

Criteria for Field Studies at SAIL Courses

For faculty interested in running a field studies course through SAIL (Social Action and Integrative Studies), your course must contain the following elements:

- Course is designed and facilitated wholly by Mason faculty and affiliates.
- Course is research-based. Information, either quantitative or qualitative, are collected and/or analyzed by students in the course.
- Assessment of student learning is done in the manner and format of the instructor's choosing but includes the following common elements: academic credit is awarded for demonstration of learning, not just for attending/participating; and the student must be able to show competency in the appropriate subject matter(s) as determined by the instructor.
- Course is primarily "place based"(e.g. in one specific region or area). It is not a tour model.
- The instructor is committed to creating field experiences for students that are collaborative, respectful of, and allow for rich and sustained interaction between and among members of the communities in which they are located. Particular efforts are made to include and value local knowledge and resource people, as well as respect for cultural norms and practices, with the goal of creating a reciprocal learning dynamic among Mason representatives and community members.
- Regardless of discipline or subject matter, field studies courses are also eminently respectful of the natural world and strive for leaving as little trace on the land as possible.
- Each Field Studies class will make some sort of specific contribution to the area in which class was located. This can be anything from sharing research results with the local government, to dedicating one day to a service-learning activity (i.e. volunteering in a local school; to cleaning a facility such as pulling invasive plants, picking up trash, repainting signs; etc.)
- All proposed syllabi must be approved by the sponsoring department (i.e. a course offered by the Environmental Science and Policy Department must be approved by that department, a course offered by the Art Department must have the curriculum approved by that department), Etc.