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EVST 595.02: Sustainable Communities Seminar

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EVST 595-02 Sustainable Communities Seminar

Class Time Thursdays, 2-4 p.m., Room LA 249

Facilitators: Tracy Mumma, 549-7678, tracym@ncat.org

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Office (JRH 101) hours: Thursdays 1-2 p.m. and 4-5 p.m. or by appointment

Course Description

This two-credit seminar further explores issues and themes raised in the co-requisite Sustainable Communities Lecture Series (EVST/Soc 495.01). This series takes a broad look at the issue of sustainability as it applies to communities. Communities can be thought of as a set of interlocking systems that provide necessities for their members. Energy, housing, transportation, food and economic systems are examined by noted experts in their fields during the lecture series. Those talks will be grist for seminar discussion that will also draw on insights from additional background readings. In this seminar we will grapple with some big questions: What are the environmental, and social, impacts of our communities? How do we assess the consequences of our actions? What can communities do to reduce our personal and collective impacts? How do we track progress?

This course has twin purposes: first to survey some of the breadth of sustainable community issues, with a particular emphasis on how they might apply to Missoula and communities in western Montana. Second, to offer an opportunity to engage civically in local issues by taking on a community project, either individually or in teams, that addresses one or more of the issues raised in the lecture series. These projects should be substantive but feasible within the seminar period. Activities range wide in scope: research and writing “white papers” for local nonprofits, organizing events or presentations, developing outreach strategies and resources, or networking with decision-makers. Seminar participants can propose their own projects, or take on projects suggested by local groups, or plug into a “ready-made,” i.e. ongoing, effort. We’ve got lots of ideas for good projects if you need inspiration.

Evaluation

Attendance and Participation 20%

This seminar meets 15 times over the course of the semester. More than one absence will substantially impact your participation grade. In the seminar, we expect engagement in the discussions. Students will also be expected to prepare a question for each lecturer, which they will submit during the following seminar meeting.

Discussion Leadership 20%

Each student will be required to lead seminar discussion during one week of the course. Evaluation is based on understanding of the material, creativity in presentation, and participation that is elicited from other students.

Project Product 50%

The product of the semester project, whether an event, a publication, or another type of project, is a major portion of the grade evaluation for this course.

Project Presentation 10%

During the final weeks of the course each student will give a 20-minute presentation to the class on the substance of their semester project.

Readings

Three texts are required for this course:

Beatley, Timothy. 2000. *Green Urbanism: Learning from European Cities*. Island Press.

Orr, David. 2002. *The Nature of Design*. Oxford University Press.

Wackernagel, Mathis and Rees, William. 1996. *Our Ecological Footprint: Reducing Human Impact on the Earth*. New Society Publishers.

As indicated in the syllabus, the course also will draw on web-based resources and additional readings placed on reserve at the Mansfield Library.

Seminar Topics Schedule**Sept. 5 – Introduction to the course and to sustainability****Sept. 12 – Overview of sustainable communities**

Text: Green Urbanism: Chapter 1 Introduction

Reserve readings:

- Boyd, Susan. 2001. *Sustainable Communities and the Future of Community Movements*. National Civic Review
- Devall, Bill. 2001. *The Unsustainability of Sustainability*. Culture Change.
- Weiss, Jonathan D. 2002. *Local Sustainability Efforts in the United States: The Progress Since Rio*. Environmental Law Reporter.

Recommended websites:

- Communities by Choice <http://www.communitiesbychoice.org/>
- Dept.of Energy's (EE/RE) Smart Communities Network
<http://www.sustainable.doe.gov>
- Green Map <http://www.greenmap.org>
- Redefining Progress <http://www.rprogress.org>
- SCN – Sustainable Communities Network <http://www.sustainable.org>

Sept. 19 –Climate Change and Communities

Text: Our Ecological Footprint: Introduction, Chapter 1, Chapter 2

Reserve readings:

Hoerner, J. Andrew, and Phelps, Barry. 2002. *A Working Environment: Addressing climate change while protecting workers and the economy*. Environmental Protection
Recommended websites:

- Climate Solutions
<http://www.climatesolutions.org>
- Rocky Mountain Institute: Climate Publications and Other Resources
<http://www.rmi.org/sitepages/pid333.php>
- U.S. Cities for Climate Protection Campaign (CCP)
<http://www.iclei.org/us/ccp/>

Sept. 26 – Renewable Energy

Project proposals due

Text: Green Urbanism: Chapter 9 Renewable Energy Cities
Our Ecological Footprint: Chapters 3 and 4

Recommended websites:

- Montana Green Power
<http://www.montanagreenpower.org>
- Renewable Energy Policy Project
<http://www.repp.org/>

Oct. 3 –The Ecological Footprint

Our Ecological Footprint: Chapter 5

Reserve readings:

Nicky Chambers, Craig Simmons and Mathis Wackernagel. *Sharing Nature's Interest*. Chapters 7, 8, 9.

Recommended websites:

- Best Foot Forward
<http://www.bestfootforward.com/>

Oct. 10 –Smart Growth

Green Urbanism: Chapter 2 Land Use & Community

Reserve readings:

Arendt, Randall. 1994. *Rural By Design*: Chapters 1-3 (pages 3-48)

Recommended websites:

- APA Policy Guide on Smart Growth
<http://www.planning.org/policyguides/smartgrowth.htm>
- Montana Smart Growth Coalition
<http://www.mtsmartgrowth.org>
- PLANetizen
<http://www.planetizen.com>

Oct. 17 – Green and Affordable Development

Green Urbanism: Chapter 3 Creative Housing & Living Environments

Recommended websites:

Affordable Sustainability Technical Assistance

<http://www.homeasta.org>

Oct. 24 –Urban Ecology and Green Building Construction

Green Urbanism: Chapter 7 Urban Ecology, Chapter 8 Closed-Loop Cities and Chapter 10 Building Ecologically

Reserve Readings:

Rocky Mountain Institute.1998. Green Development: Chapter 6, Building Design

Oct. 31 –Transportation

Interim reports on project progress due

Green Urbanism: Chapter 4 Transit Cities, Chapter 5 Car-Free, Chapter 6 Bicycles

Recommended websites:

- Bike Plan Source
<http://www.bikeplan.com/>
- Surface Transportation Policy Project
<http://www.transact.org/>

Nov. 7 – Design

Orr sections I. The Problem of Ecological Design and II. Pathologies and Barriers

Nov. 14 –University and Sustainability

Orr sections III The Politics of Design and IV Design as Pedagogy

Recommended websites:

- National Wildlife Federation Campus Ecology
<http://www.nwf.org/campusecology/index.cfm>
- Talloires declaration
http://www.ulsf.org/programs_talloires_td.html

Nov. 21 Sustainable Ag and Community Food Systems

Reserve readings:

Barton, Hugh. 2000.Sustainable Communities Chapter 13: The Food Producing Neighborhood

Slama, Jim. 2002. *The Future of Food is Sustainable and Organic*. Conscious Choice.
<http://www.consciouschoice.com/issues/cc1503/futureoffood1503.html>

Recommended websites:

- Appropriate Technology Transfer to Rural Areas (ATTRA)
<http://www.attra.org>

- Community Alliance with Farmers
<http://www.caff.org/>
- Community Alliances of Interdependent AgriCulture
<http://www.caia.net/>
- University of New Hampshire Office of Sustainability Programs: Food and Society Initiative
<http://www.sustainableunh.unh.edu/fas/index.html>
- The Land Stewardship Project
<http://www.landstewardshipproject.org>

Nov. 28 – Off for Thanksgiving

Dec. 5 –Sustainable Business

Project presentations

Text: Green Urbanism: Chapter 12 Sustainable Economy

Berry, Wendell. 2001. *The Idea of a Local Economy*

http://www.oriononline.org/pages/om/archive_om/Berry/Local_EconomyPR.html

Recommended websites

- Green Biz
<http://www.greenbiz.com>
- The Natural Step
<http://www.naturalstep.org/>

Dec. 12 –Indicators

Project presentations

Green Urbanism: Chapter 11 Ecological Governance, Chapter 13 Green Urbanism

Reserve Readings:

Barton, Hugh. 2000. Sustainable Communities Chapter 10: Leading from Below: The Contribution of Community Based Initiatives

Recommended websites:

- Missoula Measures
<http://www.co.missoula.mt.us/measures>
- Sustainable Measures
<http://www.sustainablemeasures.com/index.html>

Dec. 19—Finals

Project presentations (contingent on enrollment)