Course Number: SoWo 880-238
Course Title: Sustainable Development
Faculty: Gary Nelson, DSW
School of Social Work
Room 235
Tele: (919) 962-4370
Email: gmnelson@email.unc.edu
Semester: Spring 2010—Monday 5:30—8:30 p.m.
Tate Turner Kuralt Bldg. Room 135

Course Description

This course will examine issues and perspectives on sustainable development. In examining sustainable development, it will do so through a three part framework that combines local, national and global perspectives on the following goals: 1. economic prosperity; 2. social equity; and 3. environmental protection.

Course Objectives

At the conclusion of the course, students will be able to do the following:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the effect of their personal social and cultural background (including personal and professional values) on their own thinking, views and practice for sustainable development. This understanding will be reflected in a plan for the student’s growth and work;
2. Articulate a working definition of sustainable development that incorporates information from the past, as well as current thinking about the term, and provides practical, ethically based direction for the student’s work in sustainable development;
3. Demonstrate a working knowledge of sustainable development challenges in their community, the United States and the world;
4. Demonstrate a working knowledge of the interface between sustainable development and poverty from local and global perspective;
5. Demonstrate a working knowledge of the interface between sustainable development, culture and gender; and
6. Demonstrate an ability to apply a learning framework to a sustainable development initiative in a community of interest that appreciates the strengths of current approaches, identifies continuing challenges to sustainability, and sets forth a series of recommendations to overcome those challenges.
Required Texts and Readings

4. Additional readings will be identified and assigned throughout the semester in conjunction with the course topics, lectures, and guests.

Recommended Readings

Course Calendar---Organizational Modules, Readings and Assignments

Module I: Getting Started and Framing the Issue in Sustainable Development

Session 1: January 11th —Introduction—Our Choice A Necessary Revolution

Movie: Inconvenient Truth

Class Exercise—Small Group Exercise
- Knowledge assessment and course expectations.
- Exploring the relationship between sustainable development and issues of environmental protection, economic development, and social equity.

Assignments—Next Class Session
- Identify assignments for summarizing readings and facilitating discussion.
- Develop your own definitions of sustainable development as it pertains to your career goals—two pages double spaced.
- Write me letter—Over the next two weeks you must write me a letter dated April 21st, which begins with the words, “Dear Mr. Nelson, I got my ___ (grade) because…,” and in this letter you are to tell, in as much detail as you can, the story of what will have happened to you by this date that is in line with the grade you have earned.” In writing this letter everything must be written in the past tense. I am interested in knowledge and skills you will have gained but also the person you have become, e.g. your philosophy and stance toward social and economic development.

January 18th: Martin Luther King Day—No Class
Session 2: January 25th – Framing the Issues of Sustainable Development—It’s a Question of How We Think and What We Value

Assigned Reading:

Senge, Peter et. al. Chapter 1—A Future Awaiting Our Choices and Chapter 2—How We Got into This Predicament. Pp. 3-32.
Chapel Hill, North Carolina: School of Social Work at the University of North Carolina.

Guest: Frank Phoenix, Greenbridge & Institute for Sustainable Development

Session 3: February 1st — Green Plus—Institute for Sustainable Development

Assigned Reading:


Guest: Chris Carmody, Director Institute for Sustainable Development
Module II: Going Green and Sustainable in Low Wealth Communities

Session 4: February 8th – Rural and Low Wealth Communities in North Carolina

Assigned Reading:

Gore, Al. “Our Sources of Energy—Chapter 2—Where Our Energy Comes From and Where It Goes; Chapter 3—Electricity from the Sun; and Chapter 4—Harvesting the Wind.” Pp. 50-91.


Guest: Deb Gallagher, Nicholas Institute of the Environment
Duke University

Session 5: February 15th – Rural and Low Wealth Communities in North Carolina

Assigned Reading:


Guest: Linda Shaw, Director
Rural Advancement Foundation International (RAFI)

Session 6: February 22nd – Mapping Low Wealth Communities and Sustainability

Assigned Reading:


Guest: Leslie Scott, Center for Rural Economic Development
Session 7: March 1st—Global Perspective on Sustainable Development

Assigned Reading:


Guest: Phyllis Pomerantz, Professor of the Practice
Duke Center for International Development

March 8th—Spring Break

Module III: Planet, People and Profit

Session 8: March 15th—Planet

Assigned Reading:


Guest: Bland Landscaping

Session 9: March 22nd—People

Assigned Reading:


Guest: Kevin Trapani, CEO
The Redwoods Group
Session 10: March 29th—Performance

Assigned Reading:


Guest: Chapel Hill Restaurant Group

Module IV: Designing for Sustainable Development

Session 11: April 5th –Leadership

Assigned Reading:

Senge, Peter et. al., “Chapter 10—Getting People Engaged; Chapter 11-Building Your Case for Change; Chapter 12—The Tragedy and Opportunity of the Commons; Chapter 13—Spaceship Earth and Chapter 14—Seeing Our Choices.” Pp. 140-221.


Guest: Jon Abels, Director
   Duke Center for International Development

Session 12: April 12th –Community Engagement

Assigned Reading

Senge, Peter et. al., “Chapter 15—The Imperative to Collaborate; Chapter 16—Convening: Getting the System in the Room; Chapter 17—Seeing Reality Through Others’ Eyes; Chapter 18—Building Shared Commitment.” Pp. 227-284.


Guest: Chris Howell, Clinical Instructor
   The Less Is More Program
   School of Social Work
Session 13: April 19th – Envisioning the Future

Assigned Reading:

Senge, Peter et. al. “Chapter 19—Innovation Inspired by Living Systems; Chapter 20—Unleashing Everyday Magic; Chapter 21—You Don’t Have to Have All the Answers; Chapter 22—From Low-Hanging Fruit to New Strategic Possibilities; Chapter 13—It’s Not What the Vision Is, It’s What the Vision Does.” Pp. 285-344.


Guest: Shana Starobin, Research Coordinator
Institute for Sustainable Development

Session 14: April 26th – Class Presentations

Class Assignments
There are three assignments due in this course:

1. **Letter—Course Grade:** Letter identifying grade earned and content learned: **Due on January 25th.**
2. **Thought Piece:** A thought piece on sustainable development—your personal working definition: **Due January 25th.**
3. **Mid Term:** Due on March 1st
4. **Paper—Mapping and Identifying Resources For Going Green and Sustainable in Low Wealth Communities**

Assignment of Course Grades

The following weights will be applied to the various assignments associated with this course.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thought Piece</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-Term</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mapping Exercise</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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Course Evaluation
The course will be evaluated using evaluation form developed by the School of Social Work.