

NSCI 110H: Honors Connections
“The Sustainability of Current Societies”

Syllabus FALL 2008

Instructor	Office	Phone	Office Hours
Dr. David L. Brown	HOLT 312	898-4035	M 11:30-12:30, Tu 1:00-2:00, We 10:00-12:00, and by appointment
Dr. Kristen Mahlis	THMA 217	898-4967	MW 10:00-10:50, and by appointment

For e-mail, please contact the instructors via course WebCT Vista e-mail only.

Textbooks:

Christopher Uhl., Developing Ecological Consciousness: Paths to a Sustainable Future; Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. (February 2004);
Carolyn Merchant, The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution; HarperOne (January 1990)
On-line supplemental readings

General Course Information:

Modern American society has ready access to a vast array of luxuries beyond basic human needs of water, food, and shelter. Where do the goods and resources consumed by Americans come from? What are the environmental, social, and aesthetic costs of material consumption trends in “developed” countries? This course will evaluate the long-term sustainability of our individual and societal resource consumption. Examples from other countries and cultures will be examined, including Latin America, Africa, and Southeast Asia.

Course Goals:

1. Study the consumer practices and consequences of American society – past, present, and future
2. Examine the concept of sustainability as applied to current societies and cultures
3. Investigate problems associated with the use of energy and material resources, and with waste disposal
4. Examine energy conservation practices and more efficient energy technologies as ways of reducing the environmental consequences of energy resource consumption
5. Investigate renewable energy sources that offer reduced environmental impact, such as solar, wave, wind, and also biofuels
6. Compare American lifestyles and their personal and global implications with other countries and cultures

Grading Procedure

Your grade in HNRS 110H will be determined by your performance in the following areas:

	Percent of overall course grade
Assignments	40%
Participation/attendance	10%
Quizzes	15%
Exam (mid-term)	10%
Presentation of term project	10%
Final term project	<u>15%</u>
TOTAL for course	100%

Quizzes and exam contain multiple choice, fill-in, and short discussion questions.

Grading

Letter grade (Minimum score) A (93) A-(90) B+(87) B(83) B-(80) C+(77) C(73) C-(70) D+(67) D(63) D-(60) F(<60)

Dropping the Course

If you decide this is not the course for you, you are responsible for dropping it. This is easy to do through TRACS during the first two weeks. **After September 20, 2008 you will need a "serious and compelling" reason to drop.** (Failing the course or incompatibility with the instructor is not serious or compelling.)

Making Up A Missed Quiz or Exam

If you are sick the day of either exam, you must contact me in advance or the day of the exam to let me know you will miss the exam. **Make-up exams must be taken within one week of the scheduled exam day.**

OVERALL GUIDANCE

If you are having difficulty with any aspect of the course, you must contact the instructor immediately rather than wait until weeks go by and you fall behind.

Note regarding office hours and accessibility:

Our goal is to be as accessible to students as possible. We have set office hours that we will always try to keep. If you are unable to meet during scheduled office hours, send an e-mail and one of the instructors will arrange an appointment as soon as possible.

Tentative Course Outline

Topic

- 1 Overview; Lifestyles we seek
- 2 The Human Population and its Ecological Footprint
- 3 Happiness in Modern Life; Ways of Knowing/World Views

Evolution of Western Modern Consumer Society

- 4 Pre-industrial History
- 5 Advent of Industrial Revolution
- 6 Evolution of Energy Use
- 7 Food Production Evolution
- 8 Waste Disposal
- 9 Risks Associated with Modern Lifestyles (exposure to toxics, etc.)

Environmental Justice and Modern Lifestyles

- 10 Gendered Perspectives on Human-Nature Relationships
- 11 Non-western ("2/3s") Cultures and Societies
- 12 Religion and Sustainability

Alternatives

- 13 Sustainability Conference Sessions (TBA)
- 14 A Sustainable Meal on the Cheap?
- 15 Sustainable Practices
- 16 Local versus National Changes: Ecological Footprint Re-Visited
- 17 Presentations of Term Projects