

**Integrated Perspectives in Human Dimensions  
of Natural Resources and the Environment  
HDNRE 574  
Fall 2010**

**Instructors:**

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Neither instructor has set office hours for this course. If you wish to meet with either, please schedule a time or catch as catch can.

**Course Objective:**

An exploration of issues related to the integration and application of transdisciplinary concepts to contemporary natural resource and environmental issues.

**Course Approach:**

Success in this course depends heavily on the contributions you make to class discussions. Assigned readings introduce concepts and issues related to a transdisciplinary approach for resolving contemporary natural resource and environmental issues. Class discussion will focus on integrating perspectives from the readings with individual experiences. Doing the latter will help all of us better understand local, national, and global issues.

The reading list accompanying this syllabus is only partial; other articles will arise as students and instructors uncover salient and appropriate materials. These readings were selected to convey diverse, often contrary perspectives and to foster discussion, encourage debate, and offer a platform for comparing ideas and approaches.

This syllabus lists eight books for use as the Book Review. Each student will select one for the review. However, no book can be selected by more than one student. You will need to negotiate with your classmates over this selection process. An oral and presentation will be made reviews will be used as the basis of class discussion. An outline for preparing the book review is included at the end of this syllabus.

**Grading:**

Grading will be based on class participation and oral presentations (together these will count 50%), and all written material (50%). The latter includes one book review (10%), a subgroup

case study (15%), a collective case study (15%), and additional material as assigned (10%). Our grading structure reflects HDNRE's emphasis on developing oral and written communication skills among its students. We expect students to work together to strengthen their ability to listen, understand, reflect, and create appropriate solutions with those who have stake in issues.

### **Course Outline:**

- Week 1: Overview
- Week 2: Using a transdisciplinary approach to valuing natural resources
- Week 3: Understanding issues related to the "Commons"
- Week 4: The role of education in sustainable natural resource management, Discussion of Orr
- Week 5: Human uses of the environment and community-based natural resource management
- Week 6: *Book review due*; oral presentations and discussion of books and their relationship to transdisciplinarity
- Week 7: Uncertainty and risk
- Week 8: What is sustainability? Contemporary domestic and international context surrounding sustainability discussions
- Week 9: Issues associated with the "Ethics of Development and Conservation"
- Week 10: Interim Progress Report on Case Study
- Week 11: Discussion of Leopold's *Sand County Almanac* and Abbey's *Desert Solitaire*
- Week 12: Issues related to scale – units and levels of analysis; aggregation and disaggregation; spatial associations
- Week 13: Towards community decision-making – participatory approaches
- Week 14: Thanksgiving – no class this week – enjoy the break
- Week 15: *Case Study – Class Presentation, as collective and subgroups*; Final Reports
- Week 16: Final discussion on transdisciplinarity; class debriefing

## **Class Assignments:**

- I) The first assignment is due the first week of class. In this three page paper, each student must describe who they are in terms of personal values as well as their relationship to natural resources and the environment. As part of this assignment, each student must include a statement on their short- and long-term career goals. All of these papers will be shared with all members of the class, including the instructors, and serve as the basis of discussion during our first and/or second meeting.
- II) One book review – each student will select a book from the list appended to the course outline. Instructions for completing the review are included in the syllabi.
- III) Case Studies – (a) Each student will pick a case study topic (with approval from the instructors required) which illustrates how material in this course can be applied to address the issue. This case study will be the basis of an oral presentation in class as well as a final paper; (b) The second case study will involve teams of class members (or the entire class depending upon class size) working together to address a local community natural resource or environmental problem involving the expertise of individuals with different life experiences, skills, and training. The instructors will work with the class to maximally divide members into groups with such characteristics. The results of the team projects will be reported in class and in written form.

## **OUTLINE FOR BOOK REVIEWS**

Several books are identified for review below. You may review a different book but must get approval from the instructors to do this.

1. Your review should include: (a) a brief summary of the book's contents and central thesis; (b) your assessment of the book's merits and shortcomings – include here comparisons with other books on the same subject, whether the author's conclusions flow from the analysis, the major findings or conclusions of the effort, and whether these conclusions represent new additions to the wealth of knowledge on the subject; and (c) some judgment as to the relevance of this book to those interested in natural resource issues.

2. Do not simply repeat chapter by chapter or section by section titles and summaries of the same and avoid uneven treatment of the text (i.e., do not simply concentrate on one or two strengths or weaknesses). Attempt to be thorough without being boring and do not confuse a book "review" – which requires critical analysis – with a book "report" that provides little more than an overview of what the author(s) said. Nor should you state the obvious or use long quotes from the book to make your points.

3. Remember that *the book review is a brief essay*. Your first sentences should help the reader orient herself/himself to the subject matter context. Do not begin your review with "This book . . ."

4. You must follow the format found in recent reviews in *Society and Natural Resources*. These reviews are to be typed, double-spaced, and kept to a maximum of **three pages**. Your review should include at the top of the page the following information:

Author's name, title of book. City and state of publication: publisher, year. Pages. Cost.

5. Be sure to include your name at the end of your review.

### **Book Reviews:**

Benedict, M. and E. McMahon.

2006 *Green Infrastructure: Linking Landscapes and Communities*. Washington, DC: Island Press.

Diamond, J.

2005 *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*. New York, NY: Penguin Books.

Edwards, A. R.

2005 *The Sustainability Revolution: Portrait of a Paradigm Shift*. Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers.

Gladwell, M.

2000 *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference*. Boston, MA: Little Brown.

Kunstler, J.

1993 *The Geography of Nowhere: The Rise and Decline of America's Man-Made Landscape*. New York, NY: Touchstone.

MacDonald, S.A.

2005 *The Agony of an American Wilderness*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

McHarg, I.L.

1971 *Design with Nature*. Garden City, NJ: Doubleday.

Merchant, C.

2005 *Radical Ecology: The Search for a Livable World*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Nordhaus, T. and M. Shellenberger

2007 *Break Through: From the Death of Environmentalism to the Politics of Possibility*. New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin.

**The list of course readings is in a separate file, which will be distributed.**