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EVST 595.02: Sustainable Communities Seminar

Tracy Mumma
The University of Montana

Michael Kustudia
University of Montana - Missoula

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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
               Michael Kustudia, 327-0705,  michaelk@ncat.org
               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:


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:

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

**Sept. 19 –Climate Change and Communities**
Text: Our Ecological Footprint: Introduction, Chapter 1, Chapter 2
Reserve readings:

Recommended websites:

- Climate Solutions
  [http://www.climatesolutions.org](http://www.climatesolutions.org)
- Rocky Mountain Institute: Climate Publications and Other Resources
- U.S. Cities for Climate Protection Campaign (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](http://www.montanagreenpower.org)
- Renewable Energy Policy Project
  [http://www.repp.org/](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

**Oct. 10 – Smart Growth**

Green Urbanism: Chapter 2 Land Use & Community

Reserve readings:


Recommended websites:

- APA Policy Guide on Smart Growth
  [http://www.planning.org/policyguides/smartgrowth.htm](http://www.planning.org/policyguides/smartgrowth.htm)
- Montana Smart Growth Coalition
  [http://www.mtsmartgrowth.org](http://www.mtsmartgrowth.org)
- PLANetizen
  [http://www.planetizen.com](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

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


Recommend Reserve 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)