This course is designed to introduce students, particularly doctoral students in departments other than Environmental and Occupational Health (ENOH), to basic issues confronting the environmental health worker in both developed and developing countries. It explores the way in which particular characteristics of our environment potentially affect human health. It also addresses health problems associated with biological, chemical, physical, and radiological agents and how they impact food safety, infectious disease, air quality (indoors and outdoors), water quality, wastewater and solid waste (hazardous and nonhazardous) management, and land resources in community and occupational settings. Also, policies intended to improve public health through mitigation of environmental impacts will be reviewed. Instead of conducting a comprehensive review of all the environmental issues, this one-credit course will focus on a particular topic selected from the above-mentioned issues. General principles, however, will be always included. Therefore, the learning approach of this course is more like “case study” in which the introduction to environmental health is through the study and understanding of a particular environmental health issue.

The course consists of three phases. The first (planning) phase requires students to discuss with the course director the selection of an appropriate environmental issue for the course. The selection will be based on the suggestion of the course director and the relevant working experience (if any) and/or interests of the students. Usually, there will be 3 to 4 potential topics identified at the first meeting. The students are then required to conduct a pilot literature search and discuss again with the course director to decide the final topic for the course. As the result, each student will be working on a different environmental health issue and read/review different sets of scientific publications.

In the second phase, the students are required to conduct an intensive review of the selected topic and draft a report based on their findings. The report should include a comparison of different results/opinions with the personal viewpoint of the students. The course director will guide the students during this phase by frequent interactions, including face-to-face meetings, emails and phone conversation.

The third phase of the course is the completion of a research paper, which is due at the end of the semester. In this phase, the course director works together with the students and revises their drafts. It usually takes at least two revisions to complete the final submission.
This is a pass/fail course. The course grade will be based on the level of student participation in the planning and literature review as well as the course director’s evaluation of the students research papers.