

SYLLABUS – SUSTAINABILITY AND PLANNING
SPRING 2008

Sessions

1. Course Basics and Fundamental of Ecological and Environmental Understanding
January 29th

Course Basics

- primary course goal: understand the dominant question of the 21st century.
sustainability and how it will shape public policy and planning
- secondary goals:
 - hone your abilities to get at the jugular of an issue by
 - understanding strategic thinking
 - recognizing strategic opportunities
 - hone your understanding of relevant knowledge, especially economics and history
 - Polish Your Writing Skills – You can't be a good planner unless you are a good communicator.
- discussion focused course, will recognize differences in comfort level of different students with verbal discourse
- read two books, one required for all [Michael Pollan, *The Omnivore's Dilemma*]
one individually selected from a list of about 30 potentials. No two students read same second book.
- a number of short writings and essays.
- a narrative of notes and learning main output, no final exam

- Fundamentals of Ecological and Environmental Understanding

- humans are animals – the three fundamental imperatives of all animal life
- From the Big Bang to 10000 BC
 - The path to a life-friendly earth
 - multicelled life emerges
 - the sexual nature of life
 - the four burdens of sexual reproduction
 - the dynamic nature of earth
 - the Permian and other great extinctions
 - the mystery and miracle of intelligence
 - humans today, Cro-Magnons in suits
 - the crisis of hunting success 10,000 B.C

**READING ASSIGNMENT FOR SESSION TWO: FILE OF SIX SMALL
ARTICLES ON THE THEME: SIGNS OF THE FUTURE EVERYWHERE**

**OTHER ASSIGNMENT, REVIEW LIST OF POTENTIAL SECOND BOOKS
AND SELECT 1,2,3 CHOICES**

2. An Environmental and Economic Overview of the Evolution of Urban Civilization
February 5th

preliminary housekeeping

book assignments

review and discuss signs everywhere articles.

- Environmental and Economic Overview of the Evolution of Cities throughout history
 - from hunters to subsistence farmer to cities
 - the underlying constancy and the fundamental role of the urban- rural relationship
 - the prime myth of western civilization
 - status v. merit,
 - social dynamics: to include is to exclude
 - social tradeoffs: stability v. dynamism
 - diseases and the shape of the world
 - wood and the shape of the world
 - the western merchant and the shape of the world
 - 1765 the pivotal year
 - two and a half centuries of industrial civilization

READING ASSIGNMENT FOR SESSION 3: APPLETON, A PRACTICIONER'S GUIDE TO SUSTAINABILITY

3. General Discussion of Sustainability

February 19th

- first the history: from conservatism to environmentalism to sustainability, and what that means for understanding the sustainability movement and debate
- key issues: review of reading assignment and the questions it raises

READING AND WRITING ASSIGNMENT FOR SESSION FOUR – PICK OFF THE WEB A NEWS STORY THAT YOU THINK IS RELEVANT TO SUSTAINABILITY AND COMMENT ON IT FROM A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE. target 750 – 1000 words

4. The Economics of Sustainability, Sustainability and Public Finance

READING ASSIGNMENT FOR SESSION FIVE: FIND SOME NEWS STORY OR ARTICLE ON AN ARMED CONFLICT, COME PREPARED TO SUMMARIZE FOR THE CLASS AND WHAT IT MEANS FOR SUSTAINABILITY

5. The Social and Political Implications of Sustainability. Sustainability in a World of Nations and War

March 4th

6. Four Phases of Sustainability
March 11th

READING AND WRITING ASSIGNMENT FOR SESSION 7: SELECTION AND COMMENTARY ON AN ARTICLE RELEVANT TO NYC METRO SUSTAINABILITY 750 – 1000 words

7. Planning for Sustainability - Class Discussion
March 18th

**BOOK REPORTS ON INDIVIDUAL BOOKS DUE – IN DRAFT
READING ASSIGNMENT FOR SESSION EIGHT – SELECTED SECTIONS OF PLANYC2030. COME PREPARED TO COMMENT ON THE ONE YOU ARE ASSIGNED.**

8. Planning for Sustainability – PLANYC 2030
March 25th

FIRST BOOK REPORTS RETURNED FOR ENHANCEMENT

9. Harvesting the Long Hanging Fruit, and Eliminating Perverse Incentives
April 1st

FINAL FIRST BOOK REPORT DUE

10. System Changes and Sustaining the Unsustainable
April 8th

REPORT ON POLLAN DUE

11. Discussion of Pollan. Food Chains. Preliminary Discussion of Global Warming
April 15th

WRITING ASSIGNMENT FOR SESSION 12, STRATEGIC GOALS PAPER ON GLOBAL WARMING

12. Creation of Global Warming Strategy, The Politics of Sustainability
April 29th

13. Summary and Conclusions
May 6th

CLASS NOTES DUE, include recommended summary and conclusions

May 13th –

14. Class Notes Return and Final Thoughts, Shortened Session, Will End at 6:30

THERE IS NO FINAL TEST FOR THIS COURSE. INSTEAD, YOU ARE REQUIRED TO SUBMIT YOUR NOTES FOR THE COURSE, REVISED INTO A COHERENT NARRATIVE FORM (THAT CAN BE IN OUTLINE IF YOU PREFER, BUT IT MUST HAVE A LOGICAL ORDER TO IT) THAT INCLUDES WHAT YOU THINK IS IMPORTANT FROM MY LECTURES, AND THE LESSONS YOU HAVE LEARNED FROM THE VARIOUS READINGS, WRITINGS (INCLUDING MY COMMENTS ON THEM) AND CLASS DISCUSSIONS. THIS IS NOT INTENDED TO BE A SUMMARY OF MY LECTURES (ESPECIALLY SINCE SO MANY OF THEM WILL BE SHAPED BY QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSIONS IN CLASS), BUT A PRECIS OF WHAT YOU THINK YOU HAVE LEARNED OR WHAT YOU HAVE COME TO UNDERSTAND ABOUT SUSTAINABILITY. THIS ASSIGNMENT IS DUE WITHOUT EXCEPTION ON MAY 6TH.

YOU SHOULD FEEL FREE AT ANY TIME TO RAISE QUESTIONS IN CLASS OR AFTER IT ABOUT INFORMATION WE HAVE ADDRESSED THAT YOU FIND CONFUSING, UNCLEAR, OR YOU WISH TO CHALLENGE OR QUALIFY.

I STRESS AGAIN, THIS IS TO BE A SUMMARY OF WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED, NOT WHAT I HAVE TAUGHT.