

AGUA UNIVERSITY

Instructor: Miguel A. Luna

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Location of classes for winter: Compton College

Class Hours:

Fridays 6:00pm – 9:00pm

Saturdays: 9:00am – 2:00pm

Course description: Cumulative learning workshops with an emphasis on water, and the connection of this resource to our everyday lives, our communities, and habitat. Study of water in the state and ways it can be conserved and best managed.

Course goal: To redefine the way we think about water. To deepen the understanding of how much water plays a role in our lives and increase awareness on the urgency of taking action today to protect this life essential resource. To nourish the next round of decision makers, community activists and neighborhood leaders in Los Angeles.

A. KNOWLEDGE

Course Objectives:

Attendees will understand that...

1. Civilization has been a permanent dialogue between human beings and water.
2. Most of the water in Los Angeles has to travel long distances throughout the state before reaching our homes.
3. Water is managed, transferred, bought and sold by many entities in the state.
4. The way we use land in the development of new communities and in the process of community planning and redevelopment is deeply connected to local water supplies in the region.
5. Rivers, creeks and streams play an important role in the region, our health and in the sustainability of our communities.
6. Well thought out park projects in our neighborhoods have the potential to incorporate multiple functions while providing multiple benefits.
7. The knowledge a community member has about his or her own community and the direction they would like to see it take should always be incorporated into all city planning and redevelopment efforts.
8. We all have a role in securing healthy water for humans and ecosystems alike.
9. One person can make a difference.

B. SKILLS

1. Attendees will develop water-monitoring skills to test for ph, copper, nitrates and other constituents.
2. Attendees will deepen their knowledge of their neighborhoods and the practice of community organizing.
3. Attendees will learn how to conserve water in their homes and how to reduce their daily water usage.
4. Attendees will learn how to identify local waterways in their community.
5. Attendees will practice critical thinking on local and statewide water issues and solutions.

Course Policy: Students are expected to attend all workshop sessions and arrive on time; to interact with others in a respectful and courteous manner that will facilitate interactive dialogue; and complete course assignments.

Course Outline:

Saturday, November 7th

where's the creek in Compton?

Students will go through an over view of the program, goals and expectations. They will meet classmates and familiarize themselves with the campus. We will also take a tour to the soft-bottom part of Compton creek to provide a place-based framework for our classes. We will start to understand the topic of surface water quality and its connection to and through our communities.

Friday, November 13th

from headwaters to it's destination and the journey in between

We will begin our educational journey in understanding water, it's properties and our connection to this resource. We will start to learn about our local waterways and basins and get an insight on how water moves throughout the state to get to our faucets. Through a visual journey, we will learn about our rivers and streams, where they start and where their waters end up. We will learn about the many connections these waters make throughout our communities and get an overview of ways we can integrate streams, parks, water quality and supply through smart planning in our cities.

Saturday, November 14th

multiple functions, multiple benefits

We will take a field trip to different spots along the Los Angeles River and Compton Creek to tour projects that are capturing water onsite while providing community benefits. Along the way we will learn about the history of our cities and their development and current city efforts to rehabilitate them with projects that promote healthier communities while capturing stormwater. A hands-on experience will allow us to utilize water quality monitoring equipment to test the water in Compton creek and go over our results onsite to understand our findings and make the connection of water quality, pollution sources and impacts on our oceans. We will also monitor native habitat along the creek.

Friday, November 20th **ecological connections, restoration and sustainability**
Understanding how we are all connected to our surrounding environment and local resources is essential for a sustainable future. We will learn about how humans acquire, manage and use natural resources, and identify factors that affect the importance of those resources. We will learn more about our local water sources and how these are connected to our local native plants and vegetation (flora) and the wildlife surrounding our urban, riverside and coastal environment.

Saturday, November 21st **understanding the function of wetlands and the role they play in our ecosystem**
This day will take us on a tour of local inland/coastal wetlands. We will learn about the role these fascinating ecological environments play a role in our ecosystem. This event will also include an education trip to the beach.

Saturday, November 28th **understanding and shaping our communities**
We will tour our urban communities and take note of current places that provide opportunities for learning about how we fit in to our environment and how communal neighborhood spaces provide opportunity for building capacity and community building.

Friday, December 4th **environmental & social justice - healthy communities, it's about quality of life**
We will learn about the correlations between healthy spaces and physical and mental wellbeing. Students will hear from local community leaders about their work and efforts to improve the quality of life and opportunities for the youth to get involved and become active in efforts to transform their communities.

Saturday, December 5th **food security and healthy eating**
On this day we will take a tour of urban farms in the Compton area and get an opportunity to talk with the farmers cultivating the land. We will learn how buying food from local farms provides communities with fresher produce because it has to travel less distances to get to your table and how urban farms can also strengthen the local economy by keeping your dollars circulating locally.

Friday, December 11th **climate change and adaptation**
Changes in temperature and shifts in climate can cause severe droughts in some areas and huge floods in others. We will hear from a climate expert why this is happening, how we as individuals can help to slow down global warming and how to prepare through adaptation.

Saturday, December 12th **we drink the same water dinosaurs did**
Populations are growing and so is the water demand. This in-the-field experience will take us to a project that recycles water to increase local water supplies. We will get the opportunity to learn about and recognize the importance of recycled (reclaimed) water and learn about ways to manage this resource as a way to reduce our dependence on imported water.

Friday, December 18th **graduation event**
The culminating event will give the students an opportunity to share their learning experiences with their friends, families and their community.

Our course seeks to redefine the way we interact with water in our everyday lives. We feel that the protection of this precious and life-essential resource will only happen by adding a community element to the water molecule, an element of culture, a human element.

