



## CAT 124

Partnerships for Local Climate Action: The UCSD-EarthLab Community Station  
SP23

Instructor	Amy Knight (a2knight@ucsd.edu)
Seminar hours & location	Fridays 9 - 11:50 am in <a href="#">SME 402</a> (Structural Materials & Engineering)
Field site Location	UCSD-EarthLab (in Google Maps as MTM Earth Lab) 1110 Carolina Lane, San Diego, CA 92102
Office Hours	Virtual: Wednesdays 10-11:40 am via Zoom: 951 9913 1861 Sign up at <a href="https://calendly.com/a2knight">calendly.com/a2knight</a> In person: by appointment in SME 406

### Course Description

This experiential learning course is designed around applying an equity-driven, community-led approach to climate action. The course emphasizes youth-led climate action through the *EarthLab Method*, a set of design-based experiential learning practices. In the seminar, you will be introduced to these theories that guide the UCSD-EarthLab Community Station and draw on them as you engage in participatory field research at the Community Station. This course aims to co-produce knowledge and resources with communities, moving away from an extractive model of research towards forming collaborative and mutually beneficial relationships with our participants and site partners at Groundwork San Diego-Chollas Creek and Millennial Tech Middle School. While at the field site, you will be both a university representative and a youth mentor. In this position, you will design and lead educational activities at EarthLab. As you directly support youth participation and action, you will observe and carefully document your own and others' participation in EarthLab activities. These qualitative research skills will help you evaluate theories about what makes successful community-led climate action.

Your research will be an important contribution to ongoing projects at the UCSD-EarthLab Community Station/ UCSD Center on Global Justice. The aim of this course, thus, is to not only teach you how to ethically conduct social science field research, but also to do work that connects you and the University with the local community and the local community with the University.

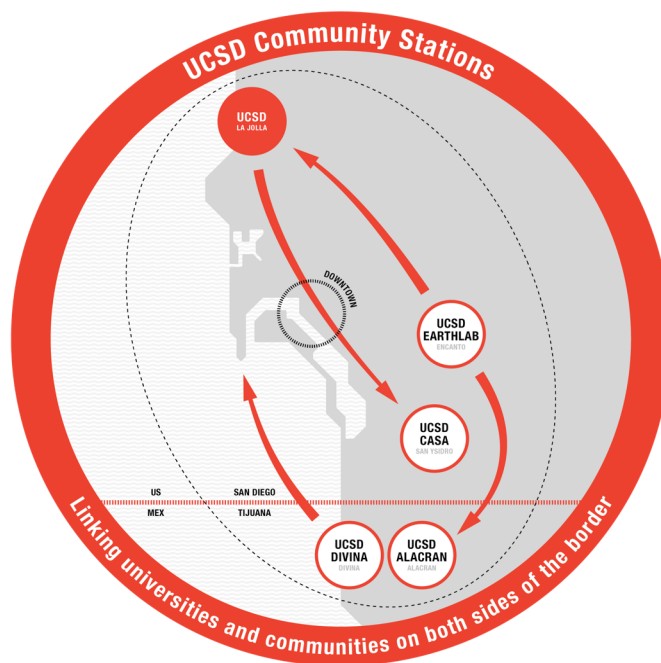


### Learning Outcomes

- Develop qualitative research skills of observation, documentation, reflection, and analysis.
- Develop the skills to critically examine interactions between self, classmates, partners, participants, and community members.
- Understand and replicate the co-production process facilitated by UCSD Community Station infrastructures.
- Strengthen research communication skills both formal (presentation) and informal (in seminar with classmates, on site with community members)
- Become well-versed in issues of climate justice and equity at global, local, and site-specific scales.

### UCSD-EarthLab Community Station

EarthLab is part of a network of public spaces in underserved neighborhoods on both sides of the border. The mission of the UCSD Community Stations is to foster relationships between the university and communities to facilitate collective, equity-focused climate action. This course is born from that mission, taking a distinctly social, community-based approach to climate action. Located in southeast San Diego County, the neighborhood of Encanto reflects the larger dynamic of the San Diego/Tijuana border region. This region is one of extremes, both in terms of climate and social inequity. In our seminar, we will consider the complex problem of climate change alongside a wide range of community-focused and initiated solutions. We will aim to understand climate justice as both a broad concept and within the specific context of our region.

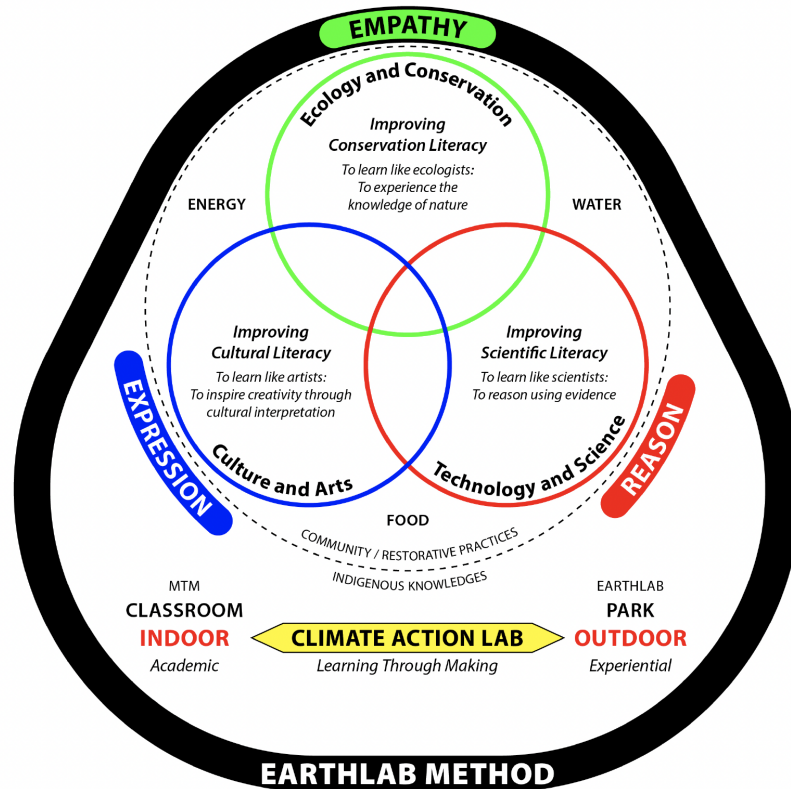




**Community Partners: Groundwork San Diego-Chollas Creek and Millennial Tech Middle School**

This course builds on a long-term partnership between UCSD, Groundwork San Diego-Chollas Creek (GWSD) and Millennial Tech Middle School (MTM). GWSD strives to bring about the sustained regeneration, improvement and management of Chollas Creek through the development of community-based partnership which empower people, businesses and organizations to promote environmental, economic, and social well-being. EarthLab is located at MTM, a public school that serves students from the Encanto Community, where 60% of the student body are emergent English language learners and more than half come from households with income below the federal poverty line. MTM supports its diverse student body by nurturing student curiosity and environmental advocacy both inside the classroom and at EarthLab. Your work at EarthLab as a researcher and youth mentor will contribute directly to this goal.

**The EarthLab Method**





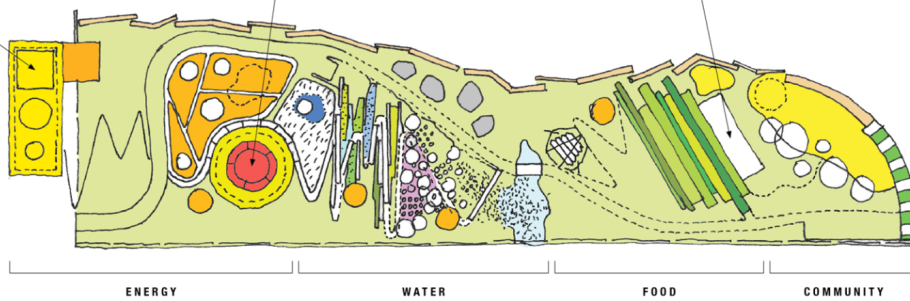
EarthLab Climate Action Park (aerial view)



1 Environmental Sustainability Makers Lab

2 Energy Garden

3 Hydroponics Station



ENERGY

WATER

FOOD

COMMUNITY



## Assignment/Grade Breakdown

### (30%) Attendance & Participation

- *Seminar attendance and discussion:* You are expected to come to the seminar having read the text(s), which can be found on Canvas, and be ready to discuss. For most weeks, this expectation will include a short reflection assignment posted to a Canvas discussion board, due Thursdays at 11:59pm. The reflections will be graded for completion and serve as facilitation tools for the discussion lead (see “discussion lead” below). Typically, the reflection will incorporate the week’s readings to aid you in thinking about and understanding your experience at the field site. We will also discuss experiences from the site, analyze field notes (see “field notes” below), and design climate action activities. Prompt arrival is critical for making the most of seminar time (see “attendance” below).
- *Discussion lead:* You will be responsible for leading the class in a discussion about one of the week’s readings. We will assign weeks and go over expectations and tools for leading discussion on the first day of seminar.
- *Field site visits:* 2:00 - 5:00pm (excluding commute). During site visits your priority is to engage with community partners and youth participants. This will look different each day, as activity materials, setup, and participant and instructor needs will vary.

### (30%) Field notes (for uploading directions, see “media and field note upload procedures” below)

- This course forms an integral part of implementing and evaluating programming at the EarthLab Community Station. EarthLab brings together a wide variety of people and organizations from the university and local community. As a student in this course, you are now part of this research collaborative both as researcher and participant. The field notes you write are data critical to this research project. They are one of the primary sources of information used by the UCSD Center on Global Justice to study effective means of co-production with community partners.
- Every time you are at site, you are required to write a field note that documents your participative experiences and the development of your EarthLab activity throughout the quarter. See “field note writing guide” in Canvas for guidelines on how to write your field notes.

### (25%) EarthLab Activity & Showcase Exhibit

- *EarthLab Activity:* Engaging in the process of co production with community members is the heart of this course. As such, the activity you design with your peers, GWSD staff,



and participants will be the outcome of this process. See “EarthLab Activity Project Description.doc” in Canvas for more details.

- *EarthLab Spring Showcase Exhibit:* On **Thursday, June 8 from 5-7PM**, EarthLab will be hosting the community for their Spring Showcase. This is during week 10 of the course. Instead of holding a seminar on Friday, June 9, you will be expected to attend the showcase to present student artifacts from your EarthLab activity. More information will be provided during the quarter.

### **(15%) Final Research Project & Final Conference**

- *Final Research Project:* By the end of the quarter, you will assemble a project or proposal that represents your findings and recommendations for the EarthLab Community Stations site. The final project will be due 24H before your scheduled final conference. More information will be given during the quarter.
- *Final Reflection:* You will write a 2-3 page paper (double-spaced) in which you reflect on a.) your progress on learning goals since the start of the quarter b.) incorporate course material and field notes to help make sense of your experience. The paper will serve both as a tool for synthesizing your and reflecting your learning this quarter, and as preparatory material for your final conference with me. This reflection will be due 24H before your scheduled final conference. More information will be given during the quarter.
- *Final Conference:* Instead of taking a final, you will meet with me 1:1 for a 20-minute conference. During this conference, we will discuss your final reflection paper and the progress you have made on your learning goals. At the end of the conference, we will agree on your final grade as a way to close out the course. Missing the conference will result in the loss of half a letter grade (e.g. from A to A-).

### **Logistics**

Carpools will be set up in the beginning of the quarter. The field site is also accessible via the UC San Diego Blue Line Trolley.

### **Email & Text Communication Guidelines**

I frequently use email to communicate with the class about assignments, updates, etc. For questions, appointments, or anything related to the course, please email me. I will do my best to get back to you promptly, within 24 hours. (I do not check email over the weekend.). For a time-sensitive request or update, you may text or call. For example, if you are locked in at the field site or need to notify me that you are running late. A text about coursework that could be



answered via email is not considered an appropriate use of contact via cell phone. If texting, please include your name. My number is in my email signature, and I will share it on the first day of class.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

	Sequence in field	Friday Seminar	Readings & Assignments	Key due dates
Week 1 (4/3 - 4/7)	<i>Introduce</i>  No field visits this week	<b>4/7</b> Topic: <i>Climate justice from local to global</i>  <b>In class:</b> Introduction to field site	<b>Readings:</b> Review <a href="#">EarthLab</a> and <a href="#">GWSD-Chollas Creek</a> websites Watch: <a href="#">RECONNECT 2021 EarthLab video</a>  “ <a href="#">Divided together</a> ” <a href="#">S1 E1: Kumeyaay Nation Divided by the Border</a>  <b>Assignments:</b> Reflection/CWA #1 due to Canvas	
Week 2 (4/10 - 4/14)	<i>Supporting Youth Participation</i>	<b>4/14</b> Topic: <i>Ethical Engagement with Youth</i>  <b>Discussion Lead:</b>  <b>Nathan Zeke</b>	<b>Readings:</b> Christensen, Pia Hardrup. 2004. <i>Children’s Participation in Ethnographic Research: Issues of Power and Representation.</i>  Caskey & Anafara. 2007. <i>Developmental Characteristics of Young Adolescents.</i>  Listen: <a href="#">San Diego Youth 4 Climate 2022 KPBS Interview</a> (12 mins)  <b>Assignments:</b> CWA #2 due Field notes #1 due to shared Google drive	
Week 3 (4/17 - 4/21)	<i>Supporting Youth Participation</i>	<b>4/21</b> Topic: <i>Designing with the EarthLab Method</i>	<b>Readings:</b> Blikstein, Paulo. 2008. <i>Travels in Troy with Friere: Technology as an Agent of Emancipation.</i>	Activity first draft due to Canvas 4/23 @



		<p><b>Discussion Lead (2): Queenie &amp; Kelly</b></p> <p><b>In class:</b> busqueda</p>	<p>Rudkin and Davis. 2007. <i>Photography as a Tool for Understanding Youth Connections to Their Neighborhood.</i></p> <p><b>Assignments:</b> CWA #3 Field notes #2 due to shared Google drive</p>	11:59 pm
<p>Week 4 (4/24 - 4/28)</p> <p><i>Supporting Youth Participation</i></p> <p>Activity draft due to Allie for feedback</p>	<p><b>4/28</b> Topic: <i>What Can Equitable Climate Solutions Look Like?</i></p> <p><b>Discussion Leads (2): Vitaliana &amp; Julie</b></p> <p><b>In class:</b> Incorporate feedback from GWSD to revise activity design</p>	<p><b>Readings:</b> "Divided together" S1 E3: <i>Indigenous Land Use Practices</i> <i>Bending the Curve</i> Executive Summary <i>Recommended: Zine, Hoodwinked in the Hothouse.</i> Third Edition</p> <p><b>Assignments:</b> CWA #4 Field notes #3 due to shared Google drive</p>		
<p>Week 5 (5/1 - 5/5)</p> <p><i>Supporting Youth Participation</i></p>	<p><b>5/5</b> Topic: <i>Remembering Interconnectedness – Facilitating Community-Led Climate Solutions</i></p> <p><b>Discussion Lead: Estrella</b></p> <p><b>In class:</b> revising activity design</p>	<p><b>Readings:</b> <b>CAPECA/Coliberate</b> Climate Grief: Our Greatest Ally? BtC Video 18: Local Solutions <b>Recommended (or in lecture):</b> Rosa et al. 2023. <i>A binational social vulnerability index (BSVI) for the San Diego-Tijuana Region: mapping trans-boundary exposure to climate change for just and equitable climate adaptation planning.</i></p> <p><b>Assignments:</b> CWA #5 Field notes #4</p>	<p>Revised draft of activity due to Canvas 5/10 @ 11:59 pm</p>	





<p>Week 6 (5/8 - 5/12)</p>	<p><i>Supporting Youth Participation</i></p> <p>Friday group starts 5/12</p>	<p><b>5/12</b> Topic: <i>Pathways to Community Empowerment</i></p> <p><b>Discussion Lead (2): Tyler &amp; Jeffrey</b></p> <p><b>In class:</b> Choosing a direction for research project</p>	<p><b>Readings:</b> Rappaport, Julian. 1995. <i>Empowerment Meets Narrative: Listening to Stories and Creating Settings</i></p> <p><i>Taking Root: The Vision of Wangari Maathai.</i> documentary (YouTube)</p> <p><b>Assignments:</b> CWA #6: Mid-term check in Field notes #5 due</p>	
<p>Week 7 (5/15 - 5/19)</p>	<p><i>Engage &amp; Lead Activity</i></p>	<p><b>5/19</b> Topic: <i>Let's Go to A New Place</i></p> <p><b>Discussion Lead (2): Jay &amp; Shun</b></p> <p><b>In class:</b> Working on research project</p>	<p><b>Readings:</b> A conversation with wisdom keeper Arkan Lushwala (6 min)</p> <p>Brault, Claire. 2017. "Feminist Imaginations in a Heated Climate: Parody, Idiocy, and Climatological Possibilities." <i>Catalyst: Feminism, Theory, Technoscience</i> 3 (2).</p> <p>Robin Wall Kimmerer: <i>SkyWoman Falling</i></p> <p><b>Assignments:</b> CWA #7 Field notes #6 due</p>	
<p>Week 8 (5/22 - 5/26)</p> <p>5/26 no school @ MTM</p>	<p><i>Engage &amp; Lead Activity</i></p> <p>Friday group will not lead</p>	<p><b>5/26</b> Topic: <i>Community Engagement &amp; Partnership</i></p> <p><b>Discussion Lead: Boden</b></p> <p><b>In class:</b> Translating activity into exhibit for showcase</p>	<p><b>Readings:</b> Self-directed research from resource bank &amp; CAPECA website</p> <p>Cordova et al., 2022. <i>Environmental Justice and the Alliance for a Just Transition: Grist for Climate Justice Planning</i></p> <p><b>Assignments:</b> CWA #8: Trauma Training attendance &amp;</p>	



			reflection Field notes #7 due	
Week 9 (5/29 - 6/2)  5/29 is Memorial Day	<i>Reflect &amp; Analyze</i>	<b>6/2</b> Topic: <i>Scaling Climate Action from Local to Global</i>  <b>Discussion Lead: Tierney</b>  <b>In class:</b> Preparing showcase exhibit, Working on research project	<b>Readings:</b> Self-directed research from resource bank  <b>Assignments:</b> CWA #9 Field notes #8 due	
Week 10 (6/5 - 6/9)	<i>Engaging with Community</i>	<b>NO SEMINAR ON FRIDAY</b>  Spring Activity Showcase <b>THURSDAY, 6/8 5-7 PM @ EarthLab</b>	<b>Assignment:</b> Field notes #9 due Friday 6/9	
Finals week (6/12 - 6/16)	<i>Process</i>	<b>Final Conferences with Amy</b> (to be scheduled individually)	<b>Assignment:</b> Final reflection paper due 24H before final conference	

**COURSE POLICIES & EXPECTATIONS**

**Field Site Dress Code**

Because our work at EarthLab is at a school and outdoors, extra attention should be paid to attire on site. Mentors will be expected to adhere to the [MTM dress code](#) and model its intention that appropriate dress and grooming contribute to a productive learning environment. While the students are required to wear uniforms and you are not, please note that the following attire is not permissible on site: cropped tops, short shorts, and any piece of clothing



with inappropriate words or pictures. This policy extends to anything you bring to the field site (i.e. stickers on water bottles). The EarthLab is also an outdoor environment, so you will be expected to wear close toed shoes. Also come prepared to get a little dirty, as outdoor education necessarily involves working with dusty or wet materials. If you have any questions about a particular item or difficulties accessing field site-appropriate attire, please contact your instructor or field site lead.

### **Media Policy**

An important part of your work at EarthLab is recording participant engagement with activities, and is considered part of your engagement at the field site. All participants in the EarthLab after school program have signed media releases, so you are able and encouraged to take photos of and with participants on site. Photos will be uploaded to Google Drive.

### **Field Note and Media Uploading Procedures (Google Drive)**

Field notes:

1. Upload your field note (AS A GOOGLE DOC ) within 24 hrs of your visit. *All late entries lose 20% per day late. After two days late submission, your field note will not be accepted.*
2. Put your name and date of the site visit at the top of the page
3. Save your document as: lastname\_wk\_site visit day\_date (ex: Knight\_wk1\_MON\_04.10.23)
4. Each weekly field note should be ~4 pages, double spaced.
5. Upload to CAT 124 EL Google Drive
6. Folder path: "CAT124\_EL\_SP23" → "Field notes" → week of site visit

Media:

1. Media uploads are due with field note uploads.
2. If you have an iphone, first convert from .HEIC to .JPEG
3. Rename image file as: description\_date (ex: participants planting milkweed\_07.24.22)
4. Folder path: "CAT124\_EL\_SP23" → "media" → week of site visit



### **Assignment Submission and Late Work**

I am understanding and flexible with most late submissions if communication is early and open. However, because we are working closely with each other and community partners, some deadlines do need to be firm. This is to ensure not only that we produce quality work in time for



the EarthLab Showcase, but also that trust and reciprocity is maintained in our relationship with GWSD and MTM. This is especially true for deadlines associated with the EarthLab activity and showcase exhibit. A pattern of late submissions will result in a conversation about how it is affecting your engagement in class, your peers, and therefore your grade.

### **Attendance**

Regular, prompt attendance at both the field site and seminar are critical to your success in the course. It is also key to maintaining a healthy partnership with GWSD and MTM. That is why it is important to communicate early and often. If you know ahead of time that you will be absent, the expectation is that you will let me know. A notification via email will usually suffice. This is especially important for field days, as I need to know if more support is needed on site.

Accommodations will be made for absences related to illness, bereavement, family emergencies or care responsibilities and will not affect your grade. **Missing two or more classes** without this type of communication will result in a conversation about how your absence is affecting your engagement in class, and therefore your grade. Similarly, I will check in **after two late arrivals**. If late arrival becomes a pattern, we will have a conversation about how tardiness is affecting your engagement in seminar and at the field site, and therefore your grade.

### **Academic Integrity**

UCSD has a university-wide Policy on Integrity of Scholarship, published annually in the General Catalog, and online <https://academicintegrity.ucsd.edu/>. All students must read and be familiar with this Policy. All suspected violations of academic integrity will be reported to UCSD's Academic Integrity Coordinator. Students found to have violated UCSD's standards for academic integrity may include suspension or dismissal, and academic sanctions may include failure of the assignment or failure of the course.

### **Communication**

In CAT, it is our hope that in this course we will develop a supportive learning community that fosters discussion, engagement, and excitement. Often, we will engage in the course material through the sharing of ideas, questions, and personal experiences. "Honesty, listening for understanding, a willingness to share your ideas, and respect for self and others" are basic guidelines that can help create a positive learning environment. Your participation and feedback are important to the success of the course and I welcome your thoughts throughout the term on how we might improve class processes that will encourage effective communication and dialogue.

### **Statement of Inclusion:**

I believe very strongly that the classroom and the community-based field site is a place to expand our knowledge and experiences safely, while being respected and valued. I support the values of UC San Diego to "create a diverse, equitable, and inclusive campus in which students, faculty, and staff can thrive". I strive to uphold the values articulated by the Office of the [Vice](#)



**Chancellor for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:** “We believe that true excellence is achieved through productive relationships among people of diverse perspectives. When the collective talents of our students, faculty, and staff at UC San Diego are united in an environment that is open and inclusive, creativity and innovation prosper.” I hope you will join me in creating a class that upholds these values to further enhance our learning as a community.

For more information, [https://commons.ucsd.edu/\\_files/Inclusion-Statements-Handout-4.pdf](https://commons.ucsd.edu/_files/Inclusion-Statements-Handout-4.pdf).  
And <http://diversity.ucsd.edu>.

**Discrimination and Harassment**

Please see Canvas for [UCSD’s Principles of Community](#) for a description of your campus’s commitments.

**Students with Disabilities**

Office for Students with Disabilities: <https://disabilities.ucsd.edu/>- 858-534-4382



# AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM

EVERY DAY AFTER SCHOOL UNTIL 5:00 PM

See you in room 205 by 3:00 pm!



At EarthLab we engage in STEAM activities to learn about nature, climate change and ways we can help our community and planet!



**NATURE  
EXPLORATION**

**GARDENING &  
COOKING**

**HOMEWORK  
HELP**

**ART  
PROJECTS**

**CLIMATE  
ACTION**

**Space is Limited! Register here:**  
<https://forms.gle/JTq6uWKBbk9jiLJc9>  
Call/Text 619-818-0275

**CAREER  
EXPLORATION**

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