

**2007-2008 Curriculum and Faculty Development Grant Request  
Associated Colleges of the South Environmental Initiative**

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**Proposed Course**

*Climate Change: The Planet Earth Experiment*

**Introduction**

**Goals:**

The purpose of this project is to redesign a first-year seminar course about climate change that I have taught during the fall semesters of 2006 and 2007. The seminar, part of Trinity University's first-year seminar program that all students must complete, has been highly successful, as measured by student course evaluations and anecdotal evidence. However, as both the debate about climate change and our nation's politics have shifted significantly since I first developed the course in summer 2005, I need to re-envision the course within a new and changing social, political, and economic context. The new course will be more interdisciplinary, focusing less on the science of climate change and more on the impact of climate change on society, both past and present. In addition, this course will be integrated into Trinity University's Sustainability Initiative, an ongoing effort to create a greener campus culture and reduce the University's carbon footprint. I am coordinating with our Residential Life office to create a new first-year Sustainable Living Hall in the dorms for all students who elect to enroll in this climate change seminar, and I am working with our Admissions Office to advertise this opportunity to admitted students this spring. Trinity already has an upper-class Sustainable Living Floor in place, so this expansion to first-year students should help improve environmental awareness across campus, and the combination of students living together while enrolled in the same seminar should provoke discussions and debates that develop and continue long after our class period ends.

**Justification:**

In summer 2005 I developed a first-year seminar about climate change that focused on the science of climate change and how the public debate and perception of climate change has been shaped. Although these remain important issues, more Americans seem to accept climate change science following the 2007 IPCC Fourth Assessment Report and the Nobel Peace prize subsequently awarded to the IPCC and Al Gore, and people, including Trinity students, worry more about what the impact of global warming will be and what we can and should do about it. I propose to redesign my climate change seminar to focus more on how climate has affected past societies, what we might expect from today's climate change, and how our current societies might be impacted. The course is inherently interdisciplinary, and will include themes of environmental ethics and justice, sustainable development, and environmental policy and practice at every level, from individual actions to federal and global initiatives.

**Match with listed priorities:**

This course matches several of the listed priorities (as indicated by corresponding numbers and letters that follow). The themes of the course will be developed using articles (both technical and in the popular press), technical reports, environmental literature (1k), and films. As stated above, the course will address issues of sustainable development (1d), environmental policy and practice (1e), environmental justice (1h), and environmental ethics (1l). Moreover, the course will become highly interdisciplinary (3) and the proposal comes from faculty who has not previously received a grant from the CDF alliance (6). Although not a new course, the course has not previously received funding (5), and the proposed redesign represents a significant departure from the original course focus.

**Project Description****Activities:**

The bulk of my activity will involve collecting and reviewing possible readings and films for this new course in order to develop a complete reading list and course syllabus for Fall 2008. I also hope to invite at least one outside speaker to campus, using funds available through Trinity University. I will continue to revise the course in real time as needed during the semester, as relevant publications and policy changes develop.

**Timetable:**

I plan to complete the majority of the course development and syllabus in late July and early August 2008, during the three weeks between the end of Trinity's summer research program and the beginning of Fall semester.

**Budget and justification:**

Book and film purchase	\$500 (needed to develop course with new focus)
Stipend	\$1000
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$1500</b>

**Evaluation and Dissemination**

The course will be evaluated through student evaluations administered by the University at the end of the semester (Fall 2008), as well as mid-term formative evaluations I will conduct at least once through the semester. As a first-year seminar course, it will also be evaluated through the first year seminar program. The project will be publicized within the ACS by making the course syllabus, reading list, and results public on the CFD webpage.

**Institutional Approval**

Approval will be sent via email from Dr. Glenn Kroeger (Geosciences Department Chair) and Dr. Diane Smith (Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs - Budget and Research).

**Disclosure Statement**

None applicable.

**Abbreviated Curriculum Vitae**

Please see attached two-page CV.