

Mark Stemen

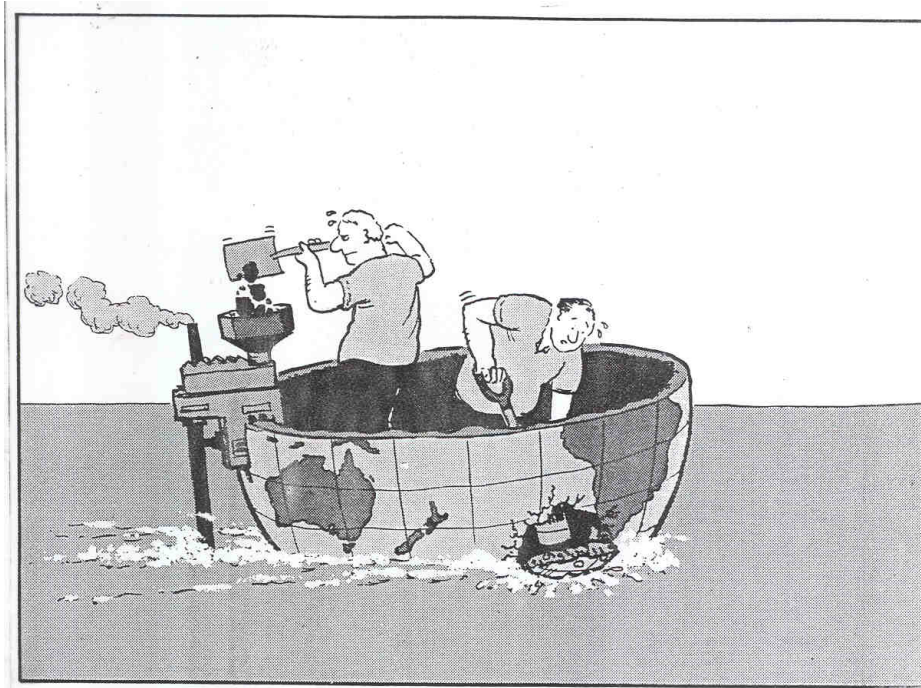
Office: 541 Butte Hall

Phone: 898-5428

Email: mstemen@csuchico.edu

GEOG 304: Sustainability Issues

Office Hours: MW 2-3, TR 11-12
and by appt.



Course Description

This course covers sustainability issues, broadly defined. We are facing an sustainability crisis in large part because we have forgotten that the human economy is a subset of the environment, not the other way around. We need to learn live within limits, to be sustainable. We also must learn to be humble. Ignorance is not a solvable problem. Our "control" of the environment is illusionary.

While we must be concerned, we can also be hopeful. Trend is not destiny. This course will also show the positive aspects of sustainability and the people making change. There is happiness in knowing your place in the world and joy in living a sustainable life.

Sustainability requires an educated and engaged citizenry so this course will also provide an opportunity for students to become engaged with the Chico sustainability movement.

Course Readings

Miller, *Sustaining the Earth* (edition 8-12)

Quinn, *Ishmael*

Course Objectives

Introduce students to the geographic study of "human/environment relationships"

Introduce students to concepts underpinning modern sustainability

Introduce students to the concept of environmental justice

Introduce students to the social construction of class, race, ethnicity, gender, and other foundational concepts of the dominant culture

Provide students with points of entry to discuss sustainability with their peers

Provide students the opportunity to do something positive and proactive

Provide students the opportunity to improve critical thinking and writing skills

Provide students the opportunity to find their own voice on the issues

GE Student Learning Outcomes

- Sustainability: Describes and explains the environmental dynamics associated with human activities, and assesses the value of balancing social and economic demands with the Earth's ability to sustain physical and biological resources and cultural diversity.
- Diversity: Demonstrates an understanding of and facility with different intellectual viewpoints as well as the unique perspectives of others based on varied experiences, identities and social attributes.
- Personal and Social Responsibility: Demonstrates knowledge and skills necessary to take responsibility for one's own life and actions, and to recognize opportunities and responsibilities to become engaged in our various local, regional, national, and international communities.

Course Requirements

5 quizzes	100 pts
11 two-page journals	330 pts
Two-page reflection on volunteer activity	30 pts
Three-page essay on <i>Ishmael</i>	200 pts
Four-page essay on sustainability	250 pts
Three-page final journal	<u>30 pts</u>
Total	940 pts

Grade Scale

90% - A 80% - B 70% - C 60% - D

Course Format

There is a quiz on the textbook almost every week to start the semester. I will provide a list of terms the week before the quiz. These quizzes are designed to keep you up on the readings and help you remember the main points.

Acquiring a bunch of facts is not the major focus of this class, however. I am more concerned with how you think about environmental issues, than what you think about them. I designed the class so we can discuss and expand on the same themes and concepts throughout the semester. Since writing is thinking on paper, we will spend a majority of the class focusing on your written work.

Every week you will write a two-page journal on that week's assignment. I read these journals, but I do not grade them. If it appears to me that you have done the reading, and spent some time thinking about it, you receive full credit. I assign this exercise to get you into the habit of writing about what you read. Journals are due the week they are assigned.

You will also write two more formal essays throughout the term. These essays will be graded. The first will be on the book *Ishmael*, by Daniel Quinn. The second will be on sustainability. You complete these essays one step at a time. You can begin writing in your weekly journals. You will write a rough draft, and I and/or your peers will comment on it. (Failure to write a rough draft will result in a thirty-point deduction.) Your final draft is due the following week, allowing you ample time to revise your work before any of it is graded. Additional directions will follow.

This class is a process as much as anything so I expect you to attend every day. But, I realize, things do come up. Everyone is allowed one unexcused absence. After that each subsequent absence will lower your overall total by ten points. Not missing class all semester is hard to do and an effort I wish to reward. So, if you never miss a class, you earn ten points extra credit.

As required, I will also host a culminating event.

If you have a disability of any type that makes it difficult for you to complete any of above the course work please let me know and I will work with you to resolve the difficulty.

Weekly reading assignments and course work deadlines

[Lecture topics subject to change]

January 22 – **TMI**

Syllabus

Video: Campus Ecology

January 24 – No Class

Attend Campus Sustainability Forum from 9-11 in Colusa 100

January 29 – **Environmental Issues**

Paragraph Due

Calculate Your Ecological Footprint [www.myfootprint.org]

January 31 – **Sustainability**

AtKisson, Future in a Word

Journal #1

February 5– **The Triple Bottom Line**

Quiz: Chapter 1

Video: Story of Stuff

February 7– **Something New Under the Sun**

Heinberg, Peak Everything

Journal #2

February 12 – **The Great Burning**

Quiz: Chapter 12

February 14 – **Climate Change**

McKibben, Global Warming's Terrifying New Math

<http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/global-warmings-terrifying-new-math-20120719>

Journal #3 Due

February 19 – **The Long Emergency**

Quiz: Chapters 9 &10

February 21 – **A Peaceful Uprising**

Grier, The End of the Industrial Age

Video: Bidder 70

Journal #4 Due

February 26 – **Water and Pollution**

Quiz: Chapter 8

Video: The Story of Bottled Water

February 28 – **Campus Sustainability**

Uhl, Process and Practice: Creating the Sustainable University

Journal #5 Due

March 5 – **Food Production and the Environment**

Quiz: Chapter 7

Video: Farmed and Dangerous

March 7 – **Agricultural Industrial Complex**

Pollan: “An Eater’s Manifesto”

Journal #6 Due

March 12 – **King Corn**

Daniel Quinn, *Ishmeal*

March 14 – **King Corn**

Daniel Quinn, *Ishmeal*

March 19 – **No Class**

March 21 – **No Class**

March 26 – **Mother Culture and the Way Things Came to Be**

No Quiz

March 28 – **No Class**

This Way to Sustainability Conference 3/27-30

April 2 – **The Great Forgetting and The Great Remembering**

Sahlins, *The Original Affluent Society*

Eisler, “Journey Into a Lost World”

Rough Draft Due in class

April 4 – **Farms of Tomorrow**

Shepard, *Annual Crops and Civilization*

Shepard, *Perennial Agriculture*

Journal #7 Due

April 9 – **Community Supported Agriculture**

Video: Big River

April 11 - **Transition Towns**

Hopkins, *What Can Communities Do?*

Journal #8 Due

Ishmael Essay Due Friday 5pm, Butte 507

April 16 – **Deep Green Resistance**

Video: Forget Shorter Showers

April 18 – **The Myth of Human Supremacism**

Jensen, *The Great Chain of Being*

Or any article at <http://www.orionmagazine.org/index.php/mag/contributor/4698/>

Journal # 9 Due

April 23 – **Local Resistance: Oil By Rail**

Video: On the Wrong Track

April 25– **Climate Insurgency in America**

Brecher, This is What Insurgency Looks Like

Brecher, The Right of the People to Protect the Climate

Journal #10 due

April 30 – **Discussion**

Rough Draft Due in class

May 2 – **Coming of Age At the End of Nature**

Hemphill, We Are The Fossil-Fuel Freedom Fighters

Journal #11 due

Saturday, May 4th Endangered Species Faire from 11 to 4pm at One Mile in Bidwell Park

May 7 – **Idle No More**

Video: Just Do It

Reflection Essay and Extra Credit Due

May 9 – **We Are Grass**

Sustainability Essay Due Friday 5pm

May 14 – **Final Culminating Event**

Final Journal Due