct format.</p>	<p>Most formatting requirements are met. Only a few grammar or spelling mistakes observed. Some references show inconsistencies in referencing style.</p>	<p>Double spaced, 12 pt font, 1 in. margins, page #s. Correct grammar and spelling Meets paper length requirements (>25 pgs). References cited correctly in Chicago style (in-text and bibliography).</p>	<p>/10</p>

	1-2	3	4-5	
Individual Growth	Student did not advance any skills throughout writing and communication process	Student showed some advancements in writing and communication during the thesis process	Student exhibited tremendous growth in writing, professional, and/or communication skills	/10
Multidisciplinarity	The argument is based on a single disciplinary perspective.	A couple of different disciplinary perspectives are used to support the thesis.	The argument is based on multiple (>2) disciplinary perspectives.	/5
Worked with Mentor	Did not work with mentor and/or did not keep appointments	Incorporated mentor feedback but rarely engaged with mentor	Worked closely with mentor, attended regular meetings, incorporated feedback	/5
Total				/100

Comments to Author:

THIS SECTION IS FOR PROGRAM EVALUATION ONLY AND DOES NOT BEAR ON STUDENT EVALUATION

The below assessment serves the purpose of assessing the EVST program learning goals and should not be factored into the capstone thesis grade. Please identify the extent to which you feel this thesis indicates that the student as achieved each of the following EVST Program Learning Goals. 1 = Has not achieved and 5 = Achieved to a high degree, ND = I cannot determine from the information presented in the thesis.

Learning Goal	1	2	3	4	5	ND
To understand the structure and dynamics of the natural world						
To understand ways in which human beings are a part of and interact with the natural world						
To understand worldviews and values that guide humans as they interact with the natural world						
To explore forms of sustainable community life						
To understand methods of data collection, synthesis, interpretation and analysis acquired from natural sciences, social sciences and humanities						

Briefly identify the strengths of the thesis:

Briefly identify the weaknesses of the thesis: