

Surviving the Future

The (Re)Emergence of Sustainable Cultures



ANTHR19G Section 60261, Spring 2009

M 6:00 – 9:00 pm, February 23 – March 30, 2009, Room 431

Instructor: Michelle Y. Merrill Office: Room 429C

Office Hours: Tu 5:00 - 5:50pm W 9:10 - 9:30pm F 12:10-1:00pm

M (2/23 - 3/30 only) 9:00 - 9:45pm

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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**
 - Explain sustainability concepts to peers and be able to share these concepts with the broader community.
 - Write thought questions and reflections on readings to facilitate peer discussion.
- II. **Critical Thinking and Information Competency: Analysis, Computation, Research, Problem Solving**
 - 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**
 - Use the methods and practices of anthropology to explore local and global questions of culture change and sustainability.
 - 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

- Work productively with peers to complete assignments.
- 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 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 reading responses before coming to class. **Ask questions** in class, via email, on the course website/blog or during office hours about anything that is unclear!

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). You

should have nothing in your ears other than hearing aid devices if needed.

You may use a recorder for 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, 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.

Grading

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.

Standard Policies

(I don't anticipate these being an issue, but I include them here just in case something comes up.)

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>.

Course grades may be reduced by one letter grade for each four tardies, each three early departures or major disruptions, and/or each two absences (e.g. If you are late 5 times, are disruptive 5 times and are absent twice, you could be dropped 3 whole letter grades).

Assignments

1. Weekly homework and class participation related to readings:
 - a. Complete assigned book reading (about 50 pages per week, see website)
 - b. Write the following responses on the reading (and post on blog, 35% 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 two to five key points from your discussion to present briefly to the entire class.
 - d. Everyone in the book group should have at least one opportunity to present (or co-present) a one to four minute summary of your book group's key findings for the week (10% of course grade).
 - e. Evaluate your own and your book groupmates' contributions to the discussion (10% 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 one article per week on your topic (post link or citation on blog, 5% of course grade).
 - b. Discuss what you found in the article and relevant findings from your book reading with your topic team in weekly class meetings.
 - c. Discuss plans for team topic presentation and sharing the preparation work appropriately.
 - d. Present your topic during the last class session (March 30th, 30% 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 half of your grade in this brief class. Plan to be in class on **March 30th**.*

Books

Every student must choose one book. Specific reading assignments and due dates will be posted on the website.

Eisler R. 2007. *The Real Wealth of Nations: Creating a Caring Economics*. Berrett-Koehler ISBN#781576753880

Hawken P. 2007. *Blessed Unrest: How the Largest Movement in the World Came into Being and Why No One Saw It Coming*. Viking ISBN#9780670038527

Jones V. 2008. *The Green Collar Economy: How One Solution Can Fix Our Two Biggest Problems*. HarperCollins ISBN#9780061350758

Kelly E. 2006. *Powerful Times: Rising to the Challenge of Our Uncertain World*. Wharton ISBN#0131855204

McDonough W, Braungart M. 2002. *Cradle to Cradle: Remaking the Way We Make Things*. North Point Press ISBN#9780865475878

McKibben B. 2007. *Deep Economy: The Wealth of Communities and the Durable Future*. Times Books ISBN#9780805076264

Stephen, A (ed). 2006. *WorldChanging: A User's Guide for the 21st Century*. Abrams ISBN#9780810930957