

## Sustainability Freshman Inquiry - Winter 2011 Syllabus -

### Course information

Course: UNST 125C (CRN 45180)  
Classroom: 101 Cramer Hall  
Class meeting times: Tu./Th, 14:00 - 15:15 pm  
Mentor labs (Required) Tu/Th in Cramer Hall 154  
16:00-16:50 (CRN 45181), 17:00-17:50 (CRN 45182), or 18:00-18:50 (CRN 45183)

### Professor

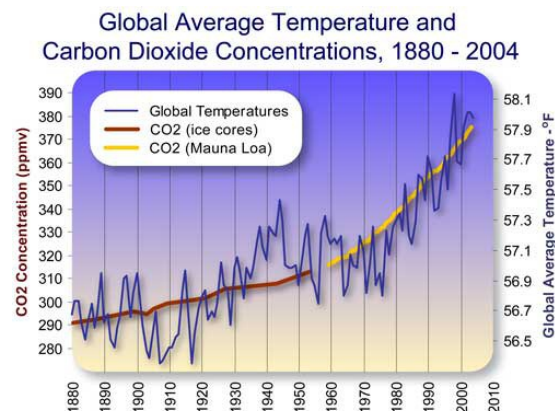
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### Peer Mentor

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### Learning Community Assistant

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### Course description

There is growing evidence that human activity is significantly transforming the natural systems that sustain us. Although we may often think of the natural world as something separate from our largely urban lives, our most basic needs such as nutritious food to eat, clean air to breathe, and clean water to drink depend on the health of the natural systems of which we are a part. The focus of this course will be on exploring the possibility of maintaining a sustainable relationship between human communities and the natural world. To investigate this question we will explore the interconnectedness of global systems (including physical, ecological, cultural, and economic).

This Freshman Inquiry class is the first course 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, articulate your positions, consider diverse points of view, and see the consequences of your thoughts and actions (see University Studies Goals below).

This course focuses on “sustainability.” This will necessarily involve taking a critical look at how 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” and “green” are used in the media, by interest groups, organizations, and constituents. **Winter term we will focus on the scientific, political, and cultural aspects of climate change and how past and current societies have dealt with challenges to their continuation. We will also touch on the current debate around health care reform.** Throughout the course you 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.

### The Sustainability Living Learning Community (SLLC)

This section of the Sustainability Freshman Inquiry course is part of the Sustainability LLC program which makes sustainable urban living a core experience for LLC students living and learning at Portland State University. The Sustainability community infuses the learning-living community with practical and theoretical approaches to sustainable living, merging students’ living community with unique academic and field experiences. The program is designed to enhance students’ academic and social experience, FRINQ Sustainability Winter 2011 (Fletcher)

encourage community participation, promote financial sustainability, and encourage community support and public-private partnerships. Students will partner with the Office of Sustainability and other campus partners to engage in various activities and programs outside of class that increase sustainable practices on campus and in the community. Students will be housed on the same floor, will participate in various community activities, and develop leadership skills through a variety of experiential learning programs. The specific goals of the SLLC program include:

- Year long examination of the philosophy and principles of sustainability
- Exploration of best practices and resources for sustainability and sustainable living
- Extensive discussion about the interconnectedness and interdependence of the environmental, social, and equity elements of sustainability
- Partnership with the Office of Sustainability
- Living cluster located in a silver LEED certified building, Broadway
- Participation in and creation of sustainable living outreach projects
- In-depth community participation required as part of the course
- Strong commitment to applying what is learned in the classroom in the local community
- Bridging of in-class learning to residence hall living through additional themed programming
- Supportive learning environment enhanced through peer academic support and Learning Community Assistants (LCAs)

### **Required Texts and Supplies**

1. Kolbert, Elizabeth. (2006). *Field Notes From a Catastrophe*. New York: Bloomsbury.
2. Diamond, Jared M. (2005). *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*. New York: Penguin Books.
3. Hjortshoj, Keith, 2009, *The Transition to College Writing*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. New York, Bedford/St. Martin's.
4. Online Materials (available at campus computer labs if you do not have access at home)
  - Online style guides (free of charge): APA (<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>)
  - Blackboard website: [bb.pdx.edu](http://bb.pdx.edu) (here you can link to Daily Log)
  - Daily Log page: <http://web.pdx.edu/~jeff/courses/sust1011/winter/DailyLog.html>
  - Additional readings, audio recordings, and videos will be assigned and made available online.
5. You will also need a USB flash drive, a planning calendar, a notebook for organizing class notes and course materials, and a stapler.

### **Brief Descriptions of Course Assignments** (subject to change, with warning)

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>% Grade</b>	<b>Brief Description</b>
Main Class Participation	15%	Active participation in and quality contributions to class sessions and effort given to the completion of informal class assignments, quizzes.
Mentor Labs / LLC Participation	15%	Active participation in and contribution to mentor lab activities, discussions, assignments, and Sustainability LLC activities, <b>including volunteering with a PSU and/or community sustainability effort.</b>
Homework	20%	Complete assignments, including short essays & quantitative exercises related to readings, assigned films, news items, or other relevant topics.
Carbon Footprint	10%	Estimate your yearly carbon footprint and write a report including graphical analysis of your data. Compare your footprint to others in US and world.
Two Exams	20%	10% each; covering readings, other course materials, and discussions.
Collapse Indiv. Assign. and Group Presentation	15%	Research a society described in <i>Collapse</i> ; do an individual research assignment. Then work in a team of students who reviewed the same society to prepare a presentation for the class on your society.
Final Reflection	5%	End-of-term formal reflection essay on what you learned, how you learned, and how this relates to University Studies and the Sustainability LLC goals.

## Assessment

We will utilize a grading system that recognizes A=excellent, B=good, C=satisfactory, D=inferior and F=failure. Your final grade for the term will be based on a percentage scale, where: 93%+=A, 90-92%=A-, 87%-89%=B+, 83%-86%=B, 80%-82%=B-, 77%-79%=C+, 73%-76%=C, 70%-72%=C-, 67%-69%=D+, 63%-67%=D, 60%-62%=D-, and a score below 60%=F.

**Note:** To determine final grades the percentage of points you receive in each category is weighted by the percentage of the final grade represented by that category (as in the table above). Points used on various assignments are just a convenient way of determining percentages and therefore points from different categories may not be exactly equivalent.

## Extra Credit / Make-up

Attend an out of class event (e.g., lecture, film, workshop, protest) and write a 2-page reflection making connections between your experience and course material. The event **MUST BE** approved by me beforehand. An extra credit assignment can be used to partially make up for missed participation points when in-class exercises are missed or to bolster the homework category of your grade.

## Portfolios

Spring term you will deliver an electronic portfolio representing your work done throughout the course. We have begun our portfolios and will continue to work on them throughout the year. **For now, be sure to keep multiple electronic copies of everything you do for this class!** Keep these copies on your H: drive at PSU and on your USB flash drive and/or other backup storage devices. Also be sure to keep drafts and older versions of assignments because demonstrating revisions will be part of your portfolio..

## University Studies Goals

Inquiry based student learning is the cornerstone of the University Studies' Freshman Inquiry courses. The goals are to develop those skills that will be crucial to your academic success and beyond. The four major learning goals of University Studies are:

- **Inquiry and Critical Thinking:** Learn various modes of inquiry through interdisciplinary problem-posing, investigating, and conceptualizing to become active, self-motivated, and empowered learners.
- **Communication:** Enhance your capacity to communicate in various media (writing, reading, visual, and oral), convey and understand quantitative information, and to work effectively in groups.
- **The Variety of Human Experience:** Appreciate and understand the 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:** Understand the impact and value of individuals and our choices on society, both intellectually and socially.

The full goal statements can be found at: <http://www.pdx.edu/unst/university-studies-goals>

## Course Schedule: Main Session, Mentor Lab, and Assignment Details

Details about what we will cover each day of class and in mentor lab will be posted on the course website on the **Daily Log page**. This page will serve to preview the plan for upcoming topics and assignments as well as to record what we actually did. If you miss a class, check this page as well as consulting your classmates about what you missed, including getting their notes. (See links above under Online Materials.) Note that in order to be flexible with current events and the pace of class discussions, future details in the Daily Log are subject to change.

## POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The central goal of these policies is to foster the trust and respect necessary to build a strong learning community. Familiarize yourself with the following policies so that you understand clearly what is expected of you as a student in this class. We will operate on the principle that you are acquainted with them (not knowing a policy will not excuse you from its enforcement). **These policies apply equally to both the main class and mentor labs.**

**Attendance:** Learning in this course involves, first and foremost, your bodily presence. Thus, attendance is required in main class, mentor labs, and SLLC activities. Excessive absences will effect your participation grade (except for legitimate reasons with prior notification). In addition too many absences will have a sever effect on your course grade.

- **Missing five classes and/or mentor labs will reduce your final grade by a letter grade. If you miss more than eight class and/or mentor labs you will fail the course. (Except for extreme circumstances which you discuss with me ahead of time, if at all possible.)**
- Keep in mind that your four allowed absences are yours to use as necessary; they are there to make sure you are not penalized for days you miss class because you are sick or have a family emergency. In other words, a day you skip class because you are tired is the same as a day you miss class because you are ill. Do not bring a doctor's note expecting an absence not to count towards your total absences. Also, if you miss a quiz or in-class activity because you skip class, these cannot be made up. Use your absences 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 so that you save your absences in case you do get sick).** That being said, please keep us informed (beforehand) when you know you will be absent, including the reason. This is best done by email and **both your mentor and instructor** should receive a copy of your email.
- If you find yourself in the exceptional circumstance of being absent more than your allotted four class or mentor lab periods, be sure and discuss this with me.
- **Make arrangements with one of your peers to obtain notes and assignments for any days you are absent.** Also consult the course Daily Log website for handouts you may have missed.
- Late arrivals are very disruptive to the classroom environment. Two late arrivals will equal an absence. Please do not rely on PSU clocks for timekeeping. They are unreliable.
- Leaving and returning once class has begun is also very disruptive. When you enter class be prepared to stay for the entire class period

**Late Work:** All assigned work will be collected at the beginning of class on the day that it is due or turned in online before their due date and time as specified in the assignment instructions (usually due before class begins). If you are going to be absent on an assignment due date, make sure you arrange to get the assignment to me **BEFORE** it is due. Late work turned in by the beginning of the next class period following the due date will receive a 20% deduction. **Work beyond this time will not be accepted.** (Except for extreme circumstances which you discuss with me ahead of time, if at all possible.)

**Written Work:** Unless instructed otherwise, you must type all work you turn in for class.

- Include a "header" with your name, the class, date, and page number at the top of each page. Save paper and do **not** use a separate cover or title page.
- **Double space** all your written work and leave **one inch margins all around**, (some versions of Word set the margins at 1.25 inches, so please adjust your margins as necessary).
- You must use a **Times New Roman or Garamond 12-point font**.
- Always use correct sentence and paragraph structure, punctuation, and spelling.
- Include a complete list of properly formatted references where appropriate. (Please refer to the online APA style guide.) Start your reference section after your conclusion; **not** on a separate sheet.

- **SAVE EVERYTHING IN ELECTRONIC FORMAT.** You'll use it in your portfolios at the end of year. Also make sure to save it all in two different places as hard drives fail and thumb drives get lost!
- Be sure to save draft copies and well as final versions.
- For assignments turned in online, the file format should be in Microsoft Word (\*.doc or \*.docx). If you use a Macintosh computer be sure to manually add the appropriate extension to your file name. You may use other programs (besides Word) to create your document (such as OpenOffice Text Document), but be sure to save your assignment as a Word file and turn in this version.

**General Conduct (Maintaining a Respectful Learning Environment):** We will do our best to cultivate a classroom atmosphere that is based on mutual respect. During our discussions, you may hear statements, opinions, and arguments that sound absurd to you or that vary significantly from your own ideas. It is important to remember that students in this class come from diverse backgrounds and bring with them a wide range of perspectives. **It is not necessary that you like other people's opinions, only that you listen to and engage them with utmost 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. Also, please avoid eating in the classroom and clean up after yourself and others. Finally, please do not begin to gather your papers, zip up your backpack, or otherwise begin "checking out" of our discussions until the class is excused.

**Benefit of the Doubt:** Practicing the learning goals of University Studies requires that we address sensitive or controversial topics and ideas in new ways. As when trying anything new, people will make mistakes. In this class we will give each other the benefit of the doubt. So if someone says something that offends you, it is your responsibility to not assume that it was said with the intention of offending you. However, it is also our responsibility to speak up. If you find yourself offended, either raise the issue at the time in class or discuss it privately with your instructor or mentor after the class. This policy implicitly requires that you not intentionally offend someone else. **No one in this class should ever feel threatened or harassed.** If you do feel this way, please speak us immediately.

**In-Class Technology Etiquette:** To foster a positive environment, free of distractions there is a **zero-tolerance cell phone policy.** When you enter the class your phone is to be set on silent or turned off and put away. Similarly, **laptops and other electronic devices are not to be used during class unless specified.** In mentor labs there will be no checking of email or using the internet unless you are instructed to do so by your mentor. Make it clear to your friends that you are not available for calls or texting during class and mentor lab times. Failure to follow these rules will result in an automatic absence for the day.

**Email:** You are responsible for reading email communications that are sent to your PSU email account (pdx.edu). If you do not regularly check this account, be sure you forward your school emails to the email account you do monitor regularly. Your mentor can help you do this. If you send me an email from a non-school account I will most likely "Reply" to this account. If you ask a good general question I may send a response to the whole class using PSU emails. Be sure you look for correspondences in both places. Lastly, please use complete sentences and words in your emails and sign them with your name.

**Plagiarism:** We expect that the writing you do for this course will be your own work. You violate this ethic if you copy materials without acknowledging the source, present specific information from a given source without acknowledging the source, present a slightly rearranged wording of source materials as your own, or submit a copy of a paper submitted by another student. Plagiarism will result in a zero grade for the assignment and likely lead to more severe academic consequences. A second offence will earn you a failing grade for the class. If something is questionable, ask your mentor or professor. The full Code of Student Conduct and Responsibility can be found here: <http://www.pdx.edu/dos/codeofconduct>.



**Policy Enforcement:** If you are found disregarding any of these policies in class or in mentor lab, you will be reminded of the policy. If you continue the behavior, you will be dismissed from class or mentor lab and the day will count as an absence. You will not be allowed to return to class or mentor lab until you have discussed your behavior with me.

**Schedule:** It is your responsibility to keep track of the due dates for all homework and reading assignments—do not show up to class and say that you were unaware of an assignment that is due. Any changes to due dates will be reflected in the online Daily Log schedule and will be communicated in class.

**Disability Resources:** If you have a disability and require assistance obtaining resources at PSU, please see me. We will be happy to accommodate you as best we can. You will also need to register at the Disability Resource Center in Smith 435 (503-725-4150 or <http://www.drc.pdx.edu>).

**Writing Resources:** The Writing Center is available for PSU students needing relatively minor or specific help with a piece of writing. The Writing Center (188F Cramer Hall, 503-725-3570, <http://www.writingcenter.pdx.edu/index.php>) can also give students advice on citing sources, avoiding plagiarism, etc. If you find that you need additional practice in developing your writing skills, there are courses you can take concurrently with Freshman Inquiry. Please see me for more details.

**Office Hours:** You are encouraged to come to office hours to receive individual advice on assignments and course materials, or just to discuss issues of interest or challenges you are having. Please come at the start of office hours or let me know ahead of time if you will be coming later (email is good for this). I will consider my office hours over when there are no more students to talk to, including if no one comes at the beginning (unless you tell me you'll be there later).

**Final Note:** We assume you are here because you want to learn and we are here because we want you to succeed. It is your responsibility to ask for help when you need it. If you are having problems with the course, with time management, or with your freshman year in general, PLEASE discuss it with me or your mentor so that we can help you address the issue.

**Schedule Reminder:** A detailed schedule (subject to change) can be found on the Daily Log page: <http://web.pdx.edu/~jeff/courses/sust1011/winter/DailyLog.html>. There is also a link from Blackboard.