

# Dr Manuel Vallée

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## Maintaining Student Engagement When Teaching about Environmental Problems

**Friday  
03 May  
2024**

**1 -2pm Seminar**

**WEBINAR**

Calendar invite:

<https://calendar.app.google/zX7hYpC3TBnVogJd9>

Zoom link:

<https://auckland.zoom.us/j/99170021497>

### *Teaching and Learning for a Sustainable World Seminar Series*

Dr Vallée's talk will focus on the importance of fostering and maintaining student engagement when teaching about environmental problems. While environmental problems are a growing concern and relevant to everyone's lives, the extent of the problems can leave students feeling overwhelmed, which can lead to apathy and disengagement. In this Environmental Sociology course Dr. Vallée uses numerous strategies to foster and maintain student engagement, one of which is assigning a 2-part comparative project that asks students to pick an environmental issue they are interested in, find a university campus or city that is a leader on addressing the issue, and then contrast it to our campus or city. One way the assignment fosters student engagement is by allowing students to personalise it, which increases relevance to their lives. Another is that it gives them a chance to identify examples where environmental problems have been effectively addressed, thereby providing the inspiration and hope that helps combat apathy and disengagement. Beyond hearing about this innovative assignment, the talk will be an opportunity to think about and discuss how we can foster and maintain student engagement when teaching about environmental problems.

### **Bio**

Dr Vallée's research and teaching focuses on factors that mediate the capacity to be sustainable, with a particular focus on environmental pollution. This focus includes studying the social processes through which people get exposed to toxicants, inequalities in such exposures, the health harms associated with such exposures, the drivers of the pollution, how dominant institutions (including government agencies and corporations) produce ignorance and false knowledge about the environmental harms, how higher education contributes to the problem, and the controlling processes that hinder communities from becoming more knowledgeable about the issue and more effective at addressing it.



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