

Course brings climate, culture together

By Caroline Fry
STAFF WRITER

As environmental science education grows in popularity, UNC Asheville provides a new environmental science class explaining the effects culture and climate have on each other.

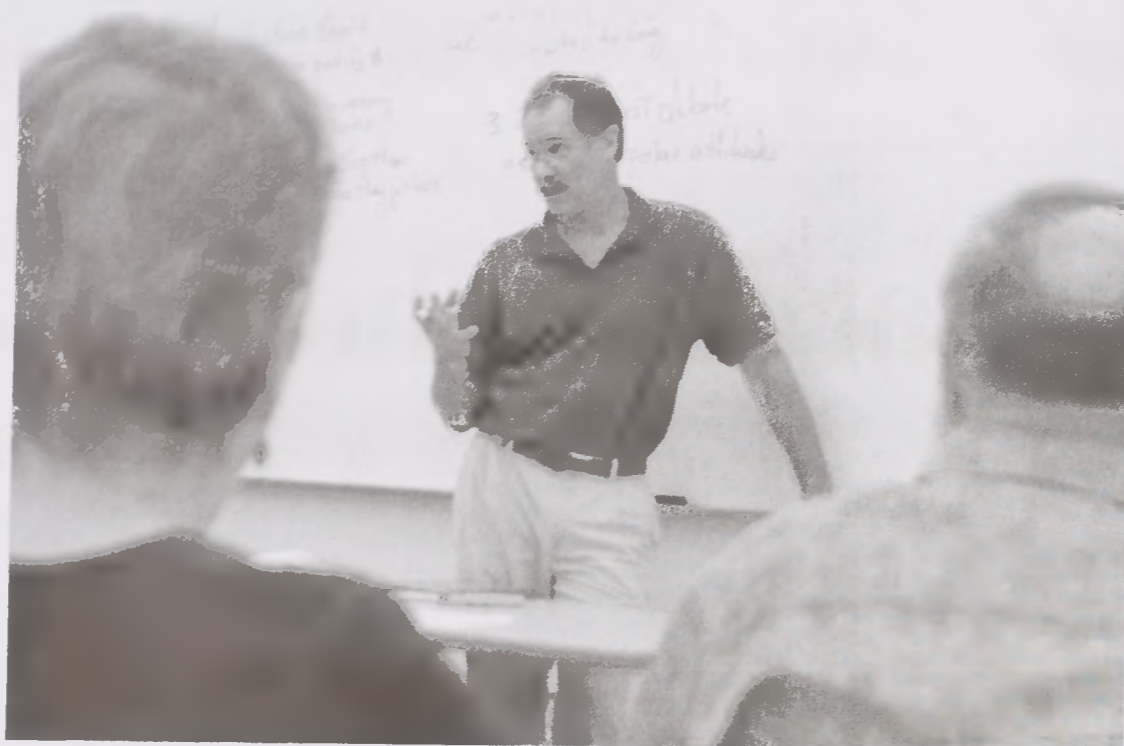
"This is a climate class, although global warming is leading the press about climate right now," said Gerard Voos, course instructor and program director of UNC Asheville's Environmental Quality Institute. "It is to make people aware, if they weren't before, of how much climate affects your daily life either here or in California or Australia. It has a massive effect."

The class, "Seminar on Science and Human Values: Climate and Culture," is part of UNC Asheville's Master of Liberal Arts Program. Topics for the class will include global warming, the impact of climate on developing countries, international environmental negotiations, oceanic affect on climate, environmental policy making and climate in the media, according to Voos.

"We're going to hit so many different topics from natural resources to the oceans, drought, as well as the impacts of global warming on different industries and agriculture," Voos said. "The course is about discussing the cultural aspects of global warming, as well as the implications of this such as extensive droughts, questioning whether industries are going to have to move, if agriculture is going to move, if the rainforest is going to become desert, or if the desert is going to become rainforest. There are serious implications to this, and we are not sure how it is going to work out."

The class consists of a lecture during first hour, given by a different person each week. Guest lecturers will include Karsten Shein, David Easterling, Richard Reynolds, Jay Lawrimore, Richard Heim and Scott Shuford from the National Climatic Data Center; Ko Barrett of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association; James Fox of the National Environmental Modeling and Analysis Center; and Susan Fox from the U.S. Forest Service.

"All of our guest lecturers are very accomplished," Voos said.



Gerard Voos, adjunct assistant professor, lectures during his climate and culture course. Throughout the course, Voos said he will teach topics such as natural resources, oceans and global warming.

"The majority of them are either NCDC scientists or others in the community who are climate oriented."

Many people may not know Asheville is a major hub for climatology, according to Voos.

"Climate in Asheville is a very hot topic," Voos said.

"There are many entrepreneurs here who make their living from the climate, as well as a lot of federal employees working with the climate who live here. We have the National Climatic Data Center, which is located downtown, as well as a large piece of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration right here in Asheville. NCDC is one of the repositories for the world's weather and climate data, and they have a huge amount of climate information, which is being updated constantly. We also have the Environmental Quality Institute, which has really built up a name for itself through lead and mercury testing."

The addition of this class is a benefit to many environmental studies majors and general public who are permitted to come to the class to hear lectures, according to Voos.

"I just started the class and look forward to hearing leading edge experts on climate," said Jim Barton, director of the Smith Creek Institute. "I'm just taking this as a one-time class, though I look forward to more news about a potential masters program in climate at UNC Asheville. I think climate is the most pressing issue of our time, and therefore public education about this issue is vital. The solutions to climate change are easier than many think, and that there is no need to move from denial to despair."

Other students are taking the class out of personal interest, such as Dr. Hilda Lee, a retired dentist who is taking some classes at UNC Asheville for fun.

"This class on climate and culture is far out of my field, but I find the topic of how climate affects culture intriguing, and I couldn't resist taking the class," Lee said. "The class has really just begun, but I am enjoying it very much. I am particularly impressed with Dr. Gerard Voos' lineup of guest speakers."

This class joins many courses dealing with climate issues offered by UNC Asheville. As the environment continues to be a big issue both in Asheville and abroad, Voos said he hopes the amount of environmental education will increase. "It is very important to educate people about the environment, especially climate," Voos said. "One of the first questions I got in class was about how to educate the populous about this issue, and how to get the average person to understand what is going on. This is not only about how important climate is on a regular basis, but if global warming is truly as serious of a problem as we think it is, how we can go about educating the average person about it. This is very important because we are not going to get anything done until this is an important topic on the grassroots level."

It is to make people aware, if they weren't before, of how much climate affects your daily life.

GERARD VOOS
Course Instructor

Loud activity in residence halls alerts campus officials

By Courtney Metz
STAFF WRITER

With only mild disturbances in the residence halls so far this semester, campus officials said they anticipate the same problems as semesters prior.

"In the residence halls themselves we haven't had any real problems," said Steve Lewis, director of campus police. "We've had a few larcenies on campus, but fortunately those have tended to not be in the residence halls."

Past school years experienced more problematic legal issues, with this year calming down, according to housing officials.

"We've had, of course, our incidents, but they haven't been of a dramatic nature," said Melanie Rhodarmer, director of residential education and coordinator of citizenship education. "In terms of disturbances and, from my conduct experience, in terms of citations and arrest reports, it's not as great as it has been that first week of class."

However, this year's on-campus students are a little hard to handle, according to residential assistants.

"I actually think that there have been more problems this year," said Laura Varnier, a Mills Hall RA and sophomore student. "The freshmen that have come in have been a very rambunctious group. So, maybe sooner than later, they'll learn that they need to just calm down and focus on studying."

There are some problems that both the Residential Education staff and campus police said they are currently looking into. Chief among these are the numerous noise complaints officials receive from both students and parents regarding the drum circle outside of Mills Hall.

"I was sitting outside Governors Hall by the tables that they have by the steps, and I could hear the drum circle and it was actually kind of loud from where I was sitting," said Lara Martini, sophomore student and RA in West Ridge.

Campus police responded to complaints, disbursing the drum circle several times, according to several RAs.

"I do think that it's a problem right now," said Karen Moriarty, a Mills Hall RA and junior drama student. "It's Monday through Friday from 9 to about 11:30 or midnight, whenever we stop them."

Though the drum circle causes problems for officials, some students said they enjoy it.

"I like it," said Ryan Beierlein, freshman student. "I was kind of disappointed when they broke it up, actually."

Other problems in the residence halls include underage drinking violations, though these are normal for this time of year and the trend has actually been going down, according to Lewis.

"It's pretty normal to have a couple, three incidents," Lewis said.

There were 90 disciplinary actions on campus for liquor law violations in 2006, down from 126 in 2005, according to the university's annual crime statistics report.

Police issued one marijuana possession citation so far this year, which is typical, according to Rhodarmer.

"Marijuana, in terms of substances, is second to alcohol in the ones that we deal with," she said.

Many of these problems are often blamed on freshmen because of their tendency to experiment, but it is merely because there are more freshmen living on campus, according to Rhodarmer.

"I certainly think that freshmen are testing their freedoms," Rhodarmer said.

Freshmen will soon settle in by learning to just respect others, said Eric Saltz, an RA in Governors Village and junior student.

"If people have respect for one another, then you will follow the basic rules," Saltz said. "Not just here but outside in the real world, too."

Abroad

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Valerie Thelen poses with her friends during her stay abroad.

would not have been interested in Latin American issues."

Clayton Crowhurst, sophomore student, currently participates in the study away program at the University of New Mexico as part of the National Student Exchange.

"I've lived in Asheville my whole life and love the city and all the great outdoors stuff outside of the city, and I also loved my first year living and going to school at UNCA," Crowhurst said. "But I thought that it would be a good idea for me to see a different part of the country and most of all, see what it was like being away from home for longer than I ever have been before."

The adjustment to a new school and a new state can be difficult and is an ongoing but satisfying

process, according to Crowhurst.

"I know that I'm going to grow a lot from this experience and that I'm going to meet all kinds of different and great people while I'm out here," he said. "I've been told that it's during times like these that people grow the most and learn to enjoy every moment for what it is worth."

Want to study abroad or away? Check out the Study Abroad/Away Fair. It's on Sept. 13 from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. in Alumni Hall in Highsmith Union.

Volunteers needed!

Come out to Hey Day at the WNC Nature Center, which raises money to make improvements in animal enrichment, habitat enhancement, and general animal care, on

October 13, from 9 to 5.

Volunteers who can help with a variety of activities including face painting, games and distributing flyers.

Students with a love for animals or children would particularly benefit from this opportunity.

If interested, contact Merritt Moseley @ <mailto:moseley@unca.edu>