

Environmental Politics – PS297 **Course Syllabus – Fall 2012**

Instructor: Dr. Stan Taylor

Class Time and Location: M, W, F 1:00-2:20 PM in the Longhouse

Office: Center 410M

Office Hours: M – F, 11:00 am -12:00 pm

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Course Description: This course focuses on the environmental problems that face the planet. These problems include, but are not limited to, overpopulation, climate change, bio-colonization, and the depletion of resources (e.g. peak oil). We will not, however, focus solely on the problems; we will also focus on alternatives – alternative philosophical visions including Gaia theory, Deep Ecology, Traditional Indigenous Ecological Knowledge, Eco-feminism and Bioregionalism; alternative “sustainable” economic, political, and social systems, and alternative grassroots political movements actively promoting change.

Class Organization: Conceptually the class will be divided into six themes. Part one focuses on alternative philosophical frameworks. Part two looks at carrying capacity of the earth and our ecological footprints. Part three examines the economics and politics of globalization. Part four focuses on specific environmental problems that globalization generates. Part five addresses sustainable alternatives. Finally, part six introduces the politics of direct environmental activism.

Required Texts and Readings:

- Readings will be provided in three ways, including: 1) handouts, 2) electronically as attachments via e-mail, and 3) postings on the library website under the course heading ‘Environmental Politics’ (Go to LCC library webpage <http://www.lanecc.edu/library/>, under Services for Students select Course Reserves, type in course name Environmental Politics, select the pertinent reading and follow the directions on name, L number and password).

Teaching Philosophy: This class will be a combination of readings, discussion, lecture, guest speakers, and films. The primary format will be that of a seminar, modified to accommodate the larger class size. This means that the class will be very interactive, not only between instructor and student, but also between student and student. I expect that you will read all assignments and come prepared with questions and insights on the readings to raise in class discussions. My intent is to get you to develop critical subjective thought, bolstered and supported by the readings.

Evaluation:

Plus/Minus Grading: This class will utilize the plus/minus grading system. 250 points is the lowest “A” grade (no “A-” grades will be assigned).

Point Pot Grading System: This class is designed to facilitate critical thinking and to enhance your written and oral communication skills. Toward this goal, grades will be based

on a number of different assignments. There are no exams. Rather each student has a “point pot” which starts out empty and can go up to 250 plus points for the class. Once the pot is full (when you have 250 points in the pot) you have an “A” grade. 250 points is the lowest “A” or equivalent to 90% on a typical grading scale. The 250 points will be composed of points earned through attendance, essays, website presentations, miscellaneous assignments, and other credit points.

A. Attendance: Given the interactive nature of the course framework attendance is a key element of the class. Attendance counts as part of your overall grade. Starting with the second week of the term (October 1) and continuing until the term’s end, class attendance will be recorded by passing around a roster sheet that is your duty to sign. Students will receive 4 points for each class attended, for a total possible of 100 points.

SPECIAL NOTE: Students with a 95% attendance record for the term will earn 20 bonus points. This means you can miss one class and still earn the bonus.

B. Essay: Over the quarter you are required to write one essay that synthesizes material from the readings. The essay will be 4-5 pages in length, double spaced, and worth a potential 100 points. There are five topic areas that you may choose from to write your essay. These are:

- 1) Deep ecology, eco-feminism, and GAIA theory;
- 2) Carrying capacity, ecological footprint, and voluntary simplicity;
- 3) The impact of neo-liberal economic systems on the 3rd world, indigenous peoples, and the 1st world;
- 4) Peak oil and climate change;
- 5) The impacts of bio-technology on food, biological life, and the earth.

Directions on how to write the essay will be handed out separately.

C. Relevant Websites: You can search out three relevant websites for the class. You will need to hand in a written synopsis about the website and be prepared to demonstrate the website to the class. Each website demonstrated to the class is worth 10 points.

D. Miscellaneous Assignments on the Readings: Over the course of the quarter small assignments, worth 10-25 points, will be handed out to help prepare for the readings. These assignments will vary, so the instructions to these assignments will be handed out with the assignment.

E. “Other credit” points: “Other credit” points can be earned in a number of ways as set forth below. The upper limit on the number of “other credit” points a student can earn is 60 points.

News Clippings: Credit can be earned by reporting on news clippings (from the newspaper, magazines, the Internet, etc.) related to class. The clipping should be attached to a sheet of paper that also has your name, the class title, and a short written summary of the article. You should be prepared to share the article orally with the class. Each article will be worth 5 points. You can submit up to **four** articles for a total of 20 possible points.

Events: You can earn extra credit by attending community events, symposiums, political forums, etc., related to the topic. You will need to hand in a written synopsis of the event and be prepared to tell the class about what you learned. The exact amount of extra credit for any such event will be negotiated between the student and the instructor, but generally such events will earn 10 to 15 points for each event attended. One good source for events is the Wayne Morris Center for Law and Politics <http://waynemorsecenter.uoregon.edu/category/events/>

Movies, Films, CD's, Tapes, Political Radio: You can earn extra credit by viewing movies and films on topics relevant to the class, listening to audio tapes or CD's on topics relevant to the class, or listening to political radio relevant to the class. You will need to do a one-page synopsis and be prepared to tell the class about the movie, film, tape, CD, or program. These assignments are worth 5-10 points each. Eugene has some excellent radio programs. Check out: Alternative Radio on **KLCC** (89.7 FM), Tuesday 6:30-7:30 p.m.; Democracy Now on **KWVA** (88.1 FM), 7-8 a.m. Monday-Friday and Cable TV channel 29, 5-6 p.m.; Free Speech Radio on **KWVA** (88.1 FM), 6:30-7:30 p.m. Monday-Friday.

Grading framework:

- Attendance (4 points per day, 25 days) 100
- Essay (1 required @ 100 points) 100
- Websites (3 possible @ 10 points) 30
- "Other credit" assignments (total possible). 60
- Miscellaneous Readings Assignments ??

Readings and Assignment Schedule: Reading assignments are subject to change. Any changes will be discussed in class. If you miss classes, it is your responsibility to ask classmates about changes to the schedule.

Introduction.

September 24 – Syllabus review, Class introductions.

September 26 – Lecture on the Political Spectrum in the USA

September 28 –

- "Wild Geese", by Mary Oliver; "Morning Poem", by Mary Oliver
- "Tomorrow's Song", by Gary Snyder
- Future Primitive: The New Ecotopias, "Intro", by Kim Stanley Robinson
- "Chocco", by Earnest Callenbach

Section One: Ecological Frameworks

October 1 –

- "Deep Ecology: A New Paradigm", by Fritjof Capra
- "The Deep Ecology Movement", by Arne Naess

October 3 –

- “American Indian cultural models for sustaining biodiversity”, by Dennis Martinez

October 5 –

- “Introduction on EcoFeminism”, by Karen Warren

October 8 –

- “Gaia”, by James Lovelock; Film: “Gaia”

Section Two: Carrying Capacity & Ecological Footprints

October 10 –

- “Carrying Capacity: The Earth’s Bottom Line”, by Sandra Postel

October 12 –

- Film: *Arithmetic, Population, & Energy* by Dr. Albert Bartlett

October 15 –

- “Our Ecological Footprint”, by Wackernagel and Rees
- Guests: Sandy Aldridge and Dale Lugenbehl

Section Three: Economics and Politics of Globalization.

October 17 –

- “Exercising Power Over Corporations through State Charters”, by Richard Grossman
- **Essay on topic one on ecological frameworks due**

October 19 – Global Income Inequality

- “Guaranteeing Corporate Rights”, by David Korten

October 22 –

- “The Last Frontier”, by Maude Barlow
- “Paradigm Wars, Globalization and the Assault on Indigenous Resources”, by Jerry Mander

October 24 – Neo-liberal economics continued

- **Essay on topic two on carrying capacity due**

October 26 –

- “Buddhist Economics”, by E.F. Schumaker; Film: *Economics of Happiness*

Section Four: Environmental Issues

October 29 –

- “Peak oil and climate change: the two great oversights of our times”, by Rob Hopkins
- “Capitalism vs. Climate Change, by Naomi Klein

- Film excerpts: *End of Suburbia & Heat*

October 31 – Guest: Mary Wood on Nature’s Trust and Climate Change

November 2 –

- “Water Democracy”, by Maude Barlow
- “Captive Water”, by Vandana Shiva
- “Tap Water Takeover”, by Carolyn McConnell
- “Bottled Water Flimflam”, by Krista Camenzind
- Film: “*Flow*”
- **Essay three on global economics due**

November 5 –

- “God in a Labcoat”, by Jeremy Rifkin
- “Biotech Tinkering Getting Out of Hand”, by Jeremy Rifkin
- “Biocolonization: The Patenting of Life and the Global Market in Body Parts”, by Andrew Kimbrel
- Film excerpts: “*The Future of Food*”, “*The Corporation*”, “*Unnatural Selection*”

November 7 –

- Biocolonization continued

Section Four: Sustainable Alternatives

November 9 –

- “Ten Principles for a Sustainable Society”, Alternatives to Globalization, A Report of the International Forum on Globalization, © 2002, pp. 221-234.
- “The Post Corporate World”, by David Korten
- **Essay four on peak oil and climate change due**

November 14 –

- Introduction to Permaculture, David Holmgren, “Essence of Permaculture”
- Guest: Jan Spencer from the Eugene Permaculture Guild speaking on “Suburban Permaculture”.

November 16

- Guest: Jan Spencer from the Eugene Permaculture Guild speaking on “Suburban Permaculture”.
- **Essay five on Biocolonization due.**

November 19 –

- “The Principles of Bioregionalism”, by Kirkpatrick Sale

November 21 –

- “Community Supported Agriculture”, by Daniel Imhoff
- Guest: Lynne Fessenden

November 26 –

- “Community Money: “The Potential of Local Currency”, by Susan Meeker-Lowry,
- Guest: Eugene Emerald Valley Time Sharing

Section Five: Politics and Action.

November 28 –

- “On the Duty of Civil Disobedience”, by Henry David Thoreau
- “Being Peace”, by Thich Nhat Hanh

November 30 –

- “Putting the Earth First”, by Dave Foreman

December 5, 12:00 -1:50 PM – Finals week class

Electronic Devices: Laptop computers can be used in class to take notes. All other uses, e.g. surfing the web, are not permitted in class without permission. Cell phones and other electronics should be turned off before entering class.

Registration: It is the student’s responsibility to see that s/he is properly registered.

Withdrawing or Dropping a Class: It is the student’s responsibility to go through the required procedure if s/he wishes to drop the class. To receive a full tuition refund you must drop the class by September 30, 2012. The last day for schedule changes or dropping a class is November 16, 2012. Students who disappear without formally dropping the course will receive an “F” grade.

Disability Resources: If you need support or assistance because of a disability, you may be eligible for academic accommodations through Disability Resources. For more information visit the website at <http://www.lanecc.edu/disability/> **and** contact the Disability Resources at (541) 463-5150 (voice) and DisabilityResources@lanecc.edu or stop by Building 1, Room 218.

Harassment and Discrimination Policy: Lane Community College is committed to providing a working and learning environment that is free from discrimination, harassment and retaliation. At Lane Community College you are protected from, and prohibited from engaging in, harassment and discrimination based on race, color, ethnicity, national origin, sex, marital status, familial relationship, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity / expression, pregnancy, age, disability, religion, or veteran status. If you believe you have been harassed or discriminated against go to: <http://www.lanecc.edu/cops/racialh.htm> or <http://www.lanecc.edu/cops/sexh.htm>