Course Overview
The increasing resource demands of industrialized countries and the “Rising Rest,” met by increasingly globalized trade patterns, are eroding the resiliency of ecological systems. Many of the public goods provided by the natural world – from clean water and air, to abundant fisheries, to common lands used to supplement traditional livelihoods – are increasingly dependent for their provision on human institutions and technological interventions. And while the modern world lionizes “economic growth” as a panacea for conflict, unemployment and poverty, there is a growing chorus arguing that the global economy must soon cease expanding and conform to the limits of the steady-state system formed by our planet and its atmosphere. This course will explore some of the central questions raised in response to perceived problems with the growth model of development. Is there a “carrying capacity” of the planet, and what happens if and when it is exceeded? What role can and should we expect technology to play in offsetting our ecological impact? Should Development adopt a different model, and if so, which? Can the new models adequately value environmental health, equitable distribution, cultural integrity, and meaningful and stable employment?
The countless implications and permutations of these questions will far outstrip the time we will have to address them. Many of them bear heavily on peace and conflict dynamics and consequently have, to the extent possible, been confined to “PJS-570: Development & Conflict.” Nevertheless, we will grapple with a broad sample of relevant challenges to environmental, social, and economic sustainability – both theoretically and practically. In terms of theory, we will become acquainted with some basic concepts in environmental and natural resource economics, population biology, ecology, and urban planning. You will be asked not only to read and do (a few simple) mathematical problem sets, but to engage actively in debates on a regular basis. In terms of practice, you will be required to participate in a semester-long project of our (collective) design in support of the Linda Vista Community Garden at Bayside Community Center.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Please Note: This syllabus is a road map to get us started, not a final contract carved in stone! The instructor reserves the right to alter requirements and/or course content throughout the semester based on his assessment of student needs and attainment of learning objectives.

All required readings, and most of the recommended readings, will be uploaded to the course WebCT/Blackboard site. There you will also find folders labeled “Learning Tools” for many of the weeks, where I will post helpful diagrams, web links, and Powerpoint presentations made in class.

We will meet once per week. The structure of each session will differ depending on the material being presented and the preferences of the class. A typical session’s length will be broken into the following components:

- Assignment review (5%),
- Recommended reading presentations (~15%),
- Lecture and/or readings discussion (~15%),
- Student presentations (~15%),
- Presentations critiques (~15%),
- Activity (30%),
- Readings preview (5%).
The following components will make up your final grade:

- **Class Participation.** Discussion-heavy classes depend for their effectiveness on the active engagement of all participants. That’s you. Please come prepared to discuss the reading, to wrestle with the ideas out loud (< 80 db, please), and to use the richness of your own experience to gauge how convincing/useful the ideas are.

  Particularly prominent in this class will be the use of Oxford-style debates in class.

- **Recommended Reading Presentation.** Each week’s readings are divided into “required” and “recommended” readings. “Required” readings are required. “Recommended” readings are recommended, but probably aren’t going to get read. For that reason, you will be asked to sign up for one recommended reading presentation over the course of the semester. You will have 10 minutes to present the basic argument, as well as its assumptions, strengths, and weaknesses. There will then be a 5 minute Q&A session.

- **Group Project.** Throughout the semester, you will work with a group on a hands-on project with the Linda Vista Community Garden at the Bayside Community Center.

- **Final Project Write-Up.** You will be asked to write a final paper proposal due about two weeks before the end of the semester. I will give you feedback to help you to craft and refine your idea, and you will then carry out the proposal (that is, write the paper). For students in the Peace Studies MA program, you may use the final paper as a springboard into your capstone project. They should be consistently cited.

Grades will be calculated using the weighting percentages below:

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>% Final Grade</th>
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<td>Class Debates</td>
<td>Throughout</td>
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<td>Recommended Reading Presentation No. 1</td>
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<td>Recommended Reading Presentation No. 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Presentation/ Paper</td>
<td>10 May</td>
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## Timeline

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* All assignment are placed under their respective due dates – NOT the dates they are assigned.
Weekly Readings

Part I:

Week 1: Introduction to the Course

**Required:**

- United Nations (1992). The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development. Available at:
  

**Recommended:**

  


**In Class:**

Week 2: Conservation & the State of Nature

Required:

Recommended:

In Class:
- Debate: Does “nature” have intrinsic value and a right to be conserved, or is conservation subject to the cost-benefit calculus? (And whose costs and benefits do we count?)

Week 3: Food and Where It Comes From

Required:
Syllabus: PJS 594-02, Sustainable Development

Required:

In Class:
- **Film:** Kenner, Robert (2009). “Food, Inc.”
- **Guest lecture:** Josh Robinson from Eden on Earth Ecological Landscaping.

Week 4: Markets and Market Failures

Required:

Recommended:

Week 5: Climate Change & Environmental Governance

Required:
- The Economist (2011). The Sad Road from Kyoto to Durban. 3 December. 

Recommended:

In Class:
- **HW Review:** Problem Set 1
- **Debate:** Pollution taxes versus cap-and-trade.
Required:


Recommended:


In Class:

- HW Review: Problem Set 2

- Debate: Julian Simon versus Paul Ehrlich revisited.


Week 7: Balancing Interests: Local, International, Ecological

Required:

Syllabus: PJS 594-02, Sustainable Development

  

  

**In Class:**

- **Debate:** What does more good for wildlife: legal hunting or outright bans?

Week 8: Sustainable Energy

**Required:**

  

**In Class:**

- **Debate:** Europe is looking to divest of nuclear reactors just as America is looking more closely at investing in it.  Is a fossil fuel-less world possible without nuclear energy?  (And is nuclear energy really “sustainable?”)

Week 9: How Environmental Policy Happens

**Required:**


**Recommended:**


Week 10: Large Dams: The Case of Narmada

**Required:**

  
  [http://www.narmada.org/gcg/gcg.html](http://www.narmada.org/gcg/gcg.html)

Syllabus: PJS 594-02, Sustainable Development


  http://www.jnu.ac.in/cslg/workingpaper/cslg%20wp%2004-04%20balakrishnan%20rajgopal.pdf


In class:

- Debate: Narmada, pro and con
- Film: “Drowned Out”

Week 11: Sustainable Urban Development

Required:


- Listen: RadioLab, “Cities,” Season 8, Episode 4:
  http://www.radiolab.org/2010/oct/08/

Recommended:


**In Class:**

- **Debate:** Urban walkability is the most ecologically sound human settlement pattern.

**Week 12: Capitalism, Consumerism, Employment & Globalization**

**Required:**


- Schor, Juliet (2010). “Chapter 5: The Economics of Plenitude”. In *Plenitude: The Economics of True Wealth*.


**Recommended:**


**Week 13: Alternative Visions for a Sustainable Economy**

**Required:**


  [http://dieoff.org/page86.htm](http://dieoff.org/page86.htm)

Syllabus: PJS 594-02, Sustainable Development

http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/singer78/English


http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/sachs181/English

Week 14: Student Presentations