

Sustainable World
NCLC 210
4 Credits (1 credit EL embedded)
Tuesdays 10:30-1:10, Innovation Hall 215G

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Required Readings

Deep Economy: The Wealth of Communities and the Durable Future by Bill McKibben (Holt Paperbacks, 2008).

The majority of readings for this class are available on the course Blackboard page.

Course Description

This is designed to be a core course for George Mason University's Environmental and Sustainability Studies major and Sustainability Studies Minor. It includes 3 credits for class time and an additional 1 credit for the sustainability-related experiential learning component. This course will focus on understanding the basic issues in the natural sciences and social sciences that underlie many of the world's current environmental problems. We will also consider ethical matters, such as equity, as they pertain to global resource consumption, pollution, and climate change.

Our time in the classroom as a learning community will combine discussion of readings and current events, mini-lectures, group projects, and active, inquiry-based learning. You will earn one credit of experiential learning through a combination of service learning and field experiences.

Mason aims to improve student success through increased participation in and celebration of undergraduate research and creative activities. Scholarship is valued as a core practice of the Mason student experience. *Students as Scholars* is Mason's undergraduate research and creative

activities initiative, organized to build students' skills in undergraduate research and creative activities. Students in the ESS BA and Sustainability Studies Minor will have increasing levels of engagement, beginning with the discovery of scholarship, moving through scholarly inquiry, and culminating with the creation of a scholarly project that promotes sustainability on campus. Sustainable World participates in the “discovery of scholarship” stage of this initiative. Assignments and course activities are designed to help you understand the scholarly field of sustainability studies and build a solid foundation of research abilities in this field.

Learning Objectives

By the completion of the course, the successful student will be able to:

- Describe the major environmental problems facing the United States and the world, the causes of these problems, and potential solutions.
- Analyze the economic, social, and moral implications of global resource use.
- Define sustainability and describe methods of assessing sustainability.

In addition, successful students will progress toward mastery of the following Students as Scholars discovery-level outcomes:

- Distinguish between personal beliefs and evidence.
- Articulate how SUSTAINABILITY SCHOLARSHIP influences society.
- Evaluate the credibility of source information.
- Understand research methods used in SUSTAINABILITY STUDIES.
- Understand how knowledge is transmitted within SUSTAINABILITY STUDIES, from SUSTAINABILITY STUDIES to other disciplines, and to the public.

Experiential Learning

You will earn one experiential learning credit in this class by completing 25 hours of sustainability-related service learning on or off campus and taking a day-long field trip off campus. **You must complete the Experiential Learning requirement to earn a passing grade for this course.**

Required Work

Sources and Destinations Essay (200 points)

In this essay, you will engage in sustainability scholarship by carefully researching the source(s) required to create an item you consume in your everyday life—for example, your breakfast cereal, your shoes, your shampoo. You will also research, as appropriate, what happens to this item after you finish with it (the destination). Your challenge will be to deal with both the ecological and social impacts of the item you study. You will receive detailed instructions for this assignment.

Midterm (150 points)

The take-home midterm will give you an opportunity to demonstrate your learning over the first half of the course. Learning community members will discuss the content of midterm essay questions before the day of the exam. You may consult your notes and course readings while writing the midterm essays.

Peer Teaching I: Community Sustainability Project (100 points)

Groups of students will engage in action-based sustainability scholarship to design a project that has the potential to promote sustainability goals within the Mason community. Each group will choose one of the course's topic areas, and pick a specific problem facing our community within that topic area. Groups will analyze the root causes of the problem, come up with a potential solution that can be implemented within a semester time-frame, and present a plan on how to implement it. You will receive detailed instructions for this assignment.

Peer Teaching II: Reports from the Field (100 points)

At our last class meeting, you will work individually or in groups to teach other learning community members about the sustainability initiatives being conducted in the campus unit or off campus organization where you have done your service learning. You will receive detailed instructions for this assignment.

Informal Writing (200 points—Directed Writing, 100; Peer Teaching Evaluations, 100)—There are two types of informal writing for the course, Directed Writing and Peer Teaching Evaluations.

- **Directed Writing**—Throughout the semester, you will do a number of brief (usually 2 pages) informal writings in response to prompts. These prompts will ask you to reflect on issues relating to sustainability, to respond to the weekly readings and activities, and to reflect on how your service learning experiences relate to your learning in other parts of the course. You will post these Directed Writings to Blackboard and will receive timely feedback.
- **Peer Teaching Evaluations**—You will use a laptop or smart phone to evaluate and provide feedback to groups on their Peer Teaching presentations throughout the semester. The credit you receive for these evaluations will depend on the level of effort and engagement they reflect. At the end of the semester, you will use your evaluations to support your argument for which of the projects proposed by the peer teaching groups deserves to be funded.

Course Portfolio (150 points)— The portfolio gives you an opportunity to consolidate the various pieces of work you have done for the course and to reflect upon and synthesize your learning throughout the semester. For those of you who are pursuing a related major or minor, this portfolio may begin a record of your knowledge and skills you can carry through other courses and onward into your future studies and careers. Toward the end of the course you will receive detailed portfolio instructions.

Participation (100 points)—Our class is a learning community. As members of this community, we all depend on each other not just to show up, but to be fully engaged in each and every class activity. This means coming to class on time and prepared, speaking and listening well during discussions, raising questions, and calling attention to current events that relate to

this course. Participation also involves doing everything you can to make our field trip run smoothly, and representing yourself and our class well when you are engaged in service learning.

Policies

Grading Scale

A+	1000-970	C+	799-770
A	969-930	C	769-730
A-	929-900	C-	729-700
B+	899-870	D	699-600
B	869-830	F	599-0
B-	829-800		

Paperless Classroom

Paper use is one of many important elements of campus sustainability. We will use the Blackboard online course management system to minimize paper use. Our aim is to collaboratively adopt policies that will balance academic needs with resource conservation concerns.

Late Work

Papers and other assignments are to be submitted at or before the time noted on the course schedule. Late work will be reduced one grade per day. No work will be accepted over one week late without a valid written medical excuse or notice of death in the family.

Honor Code

When you enrolled in this course you agreed to abide by the university's Honor Code. The Honor Code does not preclude collaborative work, such as informal discussions and studying in communities. Nor does it preclude assigned group work. The Honor Code does require that work you, as an individual, turn in ultimately be the product of your own individual synthesis or integration of ideas, and that the work a group turns in ultimately be the product of the group's collective ideas. If you are uncertain of the line between collaboration and cheating, see an instructor. As always, cite your sources. If you do not, it is plagiarism. Plagiarism means lifting someone else's ideas or words and presenting them as your own without proper attribution of the source. This includes all sources, including those found on the Internet. Use an approved citation method, specified by your instructor. Work created for previously taken classes cannot be turned in for credit in this course.

Diversity Statement

New Century College is an intentionally inclusive community that celebrates diversity and strives to have faculty, staff and students that reflect the diversity of our plural society. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, class, linguistic background, religion, gender identity, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, or physical ability.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see the instructors and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703.993.2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

Laptops & Phones

You are welcome to bring a laptop and smart phone to class and use these devices for class-related purposes only. During class please refrain from using your laptop and/or phone for purposes not related to class (e.g. Facebook, email, texting, surfing the Internet). Note that repeat offenders might be asked to not use their laptops in class or phones, as this creates a distraction and diminishes the active learning community we are creating in this class.

Email

GMU faculty and staff may only correspond with students through the students' GMU assigned email accounts. Emails sent from other accounts will not be answered.

Blackboard

To access Blackboard, login to My Mason (mymason.gmu.edu), click the Courses tab, and click the link for NCLC 210. The use of Blackboard is essential in this course, so if you have technical problems, please contact the IT department (email address can be found on Blackboard's homepage) as soon as possible.

**Sustainable World
Course Schedule**

	Topics & Due Dates	Readings and Resources
8/27	<p>Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Syllabus/Blackboard • Field Trip • Service Learning <p>Form peer teaching groups</p> <p>Survey of sustainability knowledge and behaviors</p>	
8/30	<p>Service Learning preferences due on Blackboard by 5 p.m.</p>	<p>Read the menu of service learning options in the Service Learning folder on Blackboard and post your top 3 choices, in order of preference.</p>
9/3	<p>Sustainability—History and Frameworks</p> <p>Guest speaker: Mark Thurston, Center for Consciousness and Transformation</p> <p>Receive service learning placements</p>	<p>Edwards Introduction and Ch. 1: “The Birth of Sustainability.”</p> <p>Blackboard</p> <p>David Orr. “Four Challenges of Sustainability.” Oberlin College Lecture, April 3, 2003.</p> <p>Blackboard</p>
9/10	<p>Campus Sustainability</p> <p>Guest Speaker: Giulia Manno, Office of Sustainability, George Mason University</p> <p>Introduce Peer Teaching One</p> <p>Sustainability scholarship: action research</p> <p>Guest speaker(s) from Sustainability in Action</p> <p>Directed Writing due on Blackboard by 10:30 a.m.</p>	<p>Christopher Uhl. “Process and Practice: Creating the Sustainable University.” From <i>Sustainability on Campus: Stories and Strategies for Change</i>. Ed. Bartlett & Chase. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2004.</p> <p>Blackboard</p> <p>Anthony Cortese. “Integrating Sustainability Into the Learning Community.” <i>Facilities Manager</i>, Jan./Feb. 2005.</p> <p>Blackboard</p> <p>GMU Sustainability Office website: http://green.gmu.edu/</p>
9/17	<p>Ecological Footprint</p> <p>Guest speaker: Dr. Gregory</p>	<p>Venetoulis and Talberth. “Refining the Ecological Footprint.” <i>Environment, Development, and Sustainability</i>, 10:4 2008.</p>

	<p>Unruh, New Century College</p> <p>Sustainability scholarship: ecological footprint analysis</p> <p>Introduce Sources and Destinations Assignment</p> <p>Film: <i>The Story of Stuff</i></p> <p>Directed Writing due on Blackboard by 10:30 a.m.</p>	<p>Before class, complete the Ecological Footprint Quiz at: www.myfootprint.org. Save your results as a PDF or in some other format and bring to class.</p>
9/24	<p>Global Population Growth</p> <p>Film: begin <i>The 11th Hour</i></p> <p>EXTRA CREDIT: Seth Goldman, CEO of Honest Tea. JC Cinema @ 4 p.m.</p> <p>Sources and Destinations Topic Exploration Due on BlackBoard by 11:59 p.m.</p>	<p>McKibben Chapter 1: "After Growth."</p> <p><i>The Habitable Planet</i>, Unit 5: "Human Population Dynamics."</p> <p>Blackboard</p> <p>Rev. Dr. James A. Nash. "Making Moral Connections: Population, Environment, and Consumption." Population Press Vol 3, # 3, March/April 1997.</p> <p>Blackboard</p>
10/1	<p>Climate Change</p> <p>Film: finish <i>The 11th Hour</i></p>	<p>Bill McKibben. "A New World," 2010. Blackboard</p> <p>Bill McKibben. "When Words Fail." Orion: July/August, 2008. Blackboard</p> <p>Michael Specter. "The Climate Fixers." The New Yorker: May 14, 2012. Blackboard</p>
10/8	<p>Biological & Cultural Diversity</p> <p>Film: "Wade Davis: Dreams from Endangered Cultures" (22 min.)</p> <p>Midterm review session</p>	<p>Pennington and Ricketts. "Conservation Biology and Biodiversity." <i>Encyclopedia of Life Sciences</i>, 2011. Blackboard</p>
10/11	<p>Midterm posted on BlackBoard at 9 a.m. today. Completed midterm due on Blackboard by 5 p.m. today.</p>	<p>This is an open-book, open-note exam. You may consult all course materials as you compose your midterm essays.</p>

10/15	NO CLASS [Mon. classes meet on Tues. because of Columbus Day]	
10/22	Food Guest speaker: Sam Quinn, Farm at Sunnyside	McKibben Chapter 2: "The Year of Eating Locally." Michael Pollan. "Power Steer." <i>New York Times Magazine</i> : March 31, 2002. Blackboard Wendell Berry. "The Pleasures of Eating." Reprinted from <i>What Are People For?</i> New York: FSG, 1990. Blackboard
10/29	Building and Design Film: "Janine Benyus: Biomimicry in Action" (20 min.) Outline and Annotated Bibliography for Sources and Destinations Essay due on Blackboard by 11:59 p.m.	David Orr. "Loving Children: A Design Problem." <i>Design Builder</i> , 2000. Blackboard McDonough and Braungart. "The Cradle-to-Cradle Alternative." <i>State of the World</i> . Worldwatch Institute, 2004. Blackboard
11/2	Field Trip to Sidwell Friends School	We will depart Mason at 9 a.m. and return no later than 1:30 p.m. Bring a snack or bag lunch and something to drink. Plan to be outside and dress for the weather.
11/5	Transportation Guest speaker: Ed Fendley Directed Writing due on Blackboard by 10:30 a.m.	James Howard Kunstler. "Making Other Arrangements." <i>Orion</i> : January/February 2007. Blackboard McCarthy, Woolf, and Harrison. "Revealed: The Real Cost of Air Travel." <i>The Independent</i> : May 27 2005. Blackboard Stephanie Corson. "Private Transportation vs. Mass Transit: The Environmental Aspects." Blackboard
11/12	Energy Film: <i>Kilowatt Ours</i> (55 min)	Chad Heeter. "The Oil in Your Oatmeal." <i>San Francisco Chronicle</i> : March 26, 2006. Blackboard

	Directed Writing due on Blackboard by 10:30 a.m.	Tillman and Hill. "Corn Can't Solve Our Problem." <i>The Washington Post</i> : March 25, 2007. Blackboard McKibben Chapter 4 selection: pp. 142-155
11/19	Social & Economic Justice Film: <i>China Blue</i> Sources and Destinations Essay due on Blackboard by 11:59 pm	McKibben Chapter 3: "All for One, or One for All" Vandana Shiva. "Principles of Earth Democracy." <i>Earth Democracy: Justice, Sustainability, and Peace</i> . Cambridge: South End Press, 2006. Blackboard Eric Reese. "Moving Mountains." <i>Orion</i> : January/February 2006. Blackboard
11/26	Media, Communication, Behavior Change Guest Speaker: Karen Akerlof, Mason Center for Climate Change Communication Begin Peer Teaching II: Reports from the Field	Julia Corbett. "The Links Between Environmental Attitudes and Behaviors." From <i>Communicating Nature</i> . Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 2006. Blackboard Doug McKenzie-Mohr. Introduction to <i>Fostering Sustainable Behavior</i> . Blackboard McKibben Chapter 5: "The Durable Future."
12/3	Finish Peer Teaching II: Reports from the Field Celebrate Peer Teaching I funding recipients	
12/9	Final Portfolios Due by 5 p.m.	