SCHOOL OF SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

MA IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

CASES IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Semester 2, Fridays 2-4pm
2014-2015

Course convenor: Dr. Ronan Bolton

Contact Details:
Old Surgeons' Hall
High School Yards
Edinburgh EH1 1LZ
Scotland

Office Hours: Thursdays 2pm – 4pm

Email: Ronan.Bolton@ed.ac.uk
COURSE DESCRIPTION

Rationale and course objectives
The purpose of this field-based course is three-fold: (1) to help students more fully understand some of the concepts and issues presented in the first and second year study of sustainable development; (2) to help students reflect upon and operationalise key theoretical and conceptual approaches to sustainable development in the context of field settings; (3) to aid students for further studies in their dissertation and future careers, particularly issues associated with data collection and analysis.

The underpinning rationale for this course is that the area of sustainable development is broad and there are multiple definitions of ‘the problem’ (and therefore ‘the solution’) in both social science and wider policy debates. This course allows students to critically reflect upon the ways sustainable development is varyingly understood and acted upon in Scotland. This course enables students to develop knowledge and understanding of key theoretical and conceptual approaches in the social sciences through the context of field settings. To investigate how sustainable development is understood and practiced in the field, we will focus on 4 case studies linked to sustainable consumption, sustainable communities and sustainable energy.

Field sites will illuminate both the issues at hand and allow students to develop their knowledge and understanding of a particular theoretical or conceptual approach. Case studies cover issues of both production and consumption, and also include diverse sites of intervention and change in the area of sustainable development (i.e. industry, community, Government). Each field setting will permit students to (i) hear from key people involved in that setting and (ii) carry out a small research-related activity at the site.

Course Aims and Learning Outcomes
• To gain in-depth knowledge of different field settings in which sustainability is practiced and understood;
• To give students a broad and integrated knowledge of undertaking project work in a variety of field settings;
• To develop skills by data collection, analysis and interpretation so students are confident drawing on a range of sources in order to undertake social science research;
• To gain a critical appreciation of the multiple research sites for studying sustainable development and relevant methods for doing so;
• To gain an understanding of the theoretical and conceptual frameworks used to understand sustainability in practice;
• To provide an opportunity for individual and group project work;
• To develop communication and interactive skills for group work.
Course Organisation and Teaching

Lecture Theatre 4, 7 Bristo Square on Fridays 2.00 – 4.00 p.m.

http://www.ed.ac.uk/maps/?building=bristo-square

| Week 1 – 16th Jan | Course introduction |
| Week 2 – 23th Jan | Case study skills |
| Week 3 – 30th Jan | Case #1: Visit to Torness Nuclear Power Plant |
| Week 4 – 6th Feb | Case reflection and preparation |
| Week 5 – 13th Feb | Case reflection and preparation |
| Innovative Learning Week 16th-20th Feb | Case #2: Date to be confirmed: Visit to anaerobic digestion plant  
Case #3: Friday 20th: Visit to Climate Change Fund Scottish Government Victoria Quay (Leith) |
| Week 6 – 27th Feb | Speakers from UoE Department for Social Responsibility and Sustainability |
| Week 7 – 6th Mar | Case #4: Conducting a student survey of sustainable behaviours |
| Week 8 – 13th Mar | Feedback and Reflection on cases |
| Week 9 – 20th Mar | Presentations #1 |
| Week 10 – 27th Mar | Presentations #2 |
**Weeks 1-2**
Weeks 1 and 2 of the course will be based in the classroom in order to:
- review key theoretical and conceptual approaches that students will be asked to apply to the field settings
- engage with appropriate approaches to data collection and analysis

**Weeks 3-8**
This section of the course involves introduction to and preparation for the field visits – three within Edinburgh and two outside. For trips outside of Edinburgh, travel will be arranged by the course convenor, please bring a packed lunch.

**Weeks 9-10**
The final two sessions involves individual student presentations on a topic which links an aspect of their fieldwork to a broader theoretical understanding of sustainability and transitions. These classes will also include time for discussion and reflection on the course as a whole.

**Preparation for field visits**
In advance of each field visit, it is essential that students have completed the essential readings for each setting plus conducted a minimum of 2 hours background research. Field visits will be structured to allow: (i) students to have conducted preparatory research into the issues associated with each site through lecture-based teaching and/or guided readings; (ii) presentations provided by people involved in the place visited (e.g. conservation officer, civil servant); and (iii) small research-related activities at the site. There will be opportunity to discuss and reflect on visits with the course team either on site and/or afterwards in ‘open hours’ class.

**Course Assessment**
- 2500 word essay focusing on a specific theory or concept and how this can be used to illuminate one (or more) of the field sites (50%);
- ‘Non-technical summary’ of the essay aimed at a non-social science audience (25%);
- A presentation on the subject of this essay to be delivered to the class in the final weeks of the course (25%).

**All students are asked to keep a diary of the fieldwork sites and submit an abridged version as an appendix to their essays (no more than 4000 words)**

The **deadline** for the essay and ‘non-technical summary’ is noon on Thursday 23rd April 2015.
Submission: Students must submit an electronic version of all coursework and essays on to ELMA. The completed cover sheet should have the student’s examination number (but not their name), the title of the course for which it is being submitted, and an exact count of the number of words in the essay.

Essays above the word limit will be penalised using the Ordinary level criterion of 1 mark for every 20 words over length. You will not be penalised for submitting work below the word limit. However, you should note that shorter essays are unlikely to achieve the required depth and that this will be reflected in your mark.

Feedback for the 2500 word essay will be returned online via ELMA on 14/05/15. Feedback for all coursework elements will be returned within 15 working days (this does not include weekends or any university holiday dates).

ELMA: Submission and return of coursework

Coursework is submitted online using our electronic submission system, ELMA. You will not be required to submit a paper copy of your work.

Marked coursework, grades and feedback will be returned to you via ELMA. You will not receive a paper copy of your marked course work or feedback.

For information, help and advice on submitting coursework and accessing feedback, please see the ELMA wiki at https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/SPSITWiki/ELMA. Further detailed guidance on the essay deadline and a link to the wiki and submission page will be available on the course Learn page. The wiki is the primary source of information on how to submit your work correctly and provides advice on approved file formats, uploading cover sheets and how to name your files correctly.

When you submit your work electronically, you will be asked to tick a box confirming that your work complies with university regulations on plagiarism. This confirms that the work you have submitted is your own.

Occasionally, there can be technical problems with a submission. We request that you monitor your university student email account in the 24 hours following the deadline for submitting your work. If there are any problems with your submission the course secretary will email you at this stage.

We undertake to return all coursework within 15 working days of submission. This time is needed for marking, moderation, second marking and input of results. If there are any unanticipated delays, it is the course organiser’s responsibility to inform you of the reasons.

All our coursework is assessed anonymously to ensure fairness: to facilitate this process put your Examination number (on your student card), not your name or student number, on your coursework or cover sheet.
The Operation of Lateness Penalties

Unlike in Years 1 and 2, NO EXTENSIONS ARE GRANTED WITH RESPECT TO THE SUBMISSION DEADLINES FOR ANY ASSESSED WORK AT HONOURS LEVEL. Managing deadlines is a basic life-skill that you are expected to have acquired by the time you reach Honours. Timely submission of all assessed items (coursework, essays, project reports, etc.) is a vitally important responsibility at this stage in your university career. Unexcused lateness can put at risk your prospects of proceeding to Senior Honours and can damage your final degree grade.

If you miss the submission deadline for any piece of assessed work 5 marks will be deducted for each calendar day that work is late, up to a maximum of five calendar days (25 marks). Thereafter, a mark of zero will be recorded. There is no grace period for lateness and penalties begin to apply immediately following the deadline. For example, if the deadline is Tuesday at 12 noon, work submitted on Tuesday at 12.01pm will be marked as one day late, work submitted at 12.01pm on Wednesday will be marked as two days late, and so on.

Failure to submit an item of assessed work will result in a mark of zero, with potentially very serious consequences for your overall degree class, or no degree at all. It is therefore always in your interest to submit work, even if very late.

Please be aware that all work submitted is returned to students with a provisional mark and without applicable penalties in the first instance. The mark you receive on ELMA is therefore subject to change following the consideration of the Lateness Penalty Waiver Panel (please see below for further information) and the Board of Examiners.

How to Submit a Lateness Penalty Waiver Form:

If there are extenuating circumstances beyond your control which make it essential for you to submit work after the deadline you must fill in a ‘Lateness Penalty Waiver’ (LPW) form to state the reason for your lateness. This is a request for any applicable penalties to be removed and will be considered by the Lateness Penalty Waiver Panel. Before submitting an LPW, please consider carefully whether your circumstances are (or were) significant enough to justify the lateness. Such circumstances should be serious and exceptional (e.g. not a common cold or a heavy workload). Computer failures are not regarded as justifiable reason for late submission. You are expected to regularly back-up your work and allow sufficient time for uploading it to ELMA.

You should submit the LPW form and supply an expected date of submission as soon as you are able to do so, and preferably before the deadline. Depending on the circumstances, supporting documentation may be required, so please be prepared to provide this where possible.

LPW forms can be found in a folder outside your SSO’s office, on online at: http://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/undergrad/on_course_students/assessment_and_regulations/coursework_requirements/coursework_requirements_honours
Forms should be returned by email or, if possible, in person to your SSO. They will sign the form to indicate receipt and will be able to advise you if you would like further guidance or support.

Please Note: Signing the LPW form by either your SSO or Personal Tutor only indicates acknowledgment of the request, not the waiving of lateness penalties. Final decisions on all marks rest with Examination Boards.

There is a dedicated SSO for students in each subject area in SPS. For Sustainable Development, please contact Sue Renton:

| Sustainable Development | Sue Renton       | sue.renton@ed.ac.uk | 0131 650 6958 | Room 1.09, Chrystal MacMillan Building |

Avoiding Plagiarism:

Material you submit for assessment, such as your essays, must be your own work. You can, and should, draw upon published work, ideas from lectures and class discussions, and (if appropriate) even upon discussions with other students, but you must always make clear that you are doing so. **Passing off anyone else's work** (including another student's work or material from the Web or a published author) **as your own is plagiarism** and will be punished severely.

When you upload your work to ELMA you will be asked to check a box to confirm the work is your own. ELMA automatically runs all submissions through 'Turnitin', our plagiarism detection software, and compares every essay against a constantly-updated database, which highlights all plagiarised work. Assessed work that contains plagiarised material will be awarded a mark of zero, and serious cases of plagiarism will also be reported to the College Academic Misconduct officer. In either case, the actions taken will be noted permanently on the student's record. **For further details on plagiarism see the Academic Services’ website:**

http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/students/undergraduate/discipline/plagiarism

Data Protection Guidance for Students:

In most circumstances, students are responsible for ensuring that their work with information about living, identifiable individuals complies with the requirements of the Data Protection Act. The document, **Personal Data Processed by Students**, provides an explanation of why this is the case. It can be found, with advice on data protection compliance and ethical best practice in the handling of information about living, identifiable individuals, on the Records Management section of the University website at:

http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/records-management-section/data-protection/guidance-policies/dpforstudents
WEEK 1) Introduction

This week’s class will provide an overview of the course and set out how the field visits relate to sustainable development in Scotland. Through field visits the course will explore sustainable consumption, production of “green energy” and low carbon lifestyles. The course examines sustainable development as it relates to individuals, households, and communities as well as the private and public sector. In this class we will discuss how the various field trips relate to these themes. We will also discuss how students are expected to prepare for the field trips and how the course will be structured and assessed.

Grin, John, Rotmans, Jan, Schot, Johan (2011) Transitions to Sustainable Development: New Directions in the Study of Long Term Transformative Change, Routledge (Read Introduction, section 1.1 & 1.2)
http://catalogue.lib.ed.ac.uk/vweby/holdingsInfo?searchId=531&recCount=10&recPointer=0&bibId=2166460

http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Environment/climatechange/scotlands-action/lowcarbon/meetingthetargets
Executive summary and chapter 1

WEEK 2) Case Study Skills

One of the aims of this course is to introduce students to field methodologies used in science, technology and innovation studies. During Week 2, we will explore ethnographic and interview methodologies, discuss what fieldwork is like, and lay some groundwork for the visits that will comprise the bulk of the course. In this class we will examine basic fieldwork tools, common problems and setbacks and how to get the most from field visits.


Case Study Readings

Case #1 Torness nuclear plant


**Case #2: Visit to anaerobic digestion plant (more details on this case to be provided in class)**


**Case #3 Climate Challenge Fund**

We will visit the Scottish Government offices at Victoria Quay and meet with civil servants involved with the operation of the Climate Challenge Fund and also hear about how this fits in with the Scottish Government’s broader approach towards sustainable development.

Look through the Climate Challenge Fund’s webpages: http://ccf.keepscotlandbeautiful.org/

Also look through the Keep Scotland Beautiful (KSB) website (KSB administer the Climate Challenge Fund): http://www.keepscotlandbeautiful.org/ (particularly the “What We Do” pages)


**Case #4 Sustainable behaviors student survey**

The fieldtrip will be conducted in conjunction with the University of Edinburgh’s Department for Social Responsibility and Sustainability (DSRS). Members of DSRS staff will work with the class to put into practice methodologies and techniques for conducting audits and surveys for analyzing and influencing pro-environmental behavior change. We will develop a questionnaire and trial it by conducting a student behavior survey.


Futerra, the sustainability communications agency – Sell the Sizzle: http://www.futerra.co.uk/downloads/Sellthesizzle.pdf

Our Common Cause - The Case for Working with our Cultural Values: http://www.wwf.org.uk/wwf_articles.cfm?unewsid=4224
Learning Resources for Undergraduates:

The Study Development Team at the Institute for Academic Development (IAD) provides resources and workshops aimed at helping all students to enhance their learning skills and develop effective study techniques. Resources and workshops cover a range of topics, such as managing your own learning, reading, note making, essay and report writing, exam preparation and exam techniques.

The study development resources are housed on 'LearnBetter' (undergraduate), part of Learn, the University's virtual learning environment. Follow the link from the IAD Study Development web page to enrol: www.ed.ac.uk/iad/undergraduates

Workshops are interactive: they will give you the chance to take part in activities, have discussions, exchange strategies, share ideas and ask questions. They are 90 minutes long and held on Wednesday afternoons at 1.30pm or 3.30pm. The schedule is available from the IAD Undergraduate web page (see above).

Workshops are open to all undergraduates but you need to book in advance, using the MyEd booking system. Each workshop opens for booking 2 weeks before the date of the workshop itself. If you book and then cannot attend, please cancel in advance through MyEd so that another student can have your place. (To be fair to all students, anyone who persistently books on workshops and fails to attend may be barred from signing up for future events).

Study Development Advisors are also available for an individual consultation if you have specific questions about your own approach to studying, working more effectively, strategies for improving your learning and your academic work. Please note, however, that Study Development Advisors are not subject specialists so they cannot comment on the content of your work. They also do not check or proof read students’ work.

To make an appointment with a Study Development Advisor, email iad.study@ed.ac.uk
(For support with English Language, you should contact the English Language Teaching Centre).