

## TEK Faculty Fellows: Application

[https://luky-my.sharepoint.com/:w/g/personal/rsand1\\_uky\\_edu/EftzBtYEPc1Cs60ZqhRNfzYBq9LMZ4iHOPDaczMkulacww?e=Vz1Ljx](https://luky-my.sharepoint.com/:w/g/personal/rsand1_uky_edu/EftzBtYEPc1Cs60ZqhRNfzYBq9LMZ4iHOPDaczMkulacww?e=Vz1Ljx)

(EMILY)

"Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Environmental Conservation: Exploring Justice, Humanities, and Policy in Kentucky" will take an interdisciplinary approach to environmental conservation, looking at Kentucky's ecological challenges and opportunities at the intersection of environmental humanities, justice, and policy. Through the critical analysis of the state's environmental issues, including, but not limited to, the impact of coal mining on local ecosystems and communities, the implications of water pollution for public health and biodiversity, and the disproportionate burden of environmental hazards on marginalized communities, students will use a problem-based approach to gain insights into these issues and develop solutions incorporating multiple perspectives and approaches.

Students will learn about the state's environmental landscape and develop the skills necessary to propose practical solutions in a local context by exploring problems at the intersection of environmental justice, humanities, and policy. Through a transdisciplinary approach, students will be empowered to address environmental challenges holistically, recognizing and addressing these issues' interconnected ecological and social dimensions.

- Primary use of UK campus (and Lexington) as living classroom

Multiple viewpoints and approaches to environmental problems and issues by inviting guest speakers from various backgrounds (e.g., policymakers, community activists, scholars, environmental science, sustainability, etc.). These diverse speakers, in concert with a teaching team of multidisciplinary scholars, will expose students to various perspectives on environmental issues, providing insight into different disciplinary approaches, lived experiences, and stakeholder perspectives. Further, students will engage with problems by examining case studies highlighting various geographical locations, socioeconomic conditions, and cultural contexts to understand better the multiple factors influencing environmental conservation.

- Track I: Introduction to the EH?

Debates, discussions, and group projects will provide students with opportunities for collaborative learning. Controversial environmental topics will be addressed in debates and discussions where students will research and present their ideas and critically evaluate opposing perspectives. Group projects will support peer learning as students critically engage with diverse viewpoints and approaches and present findings and proposed solutions as a team.

(BOB)

- UKC 110 proposal
  - Proposal
    - [2024 UKC Proposal: Introduction to the Environmental Humanities](#)
    - [UKC Daily Schedule 2022](#)
  - Emailed Keiko Tanaka for advice, 03-12
- TEK application
  - Emailed chair for statement of support and advice on UKC proposal, 03-12
    - Proposal to Emily: teach TEK class - fall 2025
      - 200 or 300?
  - Emailed Susan Cantrell for clarification
    - I will not be able to attend Kickoff event for Track I fellows May 2024
  - Began draft of application (see below)

## APPLICATION QUESTIONS

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf7ZOAPTGjKUIWgnjELY0l2J-m95qn-hH5ZEXgbRwXAHZs2cQ/formResponse>

1. What semester are you targeting for the proposed TEK course?

Fall 2025

2. Optional: if any further information is relevant about the targeted semester, let us know here.

Profs. Bergeron and Sandmeyer propose that the TEK course be taught fall 2025, as Sandmeyer will be teaching UKC 110 Introduction to the Humanities spring 2025 (pending approval). The two courses, the UKC course and the TEK course, will have distinct similarities. Both will be introductory courses, i.e., 100 or 200 level, and both will fulfill CORE requirements, particularly the Humanities requirements. Importantly, the TEK course will be relevantly dissimilar in that the TEK course will create a truly interdisciplinary pedagogy by bringing in guest instructors on a weekly basis from the existing UK Environmental Humanities community and external environmental professionals. In essence, the TEK course will be an experiment to create a genuinely interdisciplinary classroom experience for our students in a way that is more ambitious, even, than the UKC course.

3. Which TEK course are you proposing?

- TEK 200-level: Discover

4. Are all names listed on the application able and willing to (1) teach a section of the TEK course during the identified semester and (2) participate fully in the TEK Faculty Fellows program during the 2024-25 academic year?

YES

5. Provide a description for your proposed section of TEK 200. Responses should focus on:

1. the critical problem(s) or issue(s) that that course will address;
2. how the course will incorporate multiple viewpoints and/or approaches to the problems or issues;
3. how the course will incorporate collaborative and team-based work; and
4. how the course will foreground workforce or career skills.

Limit to 500 words

TEK 200, Introduction to Transdisciplinary Environmental Studies seeks to provide students with an overview of some of the complex problems and interdisciplinary methods with which environmental professionals deal. We are all keenly aware that nature has imposed and is imposing on humanity a new order. From global climate change to the Coronavirus to mass extinction, no matter where in the world one finds oneself, any progress we have made confronting the myriad environmental problems forcing themselves upon us feels, at best, tentative. This course is designed to introduce students to professionals and researchers working on some of the most complex and seemingly intractable environmental problems facing us today. It aims to develop students' analytical and evaluative skills as they study diverse methodologies employed in the humanities, social sciences, and the natural sciences. As importantly, students will grow their capacity to understand empathetically the life-experience of those impacted by environmental harms and catastrophes.

At its very core, this class is interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary in fact. As the complex environmental problems today imposing themselves on humanity transcend traditional disciplinary effort to comprehend and redress them, this class also transcends these same traditional disciplinary boundaries. So, in a typical week, for instance, a philosopher may present to the class her work on the problem of perceiving global climate change, the research methods she employs studying this problem, and the current state of debate on this issue. In the next class, a policy analyst may detail national and international legislation addressing the cause of rising global temperatures locally and across the globe. At the conclusion of such a week, the class professors will lead a discussion of the central concepts and methodologies introduced by the guest speakers. The aim of this approach is to develop students' ability to understand and critically assess complex theoretical and practical problems with conceptual proficiency and analytical precision. This format will have three main outcomes: (i) students will build networks with a variety of professionals working in environmental studies, (ii) students will evaluate different methodologies employed professionals and researchers in the field, and (iii)

students will develop skills of critical reasoning and self-reflection in the face of the complex of forces shaping their world today.

Themes central to this class are environmental justice, indigenous studies, the philosophy and practice of conservation, the methodology of case-study analysis, and nature and challenge of interdisciplinary research.

6. Outline the assessments/deliverables the course may include. Be sure to include your plans for regular student reflections and a team-based project.

Limit to 250 words

- Individual Reflection Papers: Students will write weekly short papers where they reflect on their learning experiences in the assigned module. The aim of this exercise is to build skills of clear articulation and precise analysis of concepts studied and challenges encountered. By the conclusion of the semester, students will develop proficiency in the critical analysis of their own perspectives, effective and charitable evaluation of alternative viewpoints, and insightful identification of areas for personal growth. Reflections will be assigned regularly and in response to specific course activities.
- Case Study Analysis: Students individually will select and analyze a Kentucky environmental case study and identify stakeholders, causes, impacts, and potential solutions from an interdisciplinary perspective.
- Individual/Pair Environmental Humanities Presentations: Students will identify a topic area in the Environmental Humanities, use the UK Libraries to research this area, and design a 5-to-7-minute presentation on some aspect of this topic. The aim of this exercise is to develop the skill of presenting research before others in a fun, engaging, informative, and creative way.
- Environmental Justice Role-Playing: Student groups will simulate a community meeting to address an environmental justice issue. Each student will represent a different stakeholder (e.g., community member, advocacy group, industry representative, government official) and engage in discussions to negotiate solutions that consider equity and access.
- Integrated Solutions: Student teams will address a selected environmental issue at the University of Kentucky and present their integrated solutions to the class, emphasizing the interdisciplinary nature of their approach and addressing potential challenges and trade-offs.

7. What are your plans for partnering with community and/or workforce experts?

Limit to 250 words

First, much work has already been achieved toward this goal. A short-term goal of the UK Environmental Humanities Initiative (see last optional question) was to form an

Environmental Humanities Community hosted at the University of Kentucky. As of this writing, 60 UK faculty, administrators, and staff as well as a number of regional environmental professionals have signed on to the Initiative. This community will form the central pillar in our efforts to partner with environmental research scholars working at UK. We have already obtained commitments from faculty in Philosophy, Historic Preservation, Honors, and WRD to participate in this endeavor. Importantly, Bergeron and Sandmeyer will also work with UK faculty directing environmental humanities graduate dissertations to include these new scholars in the development of this innovative curriculum. Additionally, as we describe in response to the next question, this course will integrate the expertise by numerous guest speakers into its curriculum. Bergeron and Sandmeyer, respectively have developed wide professional networks among legal, historical preservation, agricultural, conservation, sustainability, and non-profit professionals. We will tap these networks to introduce our students to the wide array of professionals and researchers working in environmental studies.

8. Describe your strategies for the co-development and team teaching of your TEK course section. Include an understanding of how your instructional team's disciplinary expertise and perspectives will enable students to engage critical issues with transdisciplinary approaches.

Limit to 250 words

As an example, the course will include a module that examines environmental justice. In the beginning of the week, i.e., Monday, an environmental justice expert, either external to or a member of the Environmental Humanities Initiative at UK, will guest present. The objective here will be to provide students both with networking connections but also professional perspectives on fundamental principles of environmental justice, disproportionate impacts of environmental degradation on marginalized communities, and the important role of case studies to illustrate environmental justice problems and solutions. In the next meeting, a humanities expert, also either external to or a member of the Environmental Humanities Initiative at UK, will guest present. Students will explore historical, literary, and/or artistic depictions of Kentucky's environmental landscape to provide context and skills necessary to understand cultural attitudes towards nature, land use, and conservation reflected in these works. In the Friday class, Bergeron and Sandmeyer, experts in regional planning and philosophy, respectively, will lead the class in a discussion of the concept of environmental justice and the intertwined economic, cultural-social, and land-use issues involved. This example represents a typical week in the class. The primary objective of this TEK course will be to engage students in the practice of interdisciplinary research. By the conclusion of the semester, students will have gained a practical and synthetic understanding of complex interdisciplinary approaches to pressing environmental issues and problems which are both conditioned by and impact local Kentucky's communities, regional economic and political collectives, and national and international systems.

9. Optional: if there is anything else you'd like to indicate about your proposal, please do so here.

Limit 125 words

Dr. Bergeron's training in law, preservation, and planning and expertise in environmental law, environmental justice, and cultural resource protection align with the transdisciplinary emphasis underlying this proposal. Dr. Sandmeyer's 2021 draft proposal to develop and establish an Environmental Humanities Initiative at UK (UK-EHI), directly motivates this proposal. This TEK proposal, along with ongoing efforts to establish a new UK CORE 100-level Introduction to the Environmental Humanities course, aims to advance transdisciplinary undergraduate and graduate curriculum at UK, which is an explicit recommendation outlined in the UK-EHI draft proposal. The applicants combined philosophical perspectives and practical insights into environmental justice and environmental humanities will create a learning environment where students can explore the intersections of philosophy, history, policy, and environmental conservation and sustainable land-use.