Course Description

Over the past 25 years, sustainability has become a key consideration for communities and cities. Despite the widespread usage of sustainability, there remains a great deal of debate over what it should actually mean or what it looks like in practice. Sustainability issues overlap with questions of growing inequality, immigration, gentrification, political disempowerment, racism, globalization etc. The sustainability of communities is not only threatened by climate change, pollution and growing levels of human consumption, but also by other systemic inequalities. Furthermore, these issues impact some communities more than others and continue to transform as processes of globalization and neoliberalism reshape our understanding of community. This course examines community sustainability through a social justice and equity perspective with a focus on race, gender and class. The course asks how we can better understand conceptualizations of community sustainability and explores different contexts, practices, solutions and challenges.

In order to better understand community sustainability, we study various ways to analyze these issues and different solutions and responses from several theoretical perspectives. This includes theories of collective action, political economy, political ecology, feminism, and transnational theoretical frameworks. It also includes exploring proposed solutions and practices as we confront changing dynamics. This includes asking questions such as how do we conceptualize society environment interactions at a variety of scales? How can one bring together different theoretical traditions in analysis and practice? What does a political ecological perspective mean for our understandings of sustainability as a concept but also in practice and as a movement? What role does social justice play in sustainability? Self-determination? Autonomy? Power? Is capitalism sustainable? What alternatives to the widespread commodification of nature exist, and how do we bring them into being, and scale them up? How are ecological issues linked to conflict and collective violence? Can we imagine an alternative? A different community? Neighborhood? World?

Course Objectives

1. Understand and synthesize key concepts and issues surrounding community sustainability

2. Explore various approaches to understanding community sustainability, and the implications of each approach in practice.

3. Gain a working knowledge of skills required of a comprehensive practitioner in teamwork, communication and participation. Develop communication skills through small group student activities including the tools for facilitation.

4. Develop research skills including interviewing, participant observation, analysis and writing.

Course Structure

The primary format reflects a philosophical commitment to co-teaching and co-learning as opposed to more didactical pedagogical approaches. Learning will be through critical group discussion, reading, guest speakers, writing and critical analysis. Each student group will be responsible for leading a class discussion, facilitating discussion, and for meeting course goals.
Required Readings

Book is available at Rainbow Bookstore Cooperative
426 W. Gilman St. Madison, WI 53704

All other readings are available through the course website.

Requirements, Course Policies, Grading

Student Interview 20%
This course requires each student to conduct, transcribe and analyze an interview of another student to help define community sustainability.

Class Sessions and Participation 20%
Active class participation and preparation prior to coming to class is central. Attendance is mandatory for all class sessions. Participation by all students is critical to developing a student-centered learning environment. Participation means regular attendance, knowledge of the reading assignments, and participation in group and individual class exercises, evaluations, and discussions. Any unexcused absences may be counted against your participation grade. If you are sick or have an unavoidable conflict, please notify me in advance by email.

Reflections and Critiques 20%
Each week, a short response to one or more question around the articles for the week, community practice, concepts, will be posted on the website. These reflections are meant to link observations, experiences and theories in addition to contribute to active experimentation and discussion in this and other classes.

No reflection is due on the first week of class

Final Project 40%
Each student is responsible for submitting an individual final project that will include research, data collection, analysis and a final presentation.

Readings and weeks

I Foundations, Conceptualizations and Methods of Community Sustainability


Week 2: Political Economy, Ecology and Community January 26-30th


Molotch, Harvey. The City as a Growth Machine: Toward a Political Economy of Place. AJ S 82(2): 309
https://www.questia.com/magazine/1G1-20931196/marxism-metaphors-and-ecological-politics


**Week 3: The Politics of Place, Postcolonial and Global Perspectives February 2-6th**

Malpass, Cloke, Barnett and Clarke. 2007. Fairtrade Urbanism? The Politics of Place Beyond Place in the Bristol Fairtrade City Campaign. IJ URR


**Week 4: Methodologies February 9-13th**


**II Racial Oppression, Environmental Degradation, and Economic Exploitation**

**Week 5: Privatization, Degradation and Insecurity February 16th-20th**


**Week 6: Deindustrialization, Disinvestment and Violence February 23rd-27th**


Bluestone, B. and B. Harrison. 1982. “Capital vs. Community”. In The Deindustrialization of America. pps. 3-21

http://radicaldiscipleship.net/2015/01/13/fifty-years-later-in-detroit-the-end-of-brown-separate-and-unequal/

**Week 7: Homeless Tenure, Vulnerability, Relocation**

March 2nd-6th

Student Interview Due

The Black Scholar 36(4): 13-31

Film: Lost Angeles


**III Topics and Application**

**Week 8: Food Security and the Right to Stay**

March 9th-11th

Film: The Garden


March 11th Food Chains this evening

**Week 9: Sustainable Cities Initiatives**

March 16th-20th

Picket, STA, Cadenasso, and J M Grove. Resilient Cities: meaning, models, and metaphor for integrating the ecological, socio-economic, and planning realms. Landscape and Urban Planning.

Corburn, Jason. Toward the Healthy City: People, Places, and the Politics of Urban Planning Class

“Toward a Sustainable Community,” UW-Extension

“Promising Practices in Adaptation & Resilience,” Institute for Sustainable Communities

***sustaining community based institutions??


Week 10: **Transportation and Mobility** \( \text{March 23-27th} \)


MARCH 28- APRIL 5th SPRING BREAK

V Alternative Economies and Governance

Week 11. **The Commons and Resource Management and Scale**


Week 12. Reimagining our democracies, rebuild our local economies \( \text{April 13} \)

Film: “The Take”


Week 13: Learning from Below: Indigenous Communities and Cultural Resistance April 20th-24th

Film: Jardin Kojima


Week 14: Feminist Perspectives and Social Movements April 27th-May 1st


http://www.huffingtonpost.com/beverly-bell/haitian-farmers-commit-to_b_578807.html


Week 15: Student Presentations May 4th-May 8th

Final Class: May 15th 12:05 pm