

# Sustainability

## UNST 125g Winter 2012

<http://web.pdx.edu/~chulbe/COURSES/SUS>

lecture section:

M and W 9:30 to 10:45 am room: Cramer Hall 201

mentor sections (UNST 124h):

MW 11:00 to 11:50 am; MW 12:00 to 12:50; MW 13:00 to 13:50 room: CH 165

final:

Tuesday, 20 March 8:00 to 9:50 am

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## 1 overview

In the second term of our three-term series, we turn our attention from the human relationship with landscape to the broader topic of humans as components of the Earth system. While we tend to think of modern technology as separating us from natural world, our most basic needs depend on the health of the natural systems of which we are a part. While humans have a long history of modifying those systems on local and regional scales, we have recently become capable of driving change on a global scale. This change of circumstance is profound and will be a particular focus of attention this term.

## 2 University Studies

This Freshman Inquiry class is the first step in your general education program at Portland State University. When you complete this year long course, you will have completed the equivalent of four credits in the humanities, four credits in the social sciences, four credits in the natural sciences, and three composition credits. The purpose of this course is to help you succeed in college and beyond by exercising your abilities to integrate information, consider diverse points of view, articulate your positions, and see the consequences of your thoughts and actions, as stated in the four University Studies Goals

- **Inquiry and Critical Thinking:** Students will learn various modes of inquiry through interdisciplinary curricula—problem-posing, investigating, conceptualizing—in order to become active, self-motivated, and empowered learners.
- **Communication:** Students will enhance their capacity to communicate in various ways—writing, graphics, numeracy, and other visual and oral means—to collaborate effectively with others in

group work, and to be competent in appropriate communication technologies.

- **The Variety of Human Experience:** Students will enhance their appreciation for and understanding of the rich complexity of the human experience through the study of differences in ethnic and cultural perspectives, class, race, gender, sexual orientation, and ability.
- **Ethical Issues and Social Responsibility:** Students will expand their understanding of the impact and value of individuals and their choices on society, both intellectually and socially, through group projects and collaboration in learning communities.

More information about inquiry, cluster, and capstone courses can be found at at the University Studies website: <http://www.ous.pdx.edu>

### **3 university services**

If you are a student with a documented disability and registered with the Disability Resource Center, please contact me so that we can arrange whatever academic accommodations you need.

If you are a Veteran and have questions about University services or need assistance with your transition from military to campus life, please contact Chris Goodrich, Coordinator of Veterans Services at the Office of Veterans' Services, SMSU room 425.

### **4 course resources**

#### **4.1 general**

Sustainability is a broad theme, requiring us to think critically about the ways in which cultural, economic, and political traditions shape our relationship to the natural world, including how the human relationship to nature is understood, the ways economic wellbeing and satisfaction are measured, and how terms such as sustainability are used in the media, by interest groups, by individual organizations, and by individuals. We will begin in fall term by focusing on human perception of “the environment” and the ways in which human societies both shape and are shaped by those perceptions. As the year progresses we will consider how those frameworks shape and are shaped by our responses to environmental challenges. Throughout the course students will be encouraged to read and research widely on these issues, report on your findings, participate actively in discussions, and develop a deeper sense of responsibility for your own habits and choices. In addition to assigned books, we will use online and library resources that are freely available to everyone.

#### **4.2 required texts for fall term**

Required texts may be purchased at the PSU Bookstore or another vendor. The reference book *A Pocket Style Manual* will be of use in all three terms of this class and in many other courses you take at PSU.

1. Egan, Timothy. (2006). *The Worst Hard Time: The Untold Story of Those Who Survived the Great American Dust Bowl*. New York: Houghton Mifflin.  
price on 7 January 2012: \$14.95 paperback at Powell's Books
2. Hacker, Diana (2010). *A Pocket Style Manual* 5th ed. New York: Bedford/St. Martin's.  
price on 4 September 2011: \$28.40 at Powell's Books

#### **4.3 Millar Library electronic reserve required readings**

- Balter, Michael. (2011). Was North Africa The Launch Pad For Modern Human Migrations? *Science*, 331, 20-23.

- deMenocal, Peter. (2001). Cultural Responses to Climate Change During the Late Holocene. *Science*, 292, 667-673.
- Grimm, Nancy B. et al. (2008). Global Change and the Ecology of Cities, *Science*, 319, 756-760.
- Penna, Anthony. (2010). *The Human Footprint: A Global Environmental History*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Rowley-Conwy, Peter and Layton, Robert. (2011). Foraging and farming as niche construction: stable and unstable adaptations. *Phil. Trans. R. Soc. B*, 366, 849-862.
- Steffen, Will. (2008). Looking Back to the Future. *Ambio*, 37, 507-513.

#### 4.4 other required reading

- IPCC. (2007). *Climate Change 2007: Synthesis Report Summary for Policymakers*. Contribution of Working Groups I, II and III to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Core Writing Team, Pachauri, R.K and Reisinger, A. (Eds.). IPCC: Geneva, Switzerland. Retrieved from [http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar4/syr/ar4\\_syr\\_spm.pdf](http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar4/syr/ar4_syr_spm.pdf)

#### 4.5 other online resources

- course webpage <http://web.pdx.edu/~chulbe/COURSES/SUS>
- mentor session webpage <http://www.sustainabilityfrinq.weebly.com>
- Purdue Online Writing Lab <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>

#### 4.6 Portland Art Museum

We will visit the Portland Art Museum at least once this term. If you purchased an annual college student pass last term you are set for this term as well. If you did not purchase one last term, the PAM offers an annual college student pass for students 18 years and older for \$10. You can purchase a pass when you present your PSU student ID at the Museum box office—the desk just inside the main doors. The pass is valid from September 1, 2011 to August 31, 2012. You will be asked to show both your PSU ID and the college student pass whenever you visit the PAM.

### 5 written work

#### 5.1 guidelines

Unless you are instructed otherwise, all assignments should be typed and printed on white paper. Please print double-sided pages if possible. Written assignments should

- be double-spaced with one inch margins (you may need to check these settings in your word processing software),
- include a “header” with your name, the class, date, and page number at the top of each page,
- use a standard serif typeface (such as Times) at 12 point,
- use complete sentences, correct paragraph structure, correct spelling, and correct grammar,
- include a complete list of properly formatted references together with appropriate citations in the text,

- NOT include the assignment sheet unless requested specifically, and
- NOT be burdened by a cover sheet or other enclosure, although multiple pages should be stapled together.

Please use the APA style for citations and references. You will find examples of this style in Hacker (2010) and at the Purdue Online Writing Lab, <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>. **Save everything you write in electronic format in two different places.** You will return to some assignments for ideas and as you build your electronic portfolio.

## 5.2 plagiarism

The writing you do for this course should be your own. You violate this ethic if you copy materials without acknowledging the source, present specific information without acknowledging the source, present a slightly rearranged wording of source materials as your own, or submit a copy of a paper identical to that submitted by another student. Plagiarism will result in a zero grade for the assignment and possibly lead to more severe academic consequences. A second offence will earn you a failing grade for the class. If you are uncertain about anything, ask your mentor or professor.

## 5.3 late work

All assigned work is due at the beginning of class on the day it is due, unless otherwise specified as part of the assignment. The questions assigned with class readings are for your benefit, both to help you read the article and to prepare for the classroom discussion. You may or may not be asked to turn these in at the end of the discussion time. Late work turned in by the beginning of the next class meeting will be worth a maximum of 90% the original value. Late work will not be accepted beyond this time, except in unusual circumstances. It is your responsibility to know the due dates and the ensure that your work is turned in on time. Please be certain that multiple sheets of paper are stapled before class.

## 6 electronic portfolio

Developing an electronic portfolio (an “ePortfolio”) is an integral part of the freshman inquiry process. The portfolio contains examples of your work throughout the course together with reflections on that work, organized according to the four goals of University Studies. You will add content this term to the portfolio you began last term. The University Studies program provides a variety of resources to assist you in this endeavor at the website <https://sites.google.com/a/pdx.edu/eportresources/>, including a showcase of portfolios from years past and templates.

The electronic portfolio must contain a specified set of elements and its evaluation will form part of your final grade in spring term. The elements are a reflective essay on your work throughout the year in the context of the University Studies goals and at least eight different assignments completed during the year. Those eight work samples should be chosen to help you express your understanding of the four goals and one must be the Heritage Trees of Portland project. Beyond that, the portfolio construction is up to you.

## 7 evaluation

Your grade will be based on a combination of classroom presentations and discussion, written assignments, participation in the mentor section, and in-class work. Recall that attendance is required and a poor attendance record will reduce your grade automatically. The relative weights of these activities are:

mentor section participation	10%
ePortfolio	10%
essays	25%
reading responses and research projects	25%
presentations and participation	10%
in-class quizzes and writing	20%

Grades will be assigned according to total scores as follows: 95% or higher = A, 90 to 94.9% =A-, 87 to 89.9% =B+, 83 to 86.9% =B, 80 to 82.9% =B-, 77 to 79.9% =C+, 73 to 76.9% =C, 70 to 72.9% =C-, 67 to 69.9% =D+, 63 to 66.9% =D, 60 to 62.9% =D-, less than 60% = F.

## 8 conduct

### 8.1 classroom atmosphere

Our goal at all times should be to cultivate a classroom atmosphere of mutual respect, both in the main and mentor sessions. You may hear statements, opinions, or arguments that differ significantly from your own ideas or that make no sense from your point of view. It is important to remember that students come Portland State University from diverse backgrounds and bring with them a wide range of perspectives. It is not necessary that you like other peoples opinions or that they like yours. It is necessary for you to listen to and engage others with respect. To this end, we will not tolerate disruptions. If you are disruptive, you will be asked to leave and you will be marked absent for the day.

You should do your best to come to class ready to engage with the material for the day and with everybody else in the room. Engagement requires attention. Please do not distract yourself or others by eating in the classroom, checking your phone or other electronic devices, leaving to use the restroom, or by starting to gather your papers, zip up your backpack, or otherwise begin “checking out” until the class is excused. When you enter the class your phone should be set on silent or turned off and put away. If you take out a laptop you will be asked to close it and put it away. Please do not check your email or use the internet during mentor sessions, unless you are instructed to do so by your mentor. Failure to follow these rules will result in an automatic absence for the day.

### 8.2 attendance

Learning in this class, and most other university classes, requires your attendance and participation. You are required to attend both the main class and the mentor section. Absences will affect your grade adversely.

- If you miss a total of five main or mentor session classes over the course of the term, 10% of the total possible points will be removed from your class total. That is, your mark will be reduced by one letter grade. If you miss more than eight main or mentor session classes, you will fail the course.
- Late arrivals are disruptive to the classroom environment. If you are more than 10 minutes late to class, you will be marked absent.
- This policy means that you have four excused absences to use as you wish. Put another way, a day you miss because you prefer not to attend is equivalent to a day you miss due to illness. It is up to you to keep track of those four excused absences and use them wisely. It is your responsibility to be both a good citizen (stay home if you are sick) and a good student (come to class when you are not). However, if you do encounter exceptional circumstances, inform me ahead of time so that we can accommodate them.

### **8.3 code of conduct**

As a member of the Portland State University faculty, I “strive to ensure that the highest ethical standards of professional behavior are realized within the University,” as established in the *Faculty Code of Conduct*. As a member of the PSU student body, you are bound by a *Student Code of Conduct*. It is your responsibility to be familiar with the code of conduct, which can be read at the Dean of Students website <http://www.pdx.edu/dos/codeofconduct>.

## 9 Schedule

<i>date</i>	<i>theme</i>	<i>activity</i>	<i>assignment</i>
1/9	overview of term	research papers: fact vs. opinion . starting concepts . reading: Balter, <i>Science</i> , 2011	research paper paragraph rewrite <b>due on 1/11</b>
1/11	human migration & urbanization	agriculture and the rise of cities . reading: Rowley-Conway and Layton, <i>R. Soc. Trans.</i> , 2011	essay 1: humans as ecosystem elements <b>due on 1/18</b> . data analysis 1: food audit <b>due on 1/30</b>
1/16	human migration & urbanization	holiday: MLK day . reading: Penna, <i>The Human Footprint</i>	reading questions: Penna <b>complete by 1/25</b>
1/18		discussion: Rowley-Conway and Balter . reading: Grimm, <i>Science</i> , 2008	reading questions: Grimm <b>complete by 1/25</b>
1/23	human migration & urbanization	Cities: what are they good for? . Curitiba, Brazil	food audit data for presentation <b>on 1/30</b>
1/25		discussion: Cities: what are they good for? . reading: Worst Hard Time: Ch 1 to 5	mini research project: North American Great Plains <b>for discussion on 2/8</b>
1/30	the Earth system	cities in the Earth system . discussion: food audit results	

<i>date</i>	<i>theme</i>	<i>activity</i>	<i>assignment</i>
2/1		Earth's climate: basics . reading: Worst Hard Time: Ch 6 to 10	
2/6	the Earth system	Earth's climate: basics	data analysis 2: Dust Bowl climate records <b>due on 2/27</b>
2/8		discussion: Worst Hard Time: the Great Plains . quiz 1: climate basics . reading: Worst Hard Time: Chapter 11 to end	essay 2: niche construction <b>due on 2/20</b>
2/13	the Earth system	Earth's climate: carbon cycle	
2/15		Earth's climate: variability . readings: deMenocal, <i>Science</i> , 2001 Steffen, <i>Ambio</i> , 2008	mini research project: culture groups in deMenocal, 2001 <b>complete by 2/29</b>
2/20	the Earth system	<i>The Plow that Broke the Plains</i> . diagnosing the Dust Bowl	
2/22		Earth's climate: change over time . quiz 2: climate processes . reading: IPCC, 2007	research and group presentations: future climate projections <b>complete by 3/12</b>
2/27	the Earth system	Earth's climate: change over time	



<i>date</i>	<i>theme</i>	<i>activity</i>	<i>assignment</i>
2/29		<p>discussion: What is the relevance of the historical record of culture and climate interactions? (deMenocal, Steffen)</p> <p>reading: Tennyson and Moore PAM: modern city</p>	<p>reading questions &amp; PAM: Tennyson, Moore, and more <b>complete by 3/14</b></p>
3/5	the Earth system	<i>Man of the Glaciers</i>	<p>essay 3: What drives social change? <b>due 3/12</b></p>
3/7		<p>Earth's climate: future projections and sustainability</p> <p>quiz 3: climate processes</p>	
3/12	the Earth system	Earth's climate: future projections and sustainability	
3/14		<p>discussion: How do we make sense of the human endeavor in an Earth system context? Tennyson, Moore, and more.</p>	