USP 313U
Urban Environmental Issues
Winter 2014
CRN: 44208
Room: University Pointe 102
M/W 2:00-3:50pm

Instructor: Dr. Thaddeus Miller
Office: URBN 370Q
Office Hours: M/W 4-5:00pm; other times by appointment
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Teaching Assistant: Belinda Judelman, jbelinda@pdx.edu
TA Office Hours: Th 2:15-4:15, URBN 3rd floor office

Course Description & Objectives
For the first time in human history, more than half of the world’s population lives in urban areas. Ecological degradation and declines in natural resources are, in large part, due to the economic and consumptive appetites of our cities and the people who live in them. At the same time, cities present an opportunity to live more sustainably through urban density and more efficient use of natural resources (not to mention the generation of ideas and solutions that cities foster). Either way, humanity’s ability to develop in a sustainable manner will depend on cities. This course will explore this paradox—the city as source of and solution to environmental problems—and address the following questions: What is the role of the city in our ongoing environmental crisis? What are the major urban environmental problems? What are their causes and potential solutions? Are sustainable cities possible? What might they look like? How can we reduce the natural resource demands of cities and their inhabitants? Is there space for nature in urban areas?

1 This is a working syllabus. Readings and assignments may change throughout the quarter. Any changes
This course is not just about the environment in urban areas—it is about the place of nature in a human-dominated world.

In order to address these questions (and others), we will explore historical context of urban environmental issues, theories of sustainable urban development, and case studies of sustainable development initiatives.

This course is part of the Community Development program and University Studies Community Studies, Environmental Sustainability and Healthy People/Places clusters. The learning objectives include:

- Understanding the interconnections between the social, technological, historical and ecological dimensions of urban areas;
- Development of critical thinking to analyze the meaning and validity of information and to communicate your own arguments based on this information;
- Ability to work in groups on a common project;
- Ability to provide timely and informative report to community partner; and,
- Ability to convey your knowledge and ideas clearly in written and verbal form.

**Required Reading Material**

- Articles provided in-class or from on-line sources.

**Course Structure**

**Evaluation**
Students will be evaluated on a 1000 point scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Essays (300 points)²</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Project (400 points)</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blog Postings (200 points)</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Participation (100 points)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL (1000 POINTS)</strong></td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>100%</td>
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**A Note on the Reading**
In order for you to excel in this course, it is very important that you read all the required material carefully. Some weeks, it is fairly extensive; others, it is relatively light. Throughout the quarter, it is critical that you have done the reading before class so that you can participate actively in discussions and class exercises. Each week, the blog

² Essay #1 = 150 points; Essay #2 = 150 points
 postings will require that you draw connections to the readings. Similarly, the essay assignments will require you to synthesize the readings and develop your own insights and arguments (with citations from the required readings). In short, a serious reading of the material is essential to your success in the required coursework. While the expectations are high, many of the readings were chosen for their accessibility and readability as well as their rigor and insight into urban environmental issues. I hope you’ll enjoy these readings and that the ideas they contain will stay with you long after this course is over. You should always feel free to visit me during office hours if you have any questions about the reading, or if you want to discuss the material in more detail.

Essay Assignments
There will be two essay assignments throughout the quarter. These essays will require you to synthesize discussions from class and the readings to develop your own insights and arguments in response to prompt I provide. Each writing assignment will require a 4-6 page essay response (.doc, 12 pt. Times New Roman, double-spaced, 1” margins). You will be expected to use and cite readings from the course to support your arguments. You can think of these as take home exams. However, since you’ll have more time than you would with an in-class exam, your arguments and writing will be expected to be clear, well-supported and well-structured. I am, of course, always available to talk about the assignment and your ideas. Further directions and guidelines on the essay assignments will be provided when the assignment is given.

Weekly Blog Postings
Each week you will submit short blog posts to the Dropbox on the course D2L (postings are due by 11:59PM on Thursdays except when noted on the schedule or in class). These postings are to be short responses to a question or issue presented to you in in-class and on the course D2L. Postings should generally be a short paragraph or two in length (i.e., at least 4-5 complete sentences that amount to a coherent paragraph; .doc, 12 point font, 1” margins, single-spaced). They will be in response to a question posted by the instructor in class and online. While each posting may seem small, they will amount to 20% of your final grade. All of the postings will be read and evaluated on a v- / v / v+ basis – and occasionally will be brought into class lectures for further discussion. Your postings will also be used for in-class discussions with other students on which you will be asked to report back to the rest of the class. Your posts should be thoughtful and utilize and react to the material from the readings and class. You are allowed to miss one posting without a penalty.

Group Projects
This quarter we have four community partners—Living Cully, Depave, Ground Work Portland, City Repair, and South of Market (SoMa) EcoDistrict. Each partner has offered us 2-4 projects that will help them implement a sustainability initiative. Students will choose a project (5-7 students for each project) and will work to deliver a project report to the community partner by the end of the quarter. Teams will also produce a final presentation for the community partners and the class.
There will also be several group projects that are more traditional and focus on a case study or studies. These will follow the same plan and timeline.

This is a fully collaborative project. You should think of it as you are producing a research report for a client. Team members will be individually responsible for an element of the project and will be expected to review and comment on other team members work. The portfolio will be finalized by the team and submitted to the community partner for comment. Further details of the assignment are provided on D2L and will be discussed in class.

*Project deliverables* (see Course Schedule below for due dates):

**I: Project Proposal and Work and Research Plan (50 points)**
- Short abstract (no more than 500 words) explaining the project
- Work and Research Plan (including list of internal deliverables and deadlines working toward status update, presentation and final report; individual responsibilities; and, research plan)
- Initial list of sources

**II: Status Update and Report Outline (50 points)**
- Short explanation of work completed, challenges identified and how they will be addressed (no more than 500 words)
- Updated Work and Research Plan
- Updated and expanded list of sources
- Final Report Outline

**III: Project Presentation (100 points)**

**IV: Final Report (200 points)**

Each group should assign its members the following responsibilities (in addition to responsibilities regarding writing and research):
- *Project Manager* (2): responsible for communicating with community partner, instructor, and for coordinating group work and work plan.
- *Co-editors* (2): responsible for editing final report and making sure it’s coherent.
- *Co-presentation editors* (2): responsible for coordinating final presentation.
- *Secretary*: responsible for scheduling group meetings and taking and circulating group notes.

**Course Participation**

Despite its large size, in-class discussion will be an essential part of this course. In order to receive full credit, you will be expected to participate in in-class exercises and discussions.

**Policy on Late Submissions & Missed Work**
Late web postings will not be accepted; i.e., you will not receive credit. Other late assignments will be docked one letter grade per day after the due date; assignments submitted more than two days late will not be accepted.

**Policy on Academic Integrity**
PSU takes academic integrity very seriously. As a PSU student, you are expected to adhere to the PSU Student Code of Conduct. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. The PSU Student Code of Conduct defines academic dishonesty as follows:

1. Academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty is the act of knowingly or intentionally seeking to claim credit for the work or effort of another person or participation in such acts. This includes, but is not limited to: (a) cheating, (b) fraud, (c) plagiarism, such as word for word copying, using borrowed words or phrases from original text into new patterns without attribution, or paraphrasing another writer's ideas; (d) The buying or selling of all or any portion of course assignments and research papers; (e) Performing academic assignments (including tests and examinations) for other persons; (f) Unauthorized disclosure or receipt of academic information; (g) Falsification of research data; and (h) Unauthorized collaboration. ([http://www.pdx.edu/dos/psu-student-code-conduct](http://www.pdx.edu/dos/psu-student-code-conduct))

Students are responsible for knowing both in-class behavior and rules governing use of materials in academic work. Plagiarism includes both other students’ work and Wikipedia (or anything from the internet) that is not properly cited. Any student found plagiarizing work or violating any part of PSU’s academic integrity policy will receive a failing grade for the course.

**Design to Learn (D2L) Web-based Course Management**
We will be using D2L extensively in this course including: updates to the syllabus, reading assignments, submitting weekly postings and other assignments, communicating with the instructor, the course reader and other students. Please make sure that you have your personal D2L set up to forward emails to your PDX account (Go to D2L Home > Preferences > Email > under Forwarding Options click the box “Forward incoming messages to an alternate email account” and make sure your correct email address is listed > click Save).

**Student Resources**
As PSU students, you have access to a number of excellent resources to assist you with writing and research. The PSU Writing Center offers in-person appointment and on-line tools to help you craft your papers ([http://www.writingcenter.pdx.edu/](http://www.writingcenter.pdx.edu/)). The PSU library system also offers a number of resources to help you research more effectively and efficiently ([http://library.pdx.edu/studentlibraryservices.html](http://library.pdx.edu/studentlibraryservices.html)). I highly recommend you utilize both of these sources given that this course relies heavily on your writing and research for evaluation.

**Disabilities**
Please notify the instructor of any disabilities by the first week of class so that the necessary accommodations can be arranged. More information can be found at [http://www.drc.pdx.edu/studentresources.html](http://www.drc.pdx.edu/studentresources.html).

**Classroom Etiquette**

This is a large class and so it is important to follow a few simple rules of classroom (and, more generally, social) courtesy. All cell phones should be turned off before you enter the classroom. While I realize laptops are an essential learning/note taking tool, I ask that you use it exclusively for note taking and for exploring issues that come up in class. Finally, please be on time to class. Repeated lateness (or early exits) will impact your participation grade.
## COURSE SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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| 1/6  | Course Introduction | • Review syllabus  
• Watch video: [http://vimeo.com/39048998](http://vimeo.com/39048998)  
• Ellis (D2L) |
| 1/8  | The Urban Environmental Challenge | • CPP: Ch. 1  
• Glaeser. “Our Urban Species,” from *Triumph of the City.* (D2L)  
• Owen. “Green Manhattan.” (D2L) |
| 1/13 | Project Partner Introduction | • Review partner websites and project descriptions  
• Come prepared with 2-3 questions |
| 1/15 | Urban Planet I: From Ancient to Modern | • CPP: Ch. 2-4  
• Redman. “Attitudes toward the Environment,” from *Human Impacts on Ancient Environments.* (D2L) |
| 1/20 | Martin Luther King, Jr. Day—Volunteer! | No class! |
| 1/22 | Urban Planet II: Urban Reform | • Fishman. “Urban Utopias.” (D2L)  
• Gottlieb. “Urban & Industrial Roots: Seeking to Reform the System.” (D2L) |
| 1/27 | Urban Planet III | • CPP: Ch. 5  
• UN World Urbanization Prospects, 2009 (D2L)  
• Rees. Sustainability Conundrum (D2L) |
| 1/29 | Cities as Eco-Technical Systems | • CPP: Ch. 6  
• White. Selections from *The Organic Machine* (D2L) or McPhee (D2L)  
• Hughes. “Creating an Ecotechnological Environment.” (D2L) |
| 2/3  | Climate Change and the City | • ***GROUP PROJECT: DELIVERABLE I DUE***  
• Cities and Climate Change (Part I and II) (D2L)  
• Rosenzweig et al. “Cities lead the way in climate change action.” (D2L)  
• Portland Climate Action Plan |
| Week 6 | **Climate Adaptation and Resilience** | • Klinenberg. “Adaptation: How can cities be ‘climate-proofed’?” (D2L)  
• NYTimes articles (D2L)  
• Colten et al (2008) (D2L)  
• Skim: plaNYC report (D2L) |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 2/5 | **Urban Ecological Design**  
• Guest Speaker: Carol Mayer-Reed, Mayer-Reed | **NYTimes articles (D2L)  
• Colten et al (2008) (D2L)  
• Skim: plaNYC report (D2L) |
| 2/10 | **Water & Wastewater**  
• Guest Speaker: Anne Nelson, Portland Bureau of Environmental Services | **CPP: Ch. 11  
• NRDC Stormwater Report: Executive Summary & PDX Case Study (D2L)  
• Portland Watershed Management Plan: Ch 1 and Executive Summary (D2L)  
• Skim: PWMP Five Year Implementation Plan (D2L) |
| 2/12 | **Portland State University as Living Laboratory**  
• Field Trip led by Institute for Sustainable Solutions – meet in classroom (and dress appropriately to walk outside for 45 minutes)  
• In-class group work time | **Egan (D2L)  
• Watch: John Robinson TED talk (link on D2L) |
| 2/17 | **Urban Agriculture**  
• Film: *The Garden* | *****GROUP PROJECT: DELIVERABLE II DUE***  
• CPP: Ch. 12  
• Miner (2010) (D2L) |
| 2/19 | **Environmental Justice**  
• Guest Speaker: Jenn Bildersee, Portland Brownfield Program, Bureau of Environmental Services | **Campbell. “Green Cities, Growing Cities, Just Cities.” (D2L)  
• Brulle & Pellow. “Environmental Justice: Human Health and Environmental Inequalities.” (D2L)  
• Brownfields reading (TBD) |
| 2/24 | **Nature & Community: Civic Environmentalism**  
• Guest Speaker: Mark Lakeman, City Repair | **Filler. “Up in the Park.” (D2L)  
• Shutkin. “The Land That Could Be.” (D2L)  
• Light. “Urban Environmental Ethics” (D2L) |
| 2/26 | **Sustainable Cities**  
• Guest speaker: Portland Plan | **CPP: Ch. 13  
• Newton & Bai. “Transitioning to Sustainable Urban Development.” (D2L)  
• Portland Plan (Read Executive Summary and one section of your choice) |
| 3/3 | **Sustainable Cities II: Future Cities**  
• Walking Tour Activity | **TBD** |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 10</th>
<th>3/10</th>
<th>Final Presentations I</th>
<th>• Final Reports Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3/12</td>
<td>Final Presentations II</td>
<td>• Final Reports Due</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

***Revised Final Report (via email) and Essay #2 due March 19th by 5:00pm at URBN 3rd floor front desk***

ENJOY YOUR SPRING BREAK AND BE SAFE!