Northern Arizona University
SUS 695: Elements Of Sustainable Communities

Prerequisites: must be admitted to the SUS degree program and have completed 21 or more hours of graduate work or receive permission of the SUS director.

Course Description: Examines several theories and practices that inform sustainable community life. Letter grade only. Prerequisite: completion of 21 hours in SUS program or SUS director's consent.

This course continues the programmatic theme of the SUS degree program, “Visions of Good and Sustainable Societies.” It serves as both a review and elaboration of several aspects of the theme. Students will bring together their experiences in a variety of courses as they discuss the theories and practices that inform sustainable community life. Students will have an opportunity to refine their philosophy of community and their approach to sustainable communities, test their ideas in conversation, and connect their individual work with the work and ideas of others.

Course Objectives:

1) To provide a forum for the elaboration and maturation of ideas about sustainable communities.
2) To gain exposure to a variety of approaches to and perspectives on sustainability and community life.
3) To make connections between theory and practice and between academic ideas and community life.
4) To enable advanced students to develop and share their philosophies of community and strategies for achieving sustainable communities, including as they are taking form in their thesis projects.
5) To facilitate the development of a range of skills appropriate for graduate level work, including analytic, writing, oral communication, and critical inquiry skills.

Course Structure: This course is structured as a graduate seminar. Assigned readings and writing are to be prepared for critical and constructive discussion in class. Students and faculty will share the responsibility of presenting course materials; all students are expected to attend class regularly and punctually, and to participate actively in discussion.

Required Reading: Course readings will be available on-line via VISTA. In addition, the following books may be obtained from University Text and Tools and/or the NAU Bookstore:


**TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLINE**

I. **Elements of Sustainable Communities: An Introduction**
   Week 1 – January 18 (read for next week)

II. **Theoretical and Analytical Tools**
    Week 2 – January 25


III. Elements of Sustainable Communities: Perspectives
Week 3 – February 1
7:00 pm Winona LaDuke

Post YOUR essay outlining the “elements of sustainable communities”

3. Winona LaDuke, Recovering the Sacred (selection)

IV. Time and Changing Landscapes of Community
Week 4 – February 8
1. Mendzies, No Time, ALL

Recommended:

V. Envisioning, Engaging, Remembering, and Building Community
Attend or participate in an arts/activism/community building event

Week 5 – February 15
1. Beatley, Native to Nowhere, Chapter 7

VI. Eearth – A Changed Planet

Week 6 – February 22
[Feb. 23 Koyla Abramsky – possible]

1. McKibbon, *Eaarth*, ALL

VII. The Politics of Economic Possibility

Week 7 – March 1:


VIII. Food Justice

Week 8 – March 8
7 pm Robert Gottlieb

1. Gottlieb and Joshi, *Food Justice*, ALL

*(SPRING BREAK – March 13-19)*

IX. Places of Sustainable Community

Week 9 – March 22
1. Beatley, *Native to Nowhere*, ALL (except Ch. 7)

X. Democracy, Social Movements, and Social Change

Week 10 – March 29
1. Frances Fox Piven, *Challenging Authority*, selections
XI. Strategies and Mechanisms for Achieving Sustainable Communities

Week 12 — April 12
1. McKibben, *Deep Economy*, ALL

Week 13 – April 19
1. Schor, *Plentitude*, ALL

XII. Emerging Visions of Sustainable Communities

Week 14 – April 26
1. Student Presentations

Week 15 – May 3
1. Potluck at Nancy’s

XIII. SUS Students – Public Presentations

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Because we will be using a seminar format for the class, it is absolutely essential that students attend all classes, complete the assigned reading prior to attending class, and come to class prepared to play a major role in class discussions. Success in graduate school isn’t just about “knowing more,” it is also determined by your ability to communicate what you know to others. It is my hope to create a classroom environment in which we all have an opportunity to learn from and challenge one another. Many of the topics that we will discuss are controversial. These controversies are best understood if people with differing viewpoints express their opinions in class. I expect us all to be respectful of one another, and to see every discussion as an opportunity to educate ourselves about information we may have overlooked or been unaware of. Creating an open and supportive environment for discussion is partly my responsibility - but it's partly yours too. In general the class will operate as a discussion group. Students will take turns leading discussion and devising questions to foster conversation about the reading. However, it is my expectation that all students will play an active role in each class.

Evaluation Method

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Philosophy Statement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paper 1:</td>
<td>50</td>
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<td>Paper 2:</td>
<td>50</td>
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<td>Paper 3:</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td>In-class facilitation</td>
<td>25</td>
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Presentation of Research  25
Attendance/participation  25
Total Points  300

A=90% or more; B=89%-80%; C=79%-70%; D=69%-60%; F=59% or less

You will receive more detailed guidelines for these assignments as the semester progresses. Due dates are tentative; changes will be announced in class. It is your responsibility to know when papers are due. Late papers are subject to grade reductions unless arrangements are made with me prior to the due date.

**Incomplete Grade:** Failure to complete the work in the course will result in a grade of “F” unless an Incomplete Contract has been completed prior to the last regular class of the semester. You should be aware that I am unlikely to agree to an incomplete unless you can evidence that your inability to complete the assigned work was due to clearly unavoidable circumstances.

**Plagiarism/Academic Dishonesty:** Penalties will be based upon the NAU policy for academic dishonesty.

**Tape recorders, cell phones and other electronic devices** can be very disruptive to the learning environment; their use is not permitted in this course without my approval.

**Keep all graded materials** until you receive your final grade. Also, be sure to always have a copy of completed assignments in your possession.

The topics we will cover in this course are very mattering. For that reason, it is my hope that I can create a classroom experience that will facilitate your knowledge of the subject matter, professional development and personal growth. I want to encourage you to speak with me should you experience difficulty at any point during the semester. Of course, the sooner that you come to see me, the more likely it is that we can develop strategies to improve your experience and/or performance in the course. I have scheduled office hours to make it easy for you to see me if you have concerns or just want to chat. I am also available by appointment. I genuinely hope that you enjoy the course and that you find the information worthwhile. I look forward to getting to know you and to working together!