SYLLABUS
UEP 303: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT THEORY AND PRACTICE
FALL 2013
Prof. Víctor M. Polanco
e-mail: polanco@oxy.edu

Time: Tuesday/Thursday 10:05-11:30 am
Room: Tree N
Office hours: T/Th 12-1pm or by appointment
Phone: 323.259.2991
Office: UEPI 204

DESCRIPTION

This class introduces the concept of sustainable development with particular emphasis on applications in design, planning, and public policy. It examines the origins of the sustainability discourse, theoretical perspectives on it, and practical applications at a number of different scales (the site, the neighborhood, the city, the region, the nation, and internationally). It also introduces the concepts of “resilience” and “systems thinking” as they pertain to sustainable development practices and debates. Following a philosophy of “active learning,” the class combines lectures with short assignments, discussions, student projects, several walking tours, and guest appearances by practitioners.

Sustainable development requires an ability to understand human and ecological systems at different scales and to coordinate goals of environment, economy, and equity within long-term problem-solving. To help develop these skills, this course aims to 1) familiarize students with different perspectives within sustainability debates, 2) give students experience at analyzing development challenges at different scales, and 3) provide students a context within which to develop their own philosophies and visions of sustainable development, design, and planning.

Despite highly focused plans and programs, the City of Los Angeles has never developed a comprehensive environmental sustainability plan (such as those adopted by other major cities (including New York, Seattle, Philadelphia, and Portland) that outlines a unified vision for achieving sustainability goals, targets, metrics, and time tables for implementing that vision. Therefore, the latter part of the course will focus on applying “lessons learned” to produce a collaborative class report addressing the following question: *What will it take to transform Los Angeles into and environmentally sustainable and healthful place to live for all its residents?*

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

-- Understand key elements of the sustainability concept and theoretical perspectives on it
-- Gain insight into sustainability strategies in the areas of design, planning, and public policy
-- Allow students to develop their own philosophies and visions of sustainability
-- Improve ability to analyze real-world situations
-- Practice basic graphic representation and site design (no previous experience necessary)
CLASS REQUIREMENTS

- Regular attendance (lecture material will be on the exams)
- Complete assigned readings on-time (this material will be on the exams and is important for class discussions)
- Walking tour/Field Trips (sign up for two of three Saturday morning dates)
- Assignments and Presentations
- Midterm quiz and final exam

GRADING

10 percent – Assignments
10 percent – Individual Case study: Sustainability Best Practices
10 percent – Midterm Quiz
10 percent – Individual Reflection Piece
20 percent – Sustainable LA Final Report
20 percent – Final
20 percent – Participation/Effort

COURSE MATERIALS

There is one required text for the course (available online for purchase): The Sustainable Urban Development Reader, Second Edition (Routledge, 2009), edited by Stephen M. Wheeler and Timothy Beatley.

Two to three readings will usually be assigned for each class period, but don’t worry; these readings are short. They are intended to give you insight into different perspectives people have taken related to sustainable development. Try to identify key concepts and phrases when you read. Ask yourself, In what historical context was this author writing? Were they reacting to a particular tradition or situation? How did their background affect the style and content of their writing? What about their work is most useful to current situations?

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Academic Integrity
Occidental College assumes that students and faculty accept and respect the principle of academic honesty. The policies on academic misconduct are outlined in the Student Handbook (http://www.oxy.edu/StudentHandbook.xml). Plagiarism is representing others work as your own. This means that all work that you present as your own must in fact have been done by you, and that all sources must be properly cited. Students are expected to understand and abide by Oxy’s plagiarism policy (http://www.oxy.edu/x8000.xml). Here are a couple of sites to help you document sources properly using the preferred format this class (Chicago Manual of Style, Author/Date format). Below are a few websites that should provide guidance:

http://departments.oxy.edu/cae/writing/index.html
http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html (author-date tab)
http://library.osu.edu/sites/guides/chicagogd.php
Support Services
The college provides a set of resources to students to support them in learning. The Center for Academic Excellence (CAE) provides writing assistance to students to develop ideas, draft, and revise papers. See http://departments.oxy.edu/cae/.

If you have specific physical or learning disabilities and require accommodations, please let me know early in the semester so that we can meet your learning needs. The Center for Academic Excellence also provides services to assist students with physical or learning disabilities; these students need to contact Magen Todd, Learning Strategies & Disabilities Specialist, x2849, mtodd@oxy.edu in the Center for Academic Excellence (x2545).

The Emmons Health and Counseling Center provides support for issues of stress, medical and mental health. See http://www.oxy.edu/EmmonsHealthCenter.xml.

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

In this course we try to link classroom material to events in the outside world. So a few minutes at the beginning of each class will be reserved for “News and Announcements.” This is an opportunity for students to share brief announcements of events that classmates may be interested in, and to bring the class’s attention to news items or current events related to the subject of the course. Please feel free to speak up during this time, but please also keep your announcement or comments brief. We will organize a sign-up so that a few students can lead off with news items.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Class 1  Th Aug 29  What is “Sustainability”? (Issues, Opportunities, and Definitions)
Exercise: Mapping Sustainability Issues and Visions

Class 2  Tu Sep 3  The Discovery of “Sustainability”: Key Themes and Mindsets.
Exercise: Role Play of Different Perspectives on a Renewable Energy Project

Reading:
- Introductions to The Sustainable Urban Development Reader and Part 1 (pp. 1-10)
- Donella Meadows et al.: “Perspectives, Problems, and Models” (pp. 48-52)
- Los Angeles the Improbable Sustainable City blog post by Stephanie Pincetl and Tim Papandreou, Deputy Director of Transportation Planning for the Sustainable Streets Division of San Francisco Municipal Transit Agency
Class 3  The Economic Worldview and Sustainability
    Th Sep 5  Film and Discussion: The Story of Stuff

Reading:  ■ Herman Daly: “The Steady-State Economy” (pp. 53-58)
    ■ ???

Assignment 1 Handed out

Class 4  Equity and Ethics
    Tu Sep 10  Exercise:

Reading:  ■ Aldo Leopold: “The Land Ethic” (pp. 23-32)
    ■ Robert Bullard: “People-of-Color Environmentalism” (pp. 183-189)

Class 5  Who Can Do What?: US Governance and Planning
    Th Sep 12  Guest Speaker:

Assignment 1 Due:

Class 6  Land Use Planning
    Tu Sep 17  Exercise: Development Decision Role-Play

    ■ Peter Calthorpe, “The Next American Metropolis” (pp. 87-98)
        ■ ???

Class 7  Urban Design
    Th Sep 19  Exercise:

Reading:  ■ Jan Gehl, “Outdoor Space and Outdoor Activities” (pp. 99-102)
    ■ Dolores Hayden: “Domesticating Urban Space” (pp. 190-196)

Class 8  Transportation
    Tu Sep 24  Guest Speaker:

Reading:  ■ Robert Cervero, “Transit and the Metropolis: Finding Harmony” (pp. 115-122)
    ■ Peter Newman and Jeffery Kenworthy, “Traffic Calming” (pp. 123-128)

Class 9  Urban Ecology
    Th Sep 26  Urban Agriculture -- Guest Speaker: Susan Ellsworth

Reading:  ■ Ann Whiston Spirn, “City and Nature” (pp. 139-144)
    ■ “Where Food Planning and Health Intersect” and other selections from Planning magazine, August/September 2009, available on the course SmartSite.

Class 10  Midterm Quiz
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>阅读/活动</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tue Oct 1</td>
<td>Climate Change: Planning for Adaptation and Mitigation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Bill McKibben, “The End of Nature” (pp. 64-71)</td>
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<td>- Stephen Pacala and Robert Socolow, “Stabilization Wedges” (pp. 173-180)</td>
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<td>Class 11</td>
<td>Local Economic Development</td>
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<td>Thu Oct 3</td>
<td>Reading:</td>
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<td>- Paul Hawken, “Natural Capitalism” (pp. 217-225)</td>
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<td>- Michael Schuman, “Import Replacement” (pp. 233-240)</td>
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<td>- Mark Roseland, “Strengthening Local Economies” (pp. 241-252)</td>
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<td>**Sat Oct 5</td>
<td>WALKING TOUR: First Group ()</td>
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<td>9-12 AM</td>
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<td>Class 12</td>
<td>Materials and Energy</td>
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<td>Tu Oct 8</td>
<td>Reading:</td>
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<td>- Herbert Girardet, “The Metabolism of Cities” (pp. 157-164)</td>
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<td>- John Tillman Lyle, “Waste as a Resource” (pp. 165-172)</td>
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<td>Class 13</td>
<td>Green Building and the LEED System</td>
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<td>Th Oct 10</td>
<td>Reading:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- David Eisenberg &amp; Peter Yost, “Sustainability and Building Codes” (pp. 267-272)</td>
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<td>*Sat Oct 12</td>
<td>WALKING TOUR: Second Group ()</td>
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<td>Tu Oct 15</td>
<td>FALL BREAK—NO CLASS (Mid-term period)</td>
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<td>Class 14</td>
<td>Sustainability Tools – Guest Lecture:</td>
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<td>Th Oct 17</td>
<td>Film: The Nature of Cities</td>
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<td>Reading:</td>
<td>- Virginia Maclaren, “Urban Sustainability Reporting” (pp. 281-287)</td>
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<td>- Mathis Wackernagel &amp; William Rees, “What Is an Ecological Footprint?” (pp. 289-296)</td>
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<td>- Do Ecological Footprint calculator at <a href="http://myfootprint.org">http://myfootprint.org</a>. Can you reduce your footprint to less than one earth? What factors help do that?</td>
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<td>- Do the Carbon Calculator at <a href="http://coolcalifornia.org">http://coolcalifornia.org</a>. Can you reduce your household emissions to &lt;10 tons/year (the world average)?</td>
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*Sat Oct 19
9-12 AM

WALKING TOUR: Third Group ()

Class 15
Tue Oct 22
Regional Ecosystem Planning (Guest Lecture)
Film or exercise to be determined
Draft papers handed back

Reading:
Factsheets on Regional Planning

Class 16
Th Oct 24

Class 17
Tu Oct 29
International Development (1): Development Challenges
Videos: Curitiba and other International Examples

- Jonas Rabinovitch and Josef Leitman, “Urban Planning in Curitiba” (pp. 319-329)
- Timothy Beatley, “Planning for Sustainability in Europe: A Review of Leading Practices” (pp. 330-339)

Class 18
Th Oct 31
International Development (2): Design Challenges
In-Class Exercise: International development strategies

Reading:
- Janice E. Perlman with Molly O’Meara Sheehan, “Fighting Poverty and Environmental Injustice in Cities” (pp. 197-208)

Class 19
Tu Nov 5
Where Do We Go From Here?

Reading:
- Ernest Callenbach, selections from Ecotopia (pp. 379-384)
- Ursula LeGuin, “Description of Abbenay” (pp. 385-389)
- Stephen M. Wheeler, “The View from the Twenty-Third Century” (pp. 389-392)

Class 20
Th Nov 7
Sustainable Development Plans (New York, Los Angeles, Seattle, Portland, Philadelphia)

Reading:
Vision 2021 LA

Class 21
Tu Nov 12
In-class work (Issue #1)

Reading:
TBA

Class 22
Thu Nov 14
In-class work (Issue #2)

TBA
Reading:

Class 23  In-class work (Issue #3)
Tu Nov 19

Class 24  In-class work (Issue #4)
Th Nov 21

Class 25  In-class work (Issue #5)
Tu Nov 26

Reading:  TBA

Th Nov 28  HAPPY THANKSGIVING – NO CLASS
Class 26  Last Day of Classes
Tu Dec 3  Report Presentation, Full-Class Discussion and Review for Exam
Final Report Due

Final Exam  Final Exam
Wed Dec 11
1:00-4:00
The “Fatal Five”

1. **Reading the slides.** More respondents complained about this behavior than anything else—and by a wide margin. Many indignantly asked why a presenter would read slides aloud when audience members were entirely capable of reading them for themselves...“Watching someone read PowerPoint slides is a form of torture that should be banned under the Geneva Convention,” wrote one respondent.

2. **Too long, too much information.** How long is too long? If a presentation is boring, respondents told us, even 10 minutes can seem too long. And boring presentations appear to be rampant across the sector... “Too many slides with too many words, too many points, too much data, too long, too didactic.”

3. **Lack of interaction.** The problem that first appeared when we asked respondents to describe the typical presentation resurfaced strongly in subsequent answers to open-ended questions. Many complained about being “talked at” for 30, 40, even 60 minutes at a time...

4. **Lifeless presenters.** Presenters who speak in a monotone, who seem to lack interest in their own material, or who appear to have wandered in from the set of “Night of the Living Dead” were also reported by many in the survey...

5. **Room/technical problems.** LCD projectors that don’t work, air conditioning that works too well, sound systems that are either too soft, too loud, or have too much hiss – just about every room or technical problem you can imagine showed up in survey answers...many are preventable, and even those that cannot be avoided do not have to ruin a talk...presenters often do not anticipate them or fail to have a backup plan.

**The Three Most Wanted**

In another open-ended question, we asked, “What one or two key things make a presentation excellent?” Again, respondents provided a wide range of answers, although a few unhappy campers claimed they had *never* seen an excellent presentation. A consensus emerged around three characteristics, and unsurprisingly each is a direct opposite of a common problem cited above.

1. **Interaction.** Nearly one out of every four respondents mentioned interaction – with the speaker, with other audience members, or both – as a hallmark of excellent presentations. “Interactive presentations that create opportunities for the audience members to work together and with the presenter are almost always top notch,” one respondent told us.

2. **Clarity.** Some used the words “well organized,” and some wrote “concise,” but if you were to scan the verbatim responses to this question, you would see a long run of answers that begin with “clarity.” One such response: “Clarity of three to four well-framed key points the speaker wanted the audience to take away, coupled with smart use of metaphors/anecdotes that helped speaker drive them home.”

3. **Enthusiasm.** Whether respondents used the words energy, passion, charisma, engaging, dynamic or lively, they all wanted the same thing: presenters who were enthusiastic about their topic and conveyed that interest to the audience.

Four other qualities that each received a high number of mentions were: humor, use of stories, relevance, and well-produced visuals.