

Instructor

Maria Dahmus

Dr. Dahmus received her Ph.D. from the Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies at the University of Wisconsin and completed her postdoctoral research on social dimensions of urban ecosystems at the University of Minnesota. The courses she teaches at St. Thomas include Society and Sustainability, the Environmental Studies Field Seminar, Theology and the Environment, and Dogs! Environment, Society, and Representation. Her research interests center on the interdisciplinary study of coupled social systems and ecosystems, social dimensions of environmental change, environmental movements, and sustainability in higher education.

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Course Dates:

The course will open on March 17, 2015. The instructor will monitor and participate in discussions, answer questions, and be available to participants on a regular basis **for two weeks after the course begins**. Assignments are expected to be completed within that two week period. Course materials will remain open to participants indefinitely, for review and reference.

Please note- The assignment at the end of this course will take you some time. DON'T wait until the last day to try and complete these learning activities. Give yourself plenty of time for the final learning activity.

Course Goals:

Participants will learn:

- Basic concepts central to the study of how we make environmental decisions
- Framing, and how framing affects the effectiveness of environmental messages
- How to increase the effectiveness of their education and outreach work as Master Water Stewards

Learning Objectives

1. To identify challenges to environmental decision-making and behavior change that arise from the nature of environmental problems/solutions and our responses to them;
2. To practice framing environmental messages based on the above challenges;
3. To learn about results of yard care choices research in the Twin Cities;
4. To apply models of behavior change to create a behavior change campaign around a specific yard care behavior.

Assessment

- All participants will be expected to complete all Learning Activities listed for each course within two weeks of the opening of the course dates
- All participants are expected to participate in the Discussion forums for each course.
 - Contribute at least one original posting that responds to the discussion prompts in the course.
 - Respond to the postings of at least two colleagues in the course with a thoughtful, substantive response.
- All participants will be expected to successfully pass an online quiz, with a core of at least 90%

Course Description:

This session examines challenges and opportunities for environmental decision-making and behavior change through three related topics: 1) the nature of environmental problems/solutions and our responses to them, 2) the importance of how we frame environmental messages based on these responses, and 3) models of behavior change. We will also discuss results of yard care choices research in the Twin Cities in relation to these topics. You'll integrate and apply these frameworks and research to the residential yard by developing your own behavior change campaign around a specific yard behavior.

How to begin:

All Master Water Stewards courses have a very similar course navigation scheme. You will notice the following documents:

Welcome and Introduction- This is where you will find the syllabus, the learning goals, objectives and course description, and any other materials that provide information on the course and its structure. Make sure to read this document carefully- it will help you get started, and keep you from getting lost as you go through the course.

Modules- All the learning activities are here for each course. Each set of modules will have learning activities you will need to complete in order to complete the course. Many of these will ask you to post information on the Discussion Forums

Discussions- All the discussion forums are in this area. Each of the courses in the Master Water Stewards program will make use of discussion forums. All students and instructors are expected to participate in discussions, and we think you will find these to be a rewarding part of the program. Our goal is to provide plenty of opportunities to learn from each other through discussions.