



SOC 5 - Our Sustainable Future

Catalog Description

Transfer Status: CSU/UC

Unit(s): 3.00

Lecture: 51.00 Contact hours/102.00 Out of class hours/153.00 Total hours/3.00 Unit(s)

Total: 51.00 Contact hours/102.00 Out of class hours/153.00 Total hours/3.00 Unit(s)

Course Description: This course introduces students to the principles of 'Sustainability' within the global, national, regional, and local contexts. This course will increase students' literacy of the three interconnected 'pillars' of sustainable systems, the ecosystem, human society, and the economy. To develop these literacies, students will begin by investigating the perils that currently effect each system, for example, resource depletion, species extinction, pollution, and global warming in the ecosphere; population growth, social inequality, disease, violence and conflict in human societies; and imperialism, unemployment, consumerism and waste in the global economy. The majority of the course will focus on social institutions and organizations that are re-imagining our common future by rethinking and redesigning how we live. Students will learn of new and innovative uses of renewable resources, production processes, and human capital; alternative forms of energy, transportation, building materials, food production, media, education, and urban planning; and new ways to build coalitions, community, trust, and democratic participation. Case studies will highlight sustainability practices in different parts of the world from a variety of perspectives.

Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Demonstrate the historical, scientific, philosophical and institutional origins of the current sustainability movement.
2. Define sustainability and evaluate the sustainability of particular systems and practices in contrast to others.
3. Explain the interdependent relationship between the economy, society and the ecosphere using a systems theory approach.
4. Evaluate the current problems that plague the ecosphere, and discuss remedies necessary to reverse these trends.
5. Evaluate the common problems that plague human societies and discuss remedies that would create more just and equitable societies on a global scale.
6. Evaluate the effects of modern industrial capitalism on societies throughout the world and on the ecosphere, and discuss a range of theoretical and applied technological and design innovations that make commodity production more sustainable.
7. Demonstrate the mechanics of alternative energy, transportation, building materials, food production, community planning, and innovations of other industries and organizations that will provide new forms of employment and new forms of living.
8. Analyze the political and cultural challenges of sustainability implementation.
9. Develop ideas to create common ground and promote the principles of sustainability to diverse groups of people.
10. Demonstrate the skills of civic participation and the importance of implementing them.
11. Access and evaluate sources of information on sustainability issues.

Course Content

Topic Titles / Suggested Time Topic

Lecture

<u>Topics</u>	<u>Lec Hrs</u>
Introduction to Sustainability	3.00
Historical Background/Sustainability as a Social Movement	3.00
Sustainability in the Economic Sphere: Promoting Equity, Opportunity, and Well-Being	3.00
Sustainability in the Social Sphere: Promoting Justice, Peace, and Human Development	3.00
Sustainability in the Environmental Sphere: Promoting Conservation, Restoration, and Planetary Health	3.00
Populations and Habitat	3.00
Climate	3.00
Energy	3.00
Production and Consumption	3.00
Greening the Built Environment	3.00
Sustainable Cities	3.00
Sustainable Agriculture	3.00
Water	3.00
Sustainability Education	3.00
Indigenous Wisdom Cultures	3.00

<u>Topics</u>	<u>Lec Hrs</u>
Waste and Recycling	3.00
Biosphere Consciousness	3.00
Total Hours: 51.00	

Methods of Instruction

- A. Group Discussions
- B. Homework: Students are required to complete two hours of outside-of-class homework for each hour of lecture
- C. Lecture
- D. Multimedia Presentations
- E. Problem-Solving Sessions
- F. Reading Assignments

Methods of Evaluation

- A. Oral Presentation
- B. Class participation
- C. Final Examination
- D. Short papers
- E. Class Discussion
- F. Writing Assignments
 - a. Study Guides (tied to readings)
 - b. Concept Papers (internet research)

Examples of Assignments

Reading Assignments

1. Read Garrett Hardin's "Tragedy of the Commons" and be prepared (as a part of one of two groups in class) to discuss 1) the merits of 'private' versus 'public' ownership of natural resources 2) the outcome of 'short term individual interests' versus 'long term group interests' in the management of planetary resources. Be prepared as a group to share your findings in class.
2. Read the required chapters from John Robbins' book "The Food Revolution" and Lierre Kieth's "The Vegetarian Myth" and be prepared to outline the arguments of each about the environmental and human health benefits and liabilities of animal consumption by humans. Be prepared to offer one or two arguments during class discussion.

Writing Assignments

1. Write a two-page paper on two examples of ecological design products or processes that utilize the principles of Biomimicry. Be prepared to discuss one example in class and bring up on the screen some of the links you found and explain why these links and their content are relevant.
2. Write a two-page paper that explains your view on whether Sustainability Education is a viable mode of transforming culture and social institutions toward sustainable outcomes. Be prepared during class discussion to explain your position.

Out-of-Class Assignments

1. Utilize an online ecological footprint calculator and study all the components that comprise the "Ecological Footprint" of each person on Earth. For the next week, track and record everything you consume from the natural world as described in on the website. At the end of the week, calculate your own Ecological Footprint and then comment on ways you can reduce it. Share with the class what the most surprising thing you learned about your own Ecological Footprint.
2. Construct a five-question interview on the topic of 'Abrupt Climate Change'. Interview 10 people of different ages, educational, economic, and political backgrounds on this topic. Analyze the responses of each interviewee based on Elizabeth Kubler-Ross' Stages of Grief. What do your conclusions tell you about public awareness of the dangers of anthropogenic climate change? Be prepared to share your findings with the class.

Recommended Materials of Instruction

Edward, Andres R. (2005). The Sustainability Revolution: Portrait of a Paradigm Shift. *New Society Publishers, 1st ed.* 9780865715318.

McDonough, William and Michael Braungart. (2002). Cradle-to-Cradle: Remaking the Way We Make Things. *North Point Press, 1st.* 9780865475878.

Robertson, Margaret. (2021). Sustainability Principles and Practices. *Routledge, 3rd.* 9780367365196.

Meadows, Donella H. (2008). Thinking in Systems: A Primer. *Chelsea Green, 1st.* 9781603580557.

World Watch Institute, ed. (2013). State of the World 2013: Is Sustainability Still Possible?. *World Watch Institute, 1st.* 9781610914499.

Rifkin, Jeremy. (2013). The Third Industrial Revolution: How Lateral Power is Transforming Energy, the Economy and the World. *MacMillan, 1st.* 9780230341975.

McDonough, William and Michael Brungart. (2013). The Upcycle: Beyond Sustainability: Designing for Abundance. *North Point Press, 1st.* 9780865477483.

Other Learning Materials

Photocopied or Web-Based Course Reader (journal articles, etc.)

Minimum Qualifications

Sociology (Masters Required)

Created/Revised by: Riley, Melinda

Date: 12/11/2023