The (Re)Emergence of Sustainable Cultures

ANTHR19G Section 66527, Spring 2010
Meets 6 Monday Evenings, 6:00PM-8:35PM (2/14, 2/28, 3/14, 3/28, 4/11, and 4/25)
W 11:00AM-12:00PM, Th 11:00-11:45AM & 5:35-6:15PM & other times by appointment
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http://www.cabrillo.edu/~mmerrill/anthr19g.htm
Blog = http://cabrillosustainablecultures.wordpress.com

Cabrillo login/username: _____________________ Cabrillo password: _____________________
Blog login/username: _____________________ Blog password: _____________________

COURSE OVERVIEW

In this course, we will examine innovative sustainability solutions that are transforming the way the world works, including tools and ideas for creating sustainable lifestyles, businesses, communities and cultures. We will investigate the complex systems and networks experiencing dynamic change in our environment, our economy and our society to understand where we are now. We will explore scenario-building strategies to imagine culture changes in future decades.

Course Objectives

Like Cabrillo College itself, this course seeks to honor the core values of “academic freedom, critical and independent thinking, and respect for all people and cultures.” This class provides opportunities to develop skills in all of Cabrillo’s “Core Four” competencies:

I. Communication: Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking and/or Conversing
   o Explain sustainability concepts to peers and be able to share these concepts with the broader community.
   o Write thought questions and reflections on readings to facilitate peer discussion.

II. Critical Thinking and Information Competency: Analysis, Computation, Research, Problem Solving
   o Apply principles of complex systems and biological networks to solve problems in sustainability.

III. Global Awareness: An Appreciation of Scientific Complexities, Social Diversity and Civics, and Artistic Variety
   o Use the methods and practices of anthropology to explore local and global questions of culture change and sustainability.
   o Identify trends and innovations that contribute to sustainable culture change.

IV. Personal Responsibility and Professional Development: Self-Management and Self-Awareness, Social and Physical Wellness, Workplace Skills
   o Work productively with peers to complete assignments.
   o Use online communication tools.
   o Ask for clarification and assistance from the instructor.
Learning Outcomes
Students completing this course will be able to solve novel problems related to individual lifestyle, business, community or global issues by applying sustainability principles from diverse frameworks.

Specifically, students will explore solutions to problems of long-term sustainability in personal, business, community and cultural change, including:

1. Known trends and areas of uncertainty around: a) climate change; b) pollution and waste; and, c) resource limits.
2. The global outlook on these issues, and their impact on individuals, businesses, communities and societies in the future.
3. Principles related to natural systems and their application to human economic and social systems, including technological and organizational innovation.
4. Issues currently of concern for the sustainability of the local community.
5. Examples of business and community experiments in sustainability, and lessons from them applied to the local community.
6. Strategies for generating scenarios to help understand future impacts of choices and changes.

Learning Strategies & Class Policies

Class Discussion and Lectures
Preparing for and participating in class discussions are keys to success in this class (and in most college classes). This class will be highly interactive, meaning your level of preparation in each class will be evident to your peers. I urge you to do all your readings for the week and post your topic findings before coming to class. Ask questions in class, via email, on the course website/blog or during office hours about anything that is unclear!

Participation
This course requires active participation each class meeting, so it is essential that you attend every class session, arrive on time, and come prepared. Your participation not only enhances your own learning, it benefits other students in the class, especially when working in teams. Your level of participation is reflected in your grade, and since you can’t participate if you are not in class, absences and tardiness will also be reflected in your grade. Because there are only six class meetings, this means that missing any one meeting has a big impact and will require some make-up work. The last class meeting is particularly crucial for your grade.

Common Courtesy and Common Sense
Students frequently discover that not everyone shares their personal beliefs, experiences, and convictions. Respect for many points of view is required in this class. Disagreements are healthy and help us to learn, but students must maintain a respectful attitude and courteous conversation at all times. My goal as an instructor is not to convince you to hold a particular opinion on controversial issues, but to encourage you to think critically and with an open mind about the facts, evidence, ideas and theories presented in class.

Classroom etiquette regarding portable electronic devices is not unlike takeoff and landing on an airplane – they should be turned off and stowed away. Cell phones and pagers should be OFF at all times (an exception may be made for caretakers who can keep their phones/pagers on vibrate for
emergency situations, provided the instructor is notified ahead of time) - "smart phones" may be used during team work to look up information or perform calculations, but it is not appropriate to compose/send/receive text messages in class. You should have nothing in your ears other than hearing aid devices if needed. You may use a recorder for instructor lectures, as long as it is unobtrusive (though in my experience, paying attention and taking notes during lecture is more useful). Calculators, PDAs, and laptop computers are permitted during lectures provided they aren’t making much noise.

Other behavioral norms are expected to minimize classroom disruptions and avoid disturbing your fellow students. Arrive on time for class. Do not begin packing your things and preparing to leave until the instructor has indicated class is actually finished. Do not interrupt the instructor or your classmates while they are speaking to the class, but by all means DO raise your hand when you have a question or comment. Basically, use a little common sense, try to imagine what is likely to annoy your instructor, and then avoid doing those things if you wish to remain in class.

**ADA Compliance**
Students needing accommodations should contact the instructor immediately. As required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), accommodations are provided to insure equal opportunity for students with verified disabilities. If you need assistance with an accommodation, please contact Disabled Student Services, Room 810, (479-6379) or Learning Skills Program, Room 1073, (479-6220).

**Academic Honesty**
Cheating on any class work, including plagiarism, is grounds for an immediate failing grade in the class. Plagiarism is simply defined as presenting someone else’s writing or ideas as if they were your own. To learn about what plagiarism means and how to avoid it, please see the description at: http://www.cabrillo.edu/~sholt/MITPlagiarism.pdf or http://www.plagiarism.org/learning_center/what_is_plagiarism.html and review the links provided by the Cabrillo College Library at http://libwww.cabrillo.edu/depts/libraryinstruction.html.

**Grading and Assignments**
I believe that the grade a student receives should accurately reflect their comprehension of the material and their completion of course objectives. While I would be overjoyed if this meant that all of you would receive “A” grades, and would be happy to award them if you genuinely demonstrated you deserve them, I suspect that there will be a range of grades in this course that will reflect the efforts of each individual student. It is possible that some students may fail, but I will have given you opportunities to succeed if you are willing to take responsibility and put in genuine effort. It is your responsibility as a college student to talk with me about options or strategies for improving your performance in the course.

This is an in-person interactive course, but we will also be using online tools for assignments. This will allow you to further develop and practice your skills online (as a crucial aspect of professional development for most jobs requiring a college degree, and an essential tool for global change agents), and provide a venue for sharing learning experiences with classmates and share what you are learning with the broader world. You are expected to do the following:

1. Weekly homework and class participation related to readings:
   a. Complete assigned book reading (about 50 pages per week, see blog).
b. Write the following responses on the reading **before the fourth and sixth week of class** (post on blog, 25% of course grade):
   i. Explain how one idea in the reading relates to other topics already covered in class or something you learned elsewhere (another class or life experience).
   ii. List what you think are the three to five most important points made in the reading.
   iii. Write a question to provoke discussion among others who read the same passage.
   iv. Note any important points that connect with or inform your research topic (*post this in your topic group area of the blog*).

c. Discuss the first three with your book group, and decide on key points from your discussion to present briefly to the entire class during the **fourth week** (5% of course grade – each student is expected to discuss one point from the group discussion).

d. Evaluate your own and your book groupmates’ contributions to the discussion (5% of course grade).

2. Select and research **topics** based on local issues of personal or community sustainability; prepare and present topics in teams.
   a. Find and read at least five articles on your topic (post link or citation with brief summary on blog before each meeting after the first, 15% of course grade).
   b. Discuss what you found in the article and relevant findings from your book reading with your topic team in class meetings.
   c. Discuss plans for team topic presentation and sharing the preparation work appropriately.
   d. Work with your team to present your topic during the last class session, and provide additional references and material online (40% of course grade).
   e. Evaluate your own and your teammates’ contributions to the presentation (10% of course grade).

**Note:** Evaluations and presentations happen on the **last day of class** – these account for **over half of your grade** in this brief class, so you must plan to be there.

**Books**

Every student must choose one book that they will read and discuss with their book group. Specific reading assignments and due dates will be posted on the blog page for each book.


