

Course number: JUS 691 (25993)

Spring 2011

Human Rights and Sustainability (Graduate Seminar)

Meets: Fridays 9:40-12:30

Location: Wilson Hall 255

(Syllabus subject to revision)

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Office Hours: Thursday 11:00-12:30, a.b.a.

“Failure to grasp the enormous potential that human rights have on sustaining environment ... will only lead to a larger scale of dispossession and homelessness across the world.”

- Miloon Kothari, Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing, Statement at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg South Africa, August 2002

I. Course description:

This course addresses the connections between human rights and environmental sustainability. Legal and scholarly approaches linking human rights and sustainability are just beginning to emerge, given the important resource dimensions of economic and social rights realization and the human dimensions of sustainability. The right to food, housing, and a healthy environment are all areas where the discourses and practices of both human rights and sustainability are invoked to address shortcomings in current practices.

Yet human rights demands and environmental concerns are not always in harmony. Conservation efforts have at times created obstacles for local communities in terms of access to land and livelihoods. At the same time, the world's poor and indigenous populations are often forced to bear the costs of environmental degradation, pollution, and climate change resulting from patterns of production and consumption from which they do not personally gain. The priorities of environmental justice movements, sometimes referred to as “environmentalism of the poor,” can thus differ considerably from those of mainstream environmental organizations. Furthermore, the emphasis within human rights law and practice on individual rights exists in tension with the collective and third-party impacts of many sustainability challenges, while the context-specific, place-based nature of most environmental problems (and the populations that endure them) sits uneasily aside claims to universal human rights.

The course addresses these dilemmas through theoretical and empirical readings on human rights and sustainability; grassroots accounts of struggles over environment-related human rights; and selections from literature and film that illustrate the environmental justice issues at stake. It also explores the routes by which rights can be realized beyond claims-making, emphasizing the importance of inclusive processes in the design and implementation of environmental policy.

The course will be divided into several sections, including an introduction to the concepts of human rights and sustainability, an exploration of how these concepts are operationalized in the real world, and a deeper examination of three substantive areas in which these ideas intersect and sometimes clash. The first substantive module will examine “**urban ecology and human rights**” including emerging claims for a “right to the city” and the sometimes conflicting mandates urbanization can create for states attempting to ensure adequate housing (including water and sanitation) while simultaneously protecting land and water resources.

The second substantive module will consider “**the human right to food**” and the related sustainability implications of the current global food system. The shift in the last 100 or so years from primarily rural agrarian societies to fossil fuel-based, urban industrial societies (and increasingly industrialized farming techniques) has created a number of challenges to both food security and environmental protection. The third substantive module investigates more deeply the **consequences of industrialization processes for human rights**, in particular, extractive industries such as oil and mining, and their implications for accelerated global climate change, community displacement, indigenous rights, and human health.

The objectives of the course are:

1. To clarify the official and unofficial meanings of “human rights” and “sustainability”
2. To acquaint students with theories and methodologies used to study and interrogate human rights and sustainability, in particular as they relate to one another
3. To demonstrate various ways that nations, communities, and advocates have attempted to promote social and economic rights vis-à-vis sustainability challenges
4. To elucidate the structural characteristics of sustainability challenges, including the ways these challenges are shaped by dominant processes of production and consumption
5. To evaluate the role of power in the alleviation and/or perpetuation of environmental injustices, including the way it shapes struggles over solutions
6. To examine critically the unequal distribution of environmental injustices among poorer societies and vulnerable groups
7. To further student research on topics of human rights and sustainability
8. To foster a sense of political responsibility in regard to human rights and sustainability challenges, as well as develop a set of ideas regarding how more just and sustainable alternatives may be realized

This course provides a basis for research in the fields of international development and human (particularly, social) rights. It can be used to prepare students for a comprehensive exam in the area of human rights and sustainability, as well as serve as a foundation for future work in internationally-focused governmental agencies, non-governmental organizations, or policy institutes.

II. Course requirements and grading:

Students must:

- a) **Attend all seminar meetings and participate in class discussions**
- b) **Do all required readings prior to the class for which they are assigned**
- c) **Submit weekly memos outlining your critical reactions to the assigned texts**
- d) **Lead class discussion twice during the semester**
- e) **Complete 2 short papers**
- f) **Submit an annotated bibliography of sources to be used for your final paper**
- g) **Complete a 20-25 page final paper with final bibliography (not annotated)**

a) Both attendance and participation are vital to the success of the seminar and to your grade, and are particularly important given the few number of class meetings during the semester. Students who miss more than one class will face penalties for their final grade.

b) This is a *reading-intensive* seminar. We will cover a lot of material (~100-150 pps/wk) during the semester. All seminar participants are expected each week to allot the time required for reading assigned materials thoughtfully and thoroughly, *prior to class*. This will provide the basis for your active participation in our in-class discussions. I strongly recommend, as a matter of good scholarly practice, to *take extensive notes* on all your readings, outlining the main ideas and clarifying any unfamiliar terms or concepts.

c) *Weekly memos* of 1-2 pages, outlining your critical reflections on the assigned texts, will be required. You should also include 2-3 thoughtful questions regarding the assigned materials as a whole. These memos and questions must be completed at least 24 hours prior to our weekly meetings and should be posted to the discussion board I will create for this purpose on Blackboard. In addition to writing your own memo, you are expected to review the comments circulated by all other seminar participants and comment on at least one other person's post prior to our weekly meeting.

Note: Although memos will be posted online, *they should not be written while you are online*. Despite our use of Blackboard to disseminate your memos, this is not an informal "chat session." It is intended to provide thoughtful academic commentary, comprising brief but well organized reflections, questions and criticisms regarding the readings. Conventional grammar and punctuation rules should be observed! Comments should not exceed two pages per week.

d) *Student-led discussion*: students will lead class discussion twice during the semester. Sign-up will take place during the 1st session. *If you join class after this, it is your responsibility to contact me in order to sign up*. You will select one reading (not more than 25 pages) or video (not more than 25 minutes) for your peers to consider in addition to the week's assigned materials, and transmit this material through Blackboard or the Internet one week prior to your presentation. Your task as discussion leader will be to raise important questions and issues, based on the materials and critical reflections posted by all students on Blackboard. You should attempt to find common themes, points of divergence or confusion, and interesting observations that can guide the conversation in fruitful directions. You should not regurgitate the readings, as everyone

will be expected to have done them prior to class. You are encouraged to bring in current news articles related to the week's themes, if possible.

e) There will be *two short papers* (5-6 pages) that explore and critique the arguments made in the readings from the first two substantive sections of the course:

- 1) Urban ecology and human rights - due March 11
- 2) The human right to food - due April 8

You can utilize your comments given in your weekly memos for these short papers, though I would like to see you synthesize, analyze, and critique the materials from the perspective of each topical area as a whole. I will provide guiding questions for these papers prior to their due date.

f) Your *annotated bibliography* is due two weeks before your final paper. It should consist of a brief (3-6 sentence) statement regarding the type of paper you will do (proposal, research paper, or theory paper) and its topic/questions, followed by a minimum of 10 scholarly sources that you intend to utilize, explaining how each will be useful for your topic. Please submit to the discussion board prior to class on the due date. A PowerPoint presentation is posted on Blackboard to guide you in constructing this bibliography.

g) Your *final paper* should be approximately 20-25 pages, and should link your research interests with theoretical approaches to - and empirical realities of - human rights and sustainability. You have three options in choosing the format of this paper:

- 1) a dissertation (Ph.D.) or research grant (M.S. or Ph.D.) proposal
- 2) an original research paper on a topic of human rights and sustainability (with intent to publish)
- 3) a theoretical examination of a real-world human rights and sustainability issue (comparing/contrasting **at least two** theoretical perspectives), with a discussion of possible methodologies for testing these theoretical approaches

Your choice of format should depend on your year and progress toward degree, as well as on your professional goals. Regardless of which you choose, I urge you to think in terms of *praxis*, defined as:

“the process by which a theory or lesson becomes part of lived experience. Rather than a lesson being simply absorbed at the intellectual level in a classroom, ideas are tested and experienced in the real world, followed by an opportunity for reflective contemplation. In this way, abstract concepts are connected with lived reality.”

Thus, all papers should include a theoretical framework, a review of relevant literature, and a discussion of methodologies for understanding real problems posed by the issue. I strongly recommend scheduling a meeting with me to discuss your paper before you write it.

Important: I expect graduate students to have mastered the basics of writing papers, using a standard style manual and proofreading their work. Please take the time to present professional quality work. Get to know one of the social science style manuals – e.g., *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (Kate L. Turabian), *A Manual of Style* (The University of Chicago - use the “Author, Date” system for the social sciences), or the *APA Manual* – and

pay particular attention to the pages on bibliographic references. You can lose up to a full grade for sloppiness, noncompliance or inconsistency with an established style, or poor proofreading.

Your grade will be based on the following:

- Attendance, participation, presentation: 15%
- Critical reflections postings to Blackboard: 15%
- Paper #1: 20%
- Paper #2: 20%
- Final paper: 30%

Please note that late work will not be accepted without a documented and dire reason.

III. Required Texts:

1. Bellamy Foster, John. 2002. *Ecology Against Capitalism*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
2. McKibben, Bill. 2007. *Deep Economy: The Wealth of Communities and the Durable Future*. New York: Henry Holt and Company.
3. [A text on food security will be added]

IV. Supplementary materials

1. Hancock, Jan. 2003. *Environmental Human Rights: Power, Ethics, and Law*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate. [This book is out of print, so I have put a copy on reserve at Hayden Library and will make photocopies available]
2. A number of articles for this course will be handed out in class or posted to Blackboard.

V. Miscellaneous course information:

Obvious courtesies:

- Arrive on time
- Turn off your cell phone
- Let me know in advance if you must leave early

Incompletes: “A mark of ‘I’ (incomplete) is given by the instructor only when a student who is otherwise doing acceptable work is unable to complete a course because of illness or other conditions beyond the student’s control” (from the ASU General Catalog).

Academic integrity: I hope it is unnecessary to inform you that cheating and plagiarism will be dealt with severely. This includes failing to cite sources that you use for your work, representing others’ work as your own, or allowing others to represent your work as theirs. If you have doubts about what constitutes academic dishonesty, ask me. The Faculty of Justice and Social Inquiry adheres to university policies regarding academic integrity, which you are encouraged to read and take *very* seriously: <http://provost.asu.edu/academicintegrity/policy>.

Disability Services: If you have a learning disability, need disability accommodations in this class, or have other particular needs, please let me know as soon as possible. All information regarding disability is confidential.

COURSE OUTLINE

WEEK 1: Jan. 21

Overview and Introduction to the Course [sign up for presentations]

WEEK 2: Jan. 28

What are Human Rights? [98 pps.]

Topics: Where do rights come from? How do we know they exist? How can we gauge rights realization?

PRESENTATION: Lisa D.

Readings:

- Campese, Jessica and Armelle Guignier. 2007. "Human Rights--a brief introduction to key concepts." *Conservation and Human Rights*. Pp. 10-26
- Turner, Bryan S. "Outline of a Theory of Human Rights." *Sociology*. 1993. 27:489-512.
- Pogge, Thomas. 2000. "The International Significance of Human Rights." *The Journal of Ethics*. 4(1): 45-69.
- Haglund, LaDawn and Rimjhim Aggarwal. "Test of our Progress: The Translation of Economic and Social Rights Norms into Practice." *Under Revision for the Journal of Human Rights*.
- Review the original Millennium Development Goals:
<http://www.endpoverty2015.org/en/goals>
- Review the United Nations' 2010 Millennium Development Goals Report, which can be found at : <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/reports.shtml>

Film:

- www.humanrights.com/#/what-are-human-rights

WEEK 3: Feb. 4

What is sustainability? [~95 pps. + review of online materials]

Topics: Rio summit, Kyoto protocol, The Brundtland Report, etc.; Alternative definitions of sustainability; Historical roots of ecological crises

PRESENTATION: Sheryl

Readings:

- White. 1967. "The historical roots of the ecological crisis." *Science*. 55: 1203.
- Vitousek, P.M., H.A. Mooney, J. Lubchenco and J.M. Melillo. 1997. "Human domination of Earth's ecosystems." *Science*. 277: 494-499.
- Bowers, C. A. "Toward an Eco-Justice Pedagogy"
- Martens. 2006. "Sustainability: science or fiction?" *Sustainability: Science Practice and Policy*.
- Sachs, Wolfgang. 2001. "Rio+10 and the North-South Divide." Essay published by the Heinrich Böll Foundation. (Read the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21 first)

UN Activities: (* Asterisked sources are posted on Blackboard)

- *1987 - Our Common Future (“The Brundtland Report”) World Commission on Environment and Development. OVERVIEW ONLY (pp. 18-38)
- *1992 - Rio Declaration: <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/conf151/aconf15126-1annex1.htm>
- Review Agenda 21 (“a comprehensive plan of action to be taken globally, nationally and locally by organizations of the UN System, Governments, and Major Groups” to ameliorate human impacts on the environment - came out of Rio in 1992): http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/agenda21/?utm_source=OldRedirect&utm_medium=redirect&utm_content=dsd&utm_campaign=OldRedirect
- You should take note of the follow up conference (Rio+20) to be held in 2012: <http://www.earthsummit2012.org/>
- *1998 - Kyoto protocol (“an international agreement linked to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change”): <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/convkp/kpeng.pdf>
- Familiarize yourself with what has happened since Kyoto regarding international climate change talks (most notably Copenhagen and Cancun) <http://unfccc.int/2860.php>

Film:

- The Story of Stuff (**watch outside of class**): <http://www.storyofstuff.com/>
- PBS Frontline Documentary: *Heat* (<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/heat/view>) - Chapters 1-3

WEEK 4: Feb. 11

Human Rights and Sustainability: Making the Linkages [105 pps.]

Topics: Environmental human rights, Eco-Justice

PRESENTATIONS: Sheryl, Lauren C.

Readings:

- Hancock, Jan. 2003. *Environmental human rights: power, ethics, and law*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate. Through Chapter 4 (to p. 105)

WEEKS 5-6: CASE STUDY 1 - Urban ecology and human rights

Feb. 18 [83 pps. + online materials on right to housing]

Topics: “Right to the City”; Right to housing, water, sanitation; Impact of building and urbanization on ecology

PRESENTATIONS: Lauren C., Tommy

Readings:

- Grimm, Nancy B., et al. 2008. “Global Change and the Ecology of Cities.” *Science*. 319: 756-760. [4]
- Rees, William and MathisWackernagel. 2008. “Urban Ecological Footprints: Why Cities Cannot be Sustainable—and Why They are a Key to Sustainability.” *Urban Ecology*. V: 537-555. [18]

- “Right to the City”: Brown, Alison and Annali Kristiansen. 2009. “Urban Policies and the Right to the City: Rights, responsibilities and citizenship.” UNESCO, UN-HABITAT report # SHS/SRP/URB/2008/PI/H/3 REV. Paris: UNESCO. [41]
- Swyngedouw, Erik and Nikolas C. Heynen. 2003. “Urban Political Ecology, Justice and the Politics of Scale.” *Antipode*. 35(5): 898-918. [20]

UN Activities:

- Special Rapporteur report on the right to housing: <http://www.righttohousing.org>

Film:

- TBD

Feb. 25 [114 pps.]

PRESENTATION: none

Readings:

- Evans, Peter. 2002. *Livable Cities: Urban Struggles for Livelihood and Sustainability*. University of California Press. [Chapters 1 & 6-8; also available online through ASU library]

WEEKS 7-8: Consumption, production, and the role of capitalism

Topics: Economic rationality and global expansion; Industrialization, carbon-based economies, technological advances and pollution, transportation; Inequality in costs and benefits, winners and losers at all scales/levels, gender/class/race; exploitation; Public goods; Alternative logics

PRESENTATIONS: Lisa S., Ariel, Jeff, Lisa J. [Need to specify week]

Mar. 4: Economic rationality and global expansion [103 pps. (skim 65 pps.)]

Readings:

- Bellamy Foster, John. 2002. *Ecology Against Capitalism*. New York: Monthly Review Press. [Read through Ch. 9 (p. 103); skim Ch. 10-12]

Film:

- Flow (93 minutes): Part 1

Mar. 11: Alternative Logics [102 pps. (skim 36 pps.)]

Readings:

- Haglund, LaDawn. 2010. “Theorizing Public Goods: the Role of Organizing Principles.” In Haglund, LaDawn *Limiting Resources: Market-led Reform and the Transformation of Public Goods*. Pennsylvania State University Press. Pp. 23-54.
- Jackson, Tim. 2009. *Prosperity without Growth? The transition to a sustainable economy*. UK: Sustainable Development Commission. (Skim pp. 1-36; read p. 37-107)
- The Happy Planet Index: <http://www.happyplanetindex.org/>

Film:

- Flow (93 minutes): Part 2

First short paper due March 11

WEEK 9: Mar. 18

SPRING BREAK!

No class, but please start working on your annotated bibliographies for your final paper.

WEEKS 10-11: CASE STUDY 2 - The human right to food

Topics: Trade, intellectual property rights; Agricultural policy; Green revolution; Land and energy use; Hunger and malnutrition; Food security; Biodiversity; GMOs

PRESENTATIONS: Ariel, Jeff, Tommy, Lisa D. [Need to specify weeks]

Mar. 25 [98 pps.]

Readings:

- United Nations. “The Right to Adequate Food.” *Fact Sheet #34*. Geneva: OHCHR.
- Gonzalez, Carmen. “Trade Liberalization, Food Security, and the Environment: The Neo-liberal Threat to Sustainable Rural Development” (Excerpts, 35 pps.)
- Wade, Robert. 2003. “What strategies are viable for developing countries today? The World Trade Organization and the shrinking of ‘development space.’” *Review of International Political Economy*. 10(4): 621-644.

UN Activities:

- FAO website: <http://www.fao.org/righttofood> (check out these links specifically: “strategy” and “implementation goals”)

Film:

- “The World According to Monsanto”

Apr. 1 [140 pps. + case study]

Readings:

- Gottlieb, Robert and Anupama Joshi. 2010. *Food Justice*. [Everyone read through p. 120; we will split up the remaining case studies so that 3 students read each and summarize.]
- Altieri, Miguel A. 2008. “Small Farms as a Planetary Ecological Asset: Five Key Reasons Why We Should Support the Revitalisation of Small Farms in the Global South. *TWN Environment and Development Series*. Penang, Malaysia: Third World Network.

Film:

- “The Power of Community: How Cuba Survived Peak Oil”

OPTIONAL Film:

- YouTube video: Michael Pollan, The Omnivore's Dilemma, 2006
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kFpjskn3_Pc

WEEKS 12-13: CASE STUDY 3 - Industrialization processes and human rights

Topics: Mining; Petroleum dependency and extraction; Climate change; Indigenous Rights

Apr. 8 [96 pps.]

PRESENTATIONS: Abigail, Lisa S., Lisa J., Afsanieh [Need to specify weeks]

Readings:

- United Nation Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) [15]
- Sawyer, Suzana and Edmund Terence Gomez. 2008. "Transnational Governmentality and Resource Extraction: Indigenous Peoples, Multinational Corporations, Multilateral Institutions and the State." Programme Paper 13. Geneva: UNRISD. [32 pp.]
- Jaksa, Matthew F. 2006. "Putting the Sustainable Back in Sustainable Development: Recognizing and Enforcing Indigenous Property Rights as a Pathway to Global Environmental Sustainability." *J. of Environmental Law and Litigation*. 21:157-205. [49]

UN Activities:

- UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues:
<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfi/index.html>

Film:

- *Democracy Now* coverage of Wiwa vs. Shell decision (Nigeria - excerpts ~30 min)
- "Justicia Now!" (Ecuador - 32 min)

Second short paper due April 11 [not today]

Apr. 15 [74 pps.]

PRESENTATIONS: Abigail, Lisa S., Lisa J., Afsanieh [Need to specify weeks]

Readings:

- Tsosie, Rebecca. 2009. "Climate Change, Sustainability and Globalization: Charting the Future of Indigenous Environmental Self-Determination." *Environmental and Energy Law and Policy Journal*. 4: 188-255. [68]
- Aguirre, Jessica Camille and Elizabeth Sonia Cooper. 2010. "Evo Morales, Climate Change, and the Paradoxes of a Social-Movement Presidency." *Latin American Perspectives*. 37(4): 238-244. [6]

UN Activities:

- Universal Declaration on the Rights of Mother Earth, drafted at the World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth:
<http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=18931>

Film:

- "Climate of Change"

WEEKS 14-15: SOLUTIONS

Topics: Deep ecology, deep economy; Global public goods and global commons; Governance, right to participation, autonomy, decision-making, inclusion

Apr. 22 [read 66 pps., skim 49 pps.]

NO CLASS, but please read:

- Fraser et al. 2005. "Bottom up and top down: Analysis of participatory processes for sustainability indicator identification as a pathway to community empowerment and sustainable environmental management." *Journal of Environmental Management*. 78(2006): 114-127. [13]
- Ramaswami et al. 2007. "Integrating developed and developing world knowledge into global discussions and strategies for sustainability - 2. Economics and Governance." *Environmental Science and Technology*. 41:3422-3430. [8]
- McKibben, Bill. 2007. *Deep Economy: The Wealth of Communities and the Durable Future*. New York: Henry Holt and Company. [Read to Ch. 1 (p. 45) and skim Ch. 2 (to p. 94)]

Annotated bibliography for final paper due today

Apr. 29 [138 pps.]

PRESENTATIONS: Abigail, Afsanieh

Readings:

- McKibben, Bill. 2007. *Deep Economy: The Wealth of Communities and the Durable Future*. New York: Henry Holt and Company. [Finish Book]

Film:

- "2012: Time for Change": <http://www.2012timeforchange.com/>

FINAL PAPER DUE May. 5th - NO EXCEPTIONS!