Course Syllabus
Senior Capstone Course:  A&S 495G1
Envisioning Sustainable Communities
Fall, 2013
9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m., Mondays

Instructor: Tammy Werner
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Telephone: (309) 762-9481
Email: tl-werner@wiu.edu
Office Hours: Mondays: 5-6 pm (Riverfront #128); Tuesdays: 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm (60th Street); Wednesdays: 2:00 pm – 3:00 pm (60th Street), or by appointment

Course Overview
This course provides an interdisciplinary introduction to sustainability by integrating literature from the natural sciences, the social sciences, and the humanities. Sustainability includes not only the environment (nature), but also the issues of social and economic justice. The working definition of sustainability used in this course is taken from the Bruntland Report (1987):

“Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It contains within it two key concepts:

- the concept of ‘needs’, in particular the essential needs of the world’s poor, to which overriding priority should be given; and
- the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the environment’s ability to meet present and future needs”

Course Objectives
1. Students will develop an understanding of the complex interrelationship between social, economic, and environmental problems in the 21st Century.
2. Students will critically interrogate the assumptions, beliefs, and values which inform our nation’s policy responses to community sustainability.
3. Students will develop individual projects that address a problem or need in the Quad Cities region related to sustainability.
4. Students will develop basic grant writing skills, and apply these skills to the individual student projects.

Required Readings
4. Six Additional Short Readings: All numbered readings listed in the course schedule will be made available by the instructor.

1 Note: This is a WID (Writing in the Discipline) Course
Course Requirements – Undergraduate Students

1. **Short Papers** (40% of course grade)
   Each undergraduate student will submit eight out of the ten assigned short essays (1.5 – 2 full typewritten pages). Instructions for the essay assignment will be handed out the first day of class and are available in the Course Assignments module. Specific guidelines for each essay are noted in the syllabus (see tentative schedule). The papers must be written in essay format. An electronic copy of the paper is due no later than the start of the class period noted in the course schedule. Later papers are generally not accepted for this portion of the course grade.

2. **Course Project** (40% of course grade)
   Each undergraduate student will be required to develop a project that addresses a problem or need in the Quad Cities region related to sustainability. The specific project is the student’s choice, subject to the instructor’s approval. The final product for the course project will be a grant proposal suitable for submission to an appropriate grant-making institution. The due dates for all components of the course project are noted in the course schedule. The criterion for this assignment will be handed out the first day of class, and are also available on the course website through the Western Online system. (See Course Assignments module).

3. **Reflective Essay** (10% of course grade)
   Each undergraduate student will submit a personal, self reflective, academic narrative that a) articulates what she/he has gained from developing the sustainability project, and b) provides her/his vision of a sustainable community. The essay must be at least two full pages in length (double-spaced, 1” margins, using a 12 font). The due date for the reflective essay is noted in the course schedule.

4. **Participation** (10% of course grade). In addition to regular class attendance, students are expected to actively participate in the class discussions.
Undergraduate Students: Points for the course will be distributed as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Percentage of Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Short Papers</td>
<td>8 @ 20 points = 160 points total</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Desc.</td>
<td>20 points</td>
<td>05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant Proposal (Draft 1)</td>
<td>40 points</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant Proposal (Final Draft)</td>
<td>80 points</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poster Presentation</td>
<td>20 points</td>
<td>05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective Essay</td>
<td>40 points</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance/Participation</td>
<td>40 points</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL:** 400 points = 100% of grade

**Grading: Undergraduate Students.**

Note: WIU implemented plus-minus grading in all *undergraduate courses* beginning with the Fall 2010 semester. See the following website for details: [http://www.wiu.edu/Registrar/plusminus.php](http://www.wiu.edu/Registrar/plusminus.php)

Letter grades will be assigned as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>93% - 100%</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90% - 92%</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87% - 89%</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84% - 86%</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80% - 83%</td>
<td>B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77% - 79%</td>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74% - 76%</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70% - 73%</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67% - 69%</td>
<td>D+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64% - 66%</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60% - 63%</td>
<td>D-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LESS than 60%</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Course Requirements – Graduate Students

1. **Short Papers** (40% of course grade)
   Each graduate student will submit eight out of the ten assigned short essays (1.5 – 2 full typewritten pages). Instructions for the essay assignment will be handed out the first day of class and are available in the Course Assignments module. Specific guidelines for each essay are noted in the syllabus (see tentative schedule). An electronic copy of the paper is due no later than the start of the class period noted in the course schedule. Later papers are generally not accepted for this portion of the course grade.

2. **Course Project** (30% of course grade)
   Each graduate student will be required to develop a project that addresses a problem or need in the Quad Cities region related to sustainability. The specific project is the student’s choice, subject to the instructor’s approval. The final product for the course project will be a grant proposal suitable for submission to an appropriate grant-making institution. The due dates for all components of the course project are noted in the course schedule. The criterion for this assignment will be handed out the first day of class, and are also available on the course website through the Western Online system. (See folder labeled Course Assignments)

3. **Research Project** (20% of course grade)
   Each graduate student will be required to develop a research paper on a topic that relates to the course. The specific topic is the student’s choice, subject to the instructor’s approval. Graduate students are encouraged to use this assignment as an opportunity to explore a topic for one of the three exit options (thesis, project or internship) or alternatively, to explore the topic related to the grant proposal in greater depth. The due date for the research project is noted in the course schedule. The course papers should be 10-12 pages in length, (excluding the cover page and reference pages) written at a graduate level, and conform to APA guidelines.

4. **Reflective Essay** (5% of course grade)
   Each graduate student will submit a personal, self reflective, academic narrative that a) articulates what she/he has gained from developing the sustainability project, and b) provides her/his vision of a sustainable community. The essays should be 3-4 pages in length (double-spaced, 1” margins, using a 12 font). The due date for the reflective essay is noted in the course schedule.

5. **Attendance and Participation** (5% of course grade). In addition to regular class attendance, students are expected to actively participate in the class discussions.
Graduate Students: Points for the course will be distributed as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Points</th>
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<td>60 points</td>
<td>15% of grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation of Grant Proposal</td>
<td>20 points</td>
<td>05% of grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Paper (1st Draft)</td>
<td>20 points</td>
<td>05% of grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Paper (Final Draft)</td>
<td>60 points</td>
<td>15% of grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective Essay</td>
<td>20 points</td>
<td>05% of grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance/Participation</td>
<td>20 points</td>
<td>05% of grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL:</strong></td>
<td>400 points</td>
<td>100% of grade</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grading: Graduate Students.

Letter grades will be assigned as follows:

- 90% - 100% A
- 80% - 89% B
- 70% - 79% C
- 60% - 69% D
- LESS than 60% F
Ground Rules and Policies:

It is expected that students will have completed the assigned readings prior to class. I will begin each class period with the assumption that all students are prepared.

You are expected to attend class regularly. The success of this course depends upon your active participation. If you must be absent from a particular class, please notify me in advance. If an emergency arises, please notify me as soon as possible. Attendance will be taken weekly. Students must be present for the entire class to receive credit for attendance. Students who miss more than two classes and do not have documentation of a legitimate reason for the absence(s) will be penalized as follows: 3 days missed = 1 letter grade reduction; 4 days missed = reduction of 2 letter grades; more than 4 days missed = a letter grade of F.

I expect students to arrive on time, and to be in attendance during the entire class period. If you need to arrive late or leave early for a particular class period and have a valid reason (such as a job interview that can’t be rescheduled), please alert the instructor in advance. Students who are late for two or more classes should refrain from entering the classroom, as it is disruptive to the entire class.

The weekly essays are due at the beginning of the class period noted in the syllabus. The topic and reference list, as well as both drafts of the project are due on the dates noted in the syllabus. An extension for a component of the course project will be granted provided the instructor receives documentation of a legitimate excuse. For purposes of this course, a legitimate excuse includes things like a death in the family, a mandatory court appearance, illness, or a religious observance. Verification of illness requires documentation from a physician or other healthcare professional. If a student is not present on the date presentations are scheduled, no credit will be given for that portion of the course grade.

A temporary Incomplete for a course may be given only when a student, due to circumstances beyond his or her control, has been unable to complete the course requirements within the official limits of the term. Incompletes will be given at the instructor’s discretion, and documentation of extenuating circumstances must be provided by the student.

I encourage a diversity of perspectives. However, I also expect students to be courteous and respectful of all members of the group. In addition, all students should be given the opportunity to participate. In other words, each student needs to monitor her/his level of participation to give other members of the group the opportunity to participate in the discussion.
Students are required to use the Western Online system for this course. Please check the course site frequently. Any notifications concerning changes to the schedule or the cancellation of a class will be posted on the course site. The additional readings noted in the syllabus, as well as resources for the course paper, are also available on the course site.

Please turn your cell phone off if you have one (with the exception of extenuating circumstances, such as a gravely ill family member). Cell phones, lap top computers, and other electronic devices are not allowed on your desk during class.

Students with Disabilities should note the following WIU policy: “In accordance with University policy and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), academic accommodations may be made for any student who notifies the instructor of the need for an accommodation. For the instructor to provide the proper accommodation(s) you must obtain documentation of the need for an accommodation through Disability Resource Center (DRC) and provide it to the instructor. It is imperative that you take the initiative to bring such needs to the instructor’s attention, as he/she is not legally permitted to inquire about such particular needs of students. Students who may require special assistance in emergency evacuations (i.e. fire, tornado, etc.) should contact the instructor as to the most appropriate procedures to follow in such an emergency. Contact Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 298-2512 for additional services.”

Academic dishonesty will be treated seriously. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited, to plagiarizing the worth of others, cheating on an exam, or purchasing an essay or term paper. Students are expected to review the University’s policies on academic dishonesty by the end of the first week of classes, available at: http://www.wiu.edu/policies/acintegrity.shtml

Students’ Rights and Responsibilities. Students are expected to review the Rights and Responsibilities information by the end of the first week of classes, available at: http://www.wiu.edu/provost/students.php
Tentative Schedule:

Week 1  
August 19  
*Introductions and Overview of the Course*  
Film: *The End of Suburbia* (52 minutes)  
Available: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q3uvzcY2Xug](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q3uvzcY2Xug)

Week 2  
August 26  
*Introducing Sustainability: The “Three E’s”*  
Read: Hossay, Chapter 1  
Film: *Greening the Ghetto* (18 minutes)  

**Essay #1 Guidelines:** "The wealth and massive consumption of a small minority of the world’s people is dependent on the poverty, marginalization, and environmental injury of a majority of the earth’s population; and the system is designed to ensure that this inequity continues" (Hossay, 2006, p 35-36). This quote suggests that social inequality and environmental degradation are interrelated. **Consider the reading for this week: How might you explain the relationship between social inequality and environmental degradation? How might you envision a sustainable world that addresses this relationship?**

Week 3  
September 2  
*Labor Day – No Class!*

Week 4  
September 9  
*Foundations of the Unsustainability Paradigm: The Who and the What*  
Read: Hossay, Chapters 2 & 3  
Film: *Battle in Seattle* (approx. 85 minutes)  

**Essay #2 Guidelines** Chapter 2 provides an historical overview of the rise of industrial capitalism, and the colonization of much of the world by the imperial powers of Europe and the U.S., as well as the emergence of the U.S. as the dominant economic and military power. Chapter 3 describes the new imperialism: “The ever-tightening collusion of corporate interests and government leaders that are beholden to them is placing our collective fate increasingly in the hands of the unelected… The result can be called a new imperialism. Its scope, power, and reach are increasingly total; at its helm are the world’s wealthiest and most powerful corporate and government leaders; and its rules are embodied in a coordinated array of international institutions that hold the free market as sacrosanct. The resulting system is complete, expansive, and every bit as devastating as past systems of imperialism. But this system is enforced with a neatness, formality, and executive sterility that makes it appear legitimate and proper. This highly inequitable, socially devastating, and environmentally unsustainable global order appears to most of us as the normal, matter-of-fact way the world works. It seems both natural and reasonable. But it’s not. It is designed and enforced by an entrenched web of unaccountable institutions” (Hossay, 2006, p 83-84). **Using specific examples from the reading, discuss how these international institutions (for example, the IMF, World Bank, WTO) maintain control over people and the natural environment.**
**Week 5**
September 16

*The Unsustainability Paradigm: Natural and Social Science Critiques*

**Read:** Hossay, Chapter 4 and Wessels, Prologue, Introduction, and Chapters 1-2

**Film:** *The Story of Stuff* (21 minutes)
Available: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9GorgroigqM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9GorgroigqM)

**Essay #3 Guidelines:** In chapter 4, Hossay both describes and critiques neoclassical economics—in particular, the idea that economic growth is assumed to be our fundamental goal. In addition to neoclassical economic theory, our faith in economic progress is also linked to the natural sciences—including the concept of a linear system (versus a complex system), and our belief and confidence in our scientific ability to predict and control. In Chapters 1 and 2, Wessels shatters these beliefs in his explanation of complex systems and by introducing two important concepts: carrying capacity and dynamic equilibrium. **For this essay, offer a brief definition of neoclassical economics; next, using the information from the Wessels text, explain how neoclassical economics can be critiqued using these concepts from the natural sciences.**

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**Week 6**
September 23

*Science and the Critique of Unlimited Growth*

**Read:** Wessels, Chapters 3-5 and Epilogue

**Sustainability at WIU:** Guest Speaker TBA

**Essay #4 Guidelines** In Chapter 3, Wessels uses the second law of thermodynamics (the law of entropy) and relates this to environmental issues and our nation's idea of progress (“to use ever-increasing amounts of energy to stay ahead of resource depletion and waste generation” (P 56); in Chapter 4, Wessels turns his attention to the concepts of coevolution and specialization, as well as species richness (biodiversity) and complexity and relates these concepts to our current political economy. **For this essay, discuss how entropy (Chapter 3) and species richness—also referred to as biodiversity (Chapter 4), concepts from the natural sciences, can be applied to the human made system—in other words, our political economy.**

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**Week 7**
September 30

*A Humanist Perspective on Agriculture*

**Read:** Hossay, Chapter 5: pages 143-153 and Berry, Chapters 1-4

**Film:** Begin viewing *Food, Inc.* (approx. 45 minutes)

**Essay #5 Guidelines:** In this section, Berry links the ecological crisis to morality, agriculture, and culture. **How are these themes related? What was your reaction to the reading?**

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**Week 8**
October 7

*The Future of Agriculture*

**Read:** Hossay, Chapter 5: pages 143-161 and Berry: Chapters 8 and 9

**Film:** Finish viewing *Food, Inc.* (approx 45 min)

**Essay #6 Guidelines:** In chapter 8, Berry discusses the role of the university system in the “Unsettling of America.” In chapter 9, Berry envisions a sustainable alternative to the contemporary (1970s) agribusiness model. **Write a reflective essay that articulates your thoughts and opinion concerning the future of agriculture, and the role you envision for the university system.**
Exploring sustainability in our communities

No readings this week! We will use this class meeting to generate ideas for your research projects and explore the “basics of grant writing.”

The Slow Food Revolution

Read: #1) “Wendell Berry’s Wisdom;” #2) “One Thing to Do About Food” and #3) “Detroit’s Quiet Revolution” (Selections from The Nation)
Film: Clips from Edible City: Grow the Revolution

Essay #7 Guidelines: “Learning to make the right choices about food is the single most important key to environmental awareness — for ourselves, and especially for our children” (Alice Waters).

The quote (above) suggests that food is central to environmental concerns. All of the readings for this week share this focus on food – its cultural, political, and environmental implications. Consider the following questions and construct an essay that articulates your reaction to the readings. Do you think the slow food movement has the potential to radically alter the current “fast food” paradigm? Does the slow food movement have the potential to affect meaningful changes to our current agribusiness food system? Why or why not?

Project Assignment Due: Description of community problem/need is due

Graduate Student Assignment Due: Topic/Refs for the Research Paper

War in the 21st Century: Water?

Read: Hossay, Chapter 5, pages 161-169 and Reading #4) Shiva, excerpt from Water Wars
Film: Water Wars (55 minutes)

Essay #8 Guidelines: Consider the readings for this week concerning the future of water. Construct an essay that articulates your thoughts and opinion on this important issue in the 21st century.

“Doing” Sustainability

No readings this week! We will use this class meeting to work on the grant projects.

What’s “Natural” about “Natural Gas?”

Read: #5) Steingraber, Foreword and Chapter 10
Film: “Gasland”

Essay #9 Guidelines: Consider the readings for this week concerning the latest technology to extract oil and natural gas. Construct an essay that articulates your thoughts and opinion on this important issue in the 21st century.

Project Assignment Due: 1st Draft of Grant Proposal
Week 14  
November 18  
*Mountaintop Removal: The Irrationality of Rationality*

**Read:** #6 “Mountaintop Removal 101” available here: [http://appvoices.org/end-moundaintop-removal/mtr101/](http://appvoices.org/end-moundaintop-removal/mtr101/) Read the content on the main page and click on the links (right hand side of page) to explore the impact of this “technology” on the ecology, economy, and local community.

Film: “Razing Appalachia” (60 minutes)

**Essay #10 Guidelines:** Consider the readings for this week concerning the latest technology to extract coal. **Construct an essay that articulates your thoughts and opinion on this important issue in the 21st century.**

**1st Draft of the Research Paper** (graduate students only)

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Week 15  
November 25  
*No Class - Fall Break*

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Week 16  
December 2  
*Work on Student Projects*

Guest Speaker: TBA

**Project Assignment Due:** Bring working draft of grant proposal to class

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Week 17  
December 9  
*Wrap Up*

Poster Presentations

**Assignments Due:**

- Final Draft of Grant Proposal
- Reflective Essay
- Final Draft of the Research Paper (graduate students only)

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Have a great semester break!