

Geography 558: Development and Sustainability

Fall 2008

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Class Schedule: Tuesdays 9:30am-12:15pm, Eggers 155
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Course Overview

Perhaps the best known definition of sustainable development is “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs,” formulated in the 1987 World Commission on Environment and Development report (known as *Our Common Future*). This conceptualization, however popular, is highly problematic. To begin with, like the concept of sustainable development itself, it is a normative truism. What model of development intentionally limits the ability of future generations to meet their basic needs? What school of theory advocates *unsustainable* development? One effect of the apparent universal nature of the label ‘sustainable development’ – evident in the ‘Our common future’ and ‘One world’ rhetoric – is that it conceals as much as it says. As such, one task of this course will be to unpack not only the concept of sustainable development, but also the socioeconomic processes and relations of power – operating across geographic scales – that it masks.

Moreover, merely to say that use of environmental systems must be *sustainable* indicates little if anything about the level of resource and energy flows, or the condition of states, which are to be sustained. Development could conceivably be sustained in such a way that species and ecosystems not directly necessary for the maintenance of human systems are destroyed. Thus, it can be said that the notion of sustainability is a reflection of diverse and shifting social values, rather than universally agreed-upon end-goals. It is essential therefore to maintain a healthy skepticism of the rhetoric of sustainability, and to continually ask: What is being sustained? For whom? and Why? Moreover, it is important to view sustainable development not as a radical departure from traditional development thinking, but rather as a product of it. In order better to understand what sustainable development is, we must examine its roots: how and from which ideas did it emerge?

Course Requirements

This course will be run as a seminar. This means that you absolutely *must* keep up with the assigned readings for each week, and come to class prepared to discuss them. The reading load for this course will average 100-120 pages per week – heavier than you are probably used to. I view your presence in this class as your commitment to keep up with this workload, and to come to class having read critically *all* of the week’s required readings (and hopefully the further readings as well). In order to elicit ideas and encourage discussion, you will be expected to submit comments or questions on each week’s readings in the form of a brief critical response. Individually, these comments will not be worth many points, but together will contribute significantly to your final grade for participation. These response papers should be brief (300-500 words), but are important to foster critical reflection about the readings. You are allowed three ‘free’ weeks when you don’t have to turn in a critical response, and may choose when to take these. By the end of the semester, you need to have turned in **seven** brief critical response papers.

Additionally, you will be responsible for introducing **two** sets of readings in class. For these, you will prepare and present a brief summary and critique of the week’s readings. These should be about 1000-1500 words, and

more polished than the other critical response, and involve both the required and further readings. These papers will be graded. Your in-class presentation should be about 5-10 minutes – not long, but long enough to introduce the central ideas of the week’s readings, and present some discussion questions to initiate classroom debate/discussion of the readings and topics. Please note down which two weeks you are responsible for.

You will also participate in a group project focused on sustainability in Syracuse. This project will begin on October 21 (with class reading and discussion focused on urban sustainability). Group projects and reports will be presented on November 11 (see course schedule, below). Information on the project will be handed out soon.

Finally, you are required to write a final research paper of 5000-6000 words (about 15-20 pages). This should be on a topic of your choice related to development and sustainability in the Global South. Your topic must be approved ahead of time, so please come see me by early November to discuss your topic. **Final research papers are due by Friday, December 5 by 4:00pm in Eggers 144 (Geography Main Office). No late papers will be accepted unless it is a medical or family emergency that can be documented.**

The class will also attend a conference on sustainability being held at the Syracuse Center for Excellence in late September. Further details will be announced in class.

All written work must be word-processed, free of grammatical and spelling errors, and, if appropriate, fully referenced with complete, consistent bibliography. Please visit the Writing Center if you need help with your writing. Please ensure that your name is on the cover/first page of all the papers you submit.

Grading	Points
Class participation	35
Critical response papers (5 points each x 7 papers)	35
Readings introduction paper #1	40
Readings introduction paper #2	40
Group project	50
Final paper	100
Total	300

Plagiarism

Plagiarism on course assignments is a serious offense, and is not acceptable. The University defines plagiarism as:

"The submission of any work by a student is taken as a guarantee that the thoughts and expressions in it are the student's own except when properly credited to another. Violations of this principle include giving or receiving aid in an exam or where otherwise prohibited, fraud, plagiarism, the falsification or forgery of any record, or any other deceptive act in connection with academic work. Plagiarism is the representation of another's words, ideas, programs, formulae, opinions, or other products of work as one's own, either overtly or by failing to attribute them to their true source" (Section 1.0, Syracuse University *Academic Rules and Regulations*).

It is essential that you understand what plagiarism is, and how to avoid it. **Plagiarism will result in a grade of 'F' for the course.** Students are responsible for knowing University definitions and rules regarding academic

honesty. For more information on plagiarism and academic honesty, please see:
<http://www.maxwell.syr.edu/maxpages/faculty/merupert/Teaching/plag.htm>

Disability

Students who are in need of disability-related academic accommodations must register with the Office of Disability Services (ODS), 804 University Avenue, Room 309, 315-443-4498. Students with authorized disability-related accommodations should provide a current Accommodation Authorization Letter from ODS to the instructor and review those accommodations with the instructor. Accommodations, such as exam administration, are not provided retroactively; therefore, planning for accommodations as early as possible is necessary. For further information, see the ODS website, <http://disabilityservices.syr.edu/>.

Classroom Expectations

Use of laptops, cell phones, PDAs, IPODs, etc. is NOT allowed in the classroom. You may not text/email/chat during the class, as this disrupts my teaching, influences the learning experience of students in the class and is discourteous. Please silence your cell phone before class begins. Only exemptions to the use of laptops will be for class presentation or discussion if it is required, with my permission. Please don't talk or read newspapers/magazines in class.

Notify if you plan to miss a class atleast 24 hours before class. Unexcused absences will affect your grade, as attendance and participation are noted and part of your grade. Please arrive on time, and leave when class is over; if you must arrive late or depart early, please inform me. Regular tardiness will not be accepted.

You are expected to come to every class prepared and participate in class discussions. Your critical engagement with the course material is critical, and thus you must participate fully in the class. However, all debate and discussion is expected to be carried in a respectful and professional manner. No disrespectful or abusive towards the instructor or other students will be tolerated.

Course Schedule

NB: readings marked '*reader*' in the course schedule are in the course reader, available at the University Bookstore in Schine Student Center. Readings marked '*blackboard*' are available online, through Blackboard. To access these, log on to the Blackboard page on the SU website and click on the link to GEO 558. Then find the articles under "Course Tools," then "Course Reserves." Note that Required Readings are split between the *reader* and *blackboard*, whereas Further Readings are in *blackboard* (as noted below).

<u>Date</u>	<u>Theme</u>	<u>Required Readings [Read in order]</u> <u>(Either in Reader or Blackboard)</u>	<u>Further Readings</u> <u>(All in Blackboard)</u>
<u>Week 1</u> Aug. 26	Course Introduction: What are Sustainability and Sustainable Development?		
<u>Week 2</u> Sept. 2	Theorizing and critiquing sustainability	Redclift 2005 <i>blackboard</i> Conka & Dabelko 1998 <i>blackboard</i> (WCED, Lohman, Lélé) Sneddon 2000 <i>blackboard</i> Yale ESI 2005 <i>reader</i> [skim]	Rist 1997a (pp. 171-196) Parris & Kates 2003

Date	Theme	Required Readings [Read in order] (Either in Reader or Blackboard)	Further Readings (All in Blackboard)
<u>Week 3</u> Sept. 9	Theorizing and critiquing development	Hite & Timmons 2007 <i>blackboard</i> Rist 2007b (pp. 69-122) <i>blackboard</i> Escobar 1995 <i>blackboard</i>	Walker & Bulkeley 2006 Margolis 2005
<u>Week 4</u> Sept. 16	International development: Institutions and practices	Schlesinger 2007 <i>reader</i> Bebbington 2004 <i>blackboard</i> World Bank 1992 <i>reader</i>	Summers 1991 Porter & Sheppard 1998 O'Riordan 2004
<u>Week 5</u> Sept. 23	Energy	Heinberg 2005 <i>blackboard</i> Hall 2004 <i>reader</i> Hunt, et al. 2006 <i>reader</i> Probodnik 2006 <i>blackboard</i>	Hall, et al. 2003 Holt-Giménez 2007 Sze 2005
<u>Week 6</u> Sept. 30	<i>Center of Excellence Conference on Sustainability (Sept 29th and 30th)</i>		
<u>Week 7</u> Oct. 7	Water	Barlow & Clarke 2002 <i>blackboard</i> Briscoe 2002 <i>reader</i> Swyngedouw 2004 <i>blackboard</i>	Specter 2006 Graff 2007 Mann 2007
<u>Week 8</u> Oct. 14	Resource Consumption	Myers & Kent 2004 <i>reader</i> [multiple chapters] Swyngedouw 2006 <i>reader</i> Also: carefully read through the website: http://www.footprintnetwork.org/gfn_sub.php?content=footprint_overview	Shoumatoff 2007 Wilson 2007
<u>Week 9</u> Oct. 21	Urban sustainability 1: Theory and critique	NSF 2000 <i>reader</i> Satterthwaite 1997 <i>blackboard</i> Brindley 2003 <i>reader</i> Also, review these three websites: www.usgbc.org/DisplayPage.aspx?CategoryID=19 www.aia.org/cote2_template.cfm?pagename=usun%5Fdefault www.aia.org/static/state_local_resources/adv_sustainability/	Angotti 1996 Edemariam 2007
<u>Week 10</u> Oct. 28	Agriculture	McMichael 2000 <i>reader</i> Ritchie 1999 <i>reader</i> Altieri 2000 <i>reader</i>	Barker 2002 Williams 2005 Knoblauch 2007

<u>Date</u>	<u>Theme</u>	<u>Required Readings [Read in order]</u> <u>(Either in Reader or Blackboard)</u>	<u>Further Readings</u> <u>(All in Blackboard)</u>
		Buttel 1997 <i>blackboard</i>	
<u>Week 11</u> Nov. 4	Rural Development and Livelihoods	Bebbington 2000 <i>reader</i> de Haan 2000 <i>blackboard</i> Holt-Giménez 1999 <i>reader</i>	Bebbington 2005 Gupta 1998
<u>Week 12</u> Nov. 11	Urban sustainability 2: <i>Group presentations on Syracuse</i>	See the Sustainable Design website: http://www.aiaa.org/liv_sdat Then, read Syracuse report (in pdf) at: http://www.aiaa.org/liv2_template.cfm?pagename=liv%5Fsdat%5Fcities	
<u>Week 13</u> Nov. 18	Biodiversity conservation	Fortwangler 2003 <i>reader</i> Wilshusen 2003 <i>reader</i> Neumann 2000 <i>reader</i>	Baydack & Campa 1999 Haufler 1999 Altieri n.d. Wallace 2007
<u>Week 14</u> Nov. 25	Social movements, sustainability and environmental justice	Pellow & Brulle 2005 <i>reader</i> Hodgson 2002 <i>reader</i> Langevin & Rosset 1999 <i>reader</i>	Di Chiro 1996 Hecht & Alexander 1990
<u>Week 15</u> Dec. 2	Gendering sustainability and sustainable development	Agarwal 1992 <i>reader</i> Leach 2007 <i>blackboard</i> Carney 1993 <i>reader</i>	Jackson 1993 Jewitt 2000

Final Papers Due by Friday, Dec. 5th2008, 4:00pm – Eggers 144 (Geography Office)

Course Bibliography

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