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COURSE MEETING TIMES

Saturday evening (5-7 PM, August 20) and two full days before the semester begins (Sunday and Monday, August 21 & 22). Five class meetings will take place on Tuesday evenings from 6-8 PM from August 30 through September 27.

COURSE MEETING LOCATIONS

First Meeting:
   Saturday evening (5-7 PM): Aiken 311

Field Trip:
   Sunday morning (8:30 AM): Burlington Waterfront, Local Motion Trailside Center (1 Steele Street #103); Monday morning (8 AM): Bishop Booth Center

Class meetings:
   Tuesday evenings August 30, September 6, 13, 20, 27 (6-8 PM): location TBA

COURSE GOALS

To provide graduate students with an opportunity to build a dynamic learning community, to understand basic frameworks for confronting complexity, to apply systems thinking to complex environmental issues, and to explore issues of sustainability in the context of social equity, ecological integrity, and economic vitality (AKA people, planet, prosperity).

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course begins with an evening of introductions followed by two days in the field learning about local organizations and issues involving sustainability. The course then moves on to consider concepts and applications of sustainability planning and management. This course will combine analysis, synthesis, and personal reflection to engage with the complex, ambiguous, but important concept of sustainability. Students will work with multiple ecological and social justice frameworks to explore local issues and broader sustainability concepts. Emphasizing experiential learning, the course will introduce and visit with projects, places, and people. During the last week of class students will present a sustainability café, highlighting case studies of sustainability.
LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Specific learning outcomes include:

• students can work to create a dynamic learning community among peers (incoming graduate students);
• students understand selected principles and frameworks of sustainability;
• students can apply a range of frameworks to sustainability topics (e.g. complexity, systems thinking, social justice, social-ecological systems);
• students can recognize the interconnections among ecology, economics and social systems in the design and implementation of sustainable solutions;
• students can apply and personalize an analysis of power, privilege and inclusion in the context of sustainability (planning and project implementation);
• students have enhanced multicultural skills needed to work individually and in groups in diverse environments;

ASSIGNMENTS

Readings

Readings and other informational resources are provided through the class Blackboard. All reading assignments are detailed on the site.

Critical Reflection

Critical reflection is a key component of the learning process. We'll ask you to complete a number of short (2 page maximum) writing assignments (journal entries). These entries should go beyond descriptive accounts and should demonstrate higher order processing of concepts and experiences. Entries will provide opportunities to critically assess and integrate readings, presentations, and dialogues, as well as explore new areas of inquiry. We will provide you with a number of specific prompts. These critical reflections will provide valuable feedback about your experiences/interests and will serve as a useful roadmap for future topics/readings.

Discussion and Dialogue

This course requires active participation and co-creation of the learning experience. Together we'll identify key questions that merit further research, reflection, and exploration. As a mechanism for participation, we'll utilize dialogue and other constructive conversation techniques that can support group inquiry and help us discover insights that aren't attainable individually. While some prompts will be provided, participants are expected to come prepared to engage. Because this course has relatively few meeting times, attendance and punctuality are a must. We also recognize that at times this course will be a deeply personal experience. As such, we ask for open acceptance of all that each of us brings to this conversation. At the same time we ask for courage as we push up against our own edges, challenges, and personal concerns.
Sustainability Case Studies

A partial synthesis of the NR 306 experience will take place through presentations to each other and the RSENR community. Demonstrating and explaining what a 2016 inclusive vision of sustainability might look like will be the charge for this component of the class. Both class time and "homework" time will be dedicated to this task during the last few weeks of class.

COURSE TOPICS

Dimensions of Difference
Complexity and a System Approach
Sustainability and Social Justice
Sustainability Perspectives
Social-ecological Systems for Sustainability
Presenting Sustainability Case Studies

SITE VISIT RESOURCES

Local Motion
http://www.localmotion.org/

Waste water - sewage treatment
http://www.burlingtonvt.gov/sites/default/files/DPW/Water/Following%20the%20Flow%20of%20Wastewater.pdf

Redesigning the American Neighborhood Project
http://www.uvm.edu/~ran/

Common Roots
http://www.commonroots.org/index.php

UVM Bioretention project
http://www.uvm.edu/~pss/?Page=bioretentionproject.html

Rock Point
http://rockpointvt.blogspot.com/

Intervale Center
http://www.intervale.org/

Lake Champlain Basin Program
http://www.lcbp.org/

ECHO
http://www.echovermont.org/

Watershed Alliance
http://www.uvm.edu/watershed/

Lake Champlain Sea Grant
http://www.uvm.edu/seagrant/

READING

Kay, J.J. 2008. Framing the Situation
Johnson, N.F. 2007. Two's Company, Three is Complexity


Morris-Collin, R. Sustainability and Environmental Justice (interview)


Hanley, J. Beyond the tip of the Iceberg - Five stages toward cultural competence.


**GRADING**

Reflections and homework assignments 60%
Sustainability case studies 20%
Participation 20%

**ACCESS**

In keeping with University policy, any student with a documented disability interested in utilizing accommodations should contact ACCESS, the office of Disability Services on campus. ACCESS works with students and faculty in an interactive process to explore reasonable and appropriate accommodations, which are communicated to faculty in an accommodation letter. All students are strongly encouraged to meet with their faculty to discuss the accommodations they plan to use in each course. A student’s accommodation letter lists those accommodations that will not be implemented until the student meets with their faculty to create a plan. Contact ACCESS: A170 Living/Learning Center; 802-656-7753; access@uvm.edu; or www.uvm.edu/access.

**CODE OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Offenses against the Code of Academic Integrity are deemed serious and insult the integrity of the entire academic community. Any suspected violations of the code are taken very seriously and will be forwarded to the Center for Student Ethics & Standards for further investigation.

See: http://www.uvm.edu/%7Euvmppg/ppg/student/acadintegrity.html For the full policy at UVM

**RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS**

Students have the right to practice the religion of their choice. Each semester students should submit in writing to their instructors by the end of the second full week of classes their documented religious holiday schedule for the semester. Faculty must permit students who miss work for the purpose of religious observance to make up this work.

Link to Interfaith Calendar: http://www.interfaithcalendar.org/2014.htm