GEO 5934
Theory of Sustainability
Spring 2012, Bellamy 317
Wednesdays, 2:00-4:30

Instructor: Joseph Pierce
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Office Hours: Mondays 1:30-2:30pm, or by appointment
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Course Description

This seminar explores the concept and rhetoric of sustainability as it is used by and for different actors and scholarly communities. In particular, we will examine sustainability as it is articulated and implemented within *sustainability science* (both within geography and beyond)*, social sciences, planning, politics,* and *development*. Within each of these communities, we will explicate the core assumptions about sustainability and how they affect the sorts of research and policy that are produced. We will then discuss, in turn, critiques of sustainability as a concept or discourse; alternative vocabularies through which global ecological or environmental concerns might be articulated; and recent "best case" efforts to use sustainability as a research or policy framework. The last few weeks of the semester will attempt to foster a synthetic discussion the disciplinary implications of these varying perspectives for geographers and how our research fits within the broader sustainability agenda. Our two guiding questions will be:

1) **What is sustainability?**
2) **How is that concept used or refracted by different communities, and to what ends?**

Course Objectives

Objective 1: Students will be able to **discuss various concepts and theories** of sustainability.

> ***Evaluation****:* Students will be evaluated regarding this objective through *class discussion*.

Objective 2: Students will be able to **coherently compare and relate** various theories of sustainability across a variety of disciplines.

> ***Evaluation****:* Students will be evaluated regarding this objective through *class discussion* and *the midterm paper*.

Objective 3: Students will be able to **position their own work within the span of sustainability concepts and apply their understanding to new problems** by choosing appropriate theories from the course materials to justify interventions.

***Evaluation**:* Students will be evaluated regarding this objective through *class discussion,* and the *final paper*.

Prerequisites and Fulfillment of Requirements

There are no specific prerequisites for this course. It is a graduate-level seminar, and students should expect to be called upon for graduate-level writing, presentation, and discussion.

Required Readings

There is no textbook for this course. Readings (articles and book excerpts) will be made available via Blackboard. Each week we will address 3-7 core readings (depending on length). Some weeks, additional optional relevant readings will also be made available. While it may seem redundant to state here, all participants are expected to read all required readings each week and be prepared to comment on them, regardless of whether or not they are "presenting" that work.

Assignments and Grading

There are two major assignments in this course (defined below), which, along with class participation, define your grade. All written assignments should use the following format: 12 point Times New Roman, double spaced, 1 inch margins, with a single-spaced heading that includes the assignment name, date turned in, and your name on the first line, with the title of the piece on the second. Textual formatting (citations, bibliography, abbreviations, etc.) should follow the style guide of the *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, available online (except as appropriate for the final paper, see below). All writing should be treated as a formal, serious product.

Midterm paper: Students should produce a midterm paper of roughly 10 pages that attempts to compare and integrate readings from the first half of the semester.
25% of grade

Final paper: Students should produce a final paper of that aspires to "publication quality" targeting the academic journal of their choice. We will discuss this paper in more detail as we move forward, but the primary goal is to *situate* a problem in the sustainability literature and *propose* how bringing some of the different threads we've examined help to move that problem forward.
35% of grade

Class Participation: Students will be expected to extensively participate in class discussion during each session. Students will rotate preparing summary presentations for particular articles, but all students should carefully read and be prepared to respond to the text of every article assigned. I'll be keeping track of quality/quantity of participation.
40% of grade

A word about grading: As is true for many of my colleagues, I try to guide students regarding what qualifies as good without setting an outer bound for what is excellent. We will discuss in further detail what I am seeking in each of these assignments as they approach, but what I value most is your creative engagement with reading materials and the various assignments as a vehicle for learning. I urge you to make assignments your own by *discussing with me* outside of class whether your proposed approach will satisfy the requirements of the assignment.

Numeric grades on assignments will translate to letter grades on the following scale:

92 to 100.0% = A	77 to 79 = C+
90 to 92 = A-	73 to 76 = C
87 to 89 = B+	70 to 72 = C-
83 to 86 = B	60 to 69 = D
80 to 82 = B-	0 to 59 = F

Class Policies

Classroom Ground Rules: Every student deserves an academic environment in which they are free to intellectually explore and participate in discussion safely and comfortably. All students are expected to abide by basic ground rules and avoid disparaging or inflammatory comments to their classmates.

Classroom Technology: Mobile phones, texting, email, messaging, facebook, etc.—any personal communication or use of technology for non-classroom purposes—is not permitted. I reserve the right to prohibit the use of laptops in the classroom if I have concerns regarding focus and attention to class activities. Classroom technology is a privilege! Don't ruin it for your classmates.

University Attendance Policy: Excused absences include documented illness, deaths in the family and other documented crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, religious holy days, and official University activities. These absences will be accommodated in a way that does not arbitrarily penalize students who have a valid excuse. Consideration will also be given to students whose dependent children experience serious illness.

Late Work: Timely submission of assignments is key to the smooth functioning of the class. Late work must be excused by the instructor, should reflect a serious, documented excuse, and *will be* marked down 10% per day. No assignments will be accepted more than 1 week late. Grade disputes must be addressed to the instructor *within one week* of the grade being posted online; you are responsible for keeping up with your grades as they are posted to the course website.

Academic Honor Policy: The Florida State University Academic Honor Policy outlines the University's expectations for the integrity of students' academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities

of students and faculty members throughout the process. Students are responsible for reading the Academic Honor Policy and for living up to their pledge to ". . . be honest and truthful and . . . [to] strive for personal and institutional integrity at Florida State University." (Florida State University Academic Honor Policy, found at http://dof.fsu.edu/honorpolicy.htm.)

Free Tutoring from FSU: For tutoring and writing help in any course at Florida State University, visit the Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) Tutoring Services' comprehensive list of tutoring options - seehttp://ace.fsu.edu/tutoring or contact tutor@fsu.edu for more information. High-quality tutoring is available by appointment and on a walk-in basis. These services are offered by tutors trained to encourage the highest level of individual academic success while upholding personal academic integrity.

Americans With Disabilities Act: Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should: (1) register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center; and (2) bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be done during the first week of class. This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format upon request. For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact the:

Student Disability Resource Center
874 Traditions Way
108 Student Services Building
Florida State University
Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167
(850) 644-9566 (voice)
(850) 644-8504 (TDD)
sdrc@admin.fsu.edu
http://www.disabilitycenter.fsu.edu/

Syllabus Change Policy: Except for changes that substantially affect implementation of the evaluation (grading) statement, this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice.

Syllabus continues with course schedule on the following page.

Course Schedule for Theory of Sustainability

Each week we meet once except as interrupted by holidays and professional activities. You are expected to have read all of the assigned material before the class session; any written assignments are due *before* the session unless otherwise noted.

Week One: Introduction (Jan 4)

Key Questions: Goals for the course? Where does sustainability fit in geography?

SEGMENT ONE: Core Literatures

Week Two: Sustainability Science (Jan 11)

Readings:

- Daly. Sustainable development: from concept and theory to operational principles. Population and Development Review (1990) vol. 16 pp. 25-43
- Costanza. Ambio - Sustainability or Collapse: What Can We Learn from Integrating the History of Humans and the Rest of Nature? 2007
- Fiksel. Sustainability and resilience: toward a systems approach. Sustainability: Science Practice and Policy (2006)
- Holdren. The Meaning of Sustainability: Biogeophysical Aspects by John P. Holdren, Gretchen C. Daily, and Paul Ehrlich. In Defining and Measuring Sustainability, World Bank. 1995.
- McMichael et al. New Visions for Addressing Sustainability. Science (2003)
- Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future. UN A/42/427. 1987. ("The Brundtland Report" – focus on part 1 section 2 I-IV, "Towards Sustainable Development")

Week Three: Climate Change, Global Environmental Change (Jan 18)

Readings:

- Cox. What are we doing about climate change?. Human Geography (2010) vol. 3 (2) pp. 1-20
- Gibson et al. Boundary Crossings: Climate change and household dynamics: beyond consumption, unbounding sustainability. Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers 2010
- Walther et al. Ecological responses to recent climate change. Nature (2002) vol. 416 (6879) pp. 389-395
- Smith et al. Vulnerability to climate change and reasons for concern: a synthesis. Climate change (2001) pp. 913-967

Week Four: Planning and Sustainable Design (Jan 25)

Readings:

- Chifos. The Sustainable Communities Experiment in the United States: Insights from Three Federal-Level …. Journal of Planning Education and Research (2007)
- Neuman. The Place of Planning in Sustainability Metrics for Public Works: Lessons From the Philadelphia Region. Public Works Management and Policy (2011)
- Termorshuizen et al. Incorporating ecological sustainability into landscape planning. Landscape and Urban Planning (2007) vol. 79 (3-4) pp. 374-384
- Murdoch. Putting discourse in its place: planning, sustainability and the urban capacity study. Area (2004) vol. 36 (1) pp. 50-58
- Campbell. Green Cities, Growing Cities, Just Cities. Journal of the American Planning Association (1996) pp. 1-30
- Jepson. Sustainability and Planning: Diverse Concepts and Close Associations. Journal of Planning Literature (2001) vol. 15 (4) pp. 499

Week Five: Policy and Development (Feb 1)

Readings:

- Holdren. PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS: Science and Technology for Sustainable Well-Being. Science (2008)
- Agrawal. Common Property Institutions and Sustainable Governance of Resources. World Development (2001)
- Roosa. City Policies: Energy & Sustainability in the Sunbelt. International Journal of Green Energy (2008) pp. 1-22
- Bueren and Jong. Establishing sustainability: policy successes and failures. Building Research & Information (2007) vol. 35 (5) pp. 543-556
- Deakin. Sustainable Development and Sustainable Transportation:
- Strategies for Economic Prosperity, Environmental Quality, and Equity. (2001) pp. 1-42
- De Kruijf. Following Sustainable Development in Relation to the North–South Dialogue: Ecosystem Health and Sustainability Indicators. Ecotoxicology and Environmental Safety (1998) vol. 40 (1-2) pp. 4-14
- Munda. A conflict analysis approach for illuminating distributional issues in sustainability policy. European Journal of Operational Research (2009) vol. 194 (1) pp. 307-322

- Welfens et al. Global economic sustainability indicator: analysis and policy options for the Copenhagen process. International Economics and Economic Policy (2010) vol. 7 (2) pp. 153-185
- Pezzoli. Sustainable Development: A Transdisciplinary Overview of the Literature. Journal of Environmental Planning and Management (1997)

SEGMENT TWO: Critiques

Week Six: Scientific Skepticism (Feb 8)

Readings:

- Sneddon. 'Sustainability'in ecological economics, ecology and livelihoods: a review. Progress in Human Geography (2000)
- Redclift. Sustainable development (1987-2005): an oxymoron comes of age. Horizontes Antropológicos (2006)
- Toman. Economics and "Sustainability": Balancing Trade-Offs and Imperatives. Land Economics (1994) vol. 4 pp. 399-413
- Langhelle. Sustainable Development: Exploring the Ethics of Our Common Future. International Political Science Review/ Revue internationale … (1999)

Week Seven: Disciplinary Skepticism (Feb 15)

Readings:

- Komiyama and Takeuchi. Sustainability science: building a new discipline. Sustain Sci (2006) vol. 1 (1) pp. 1-6
- Davidson. Social Sustainability and the City. Geography Compass (2010) vol. 4 (7) pp. 872-880
- Davidson. Hacking away at sustainability: science, ideology and cynical blockage. Human Geography (2010) vol. 3 (2) pp. 1-8
- Littig and Griessler. Social sustainability: a catchword between political pragmatism and social theory. International Journal of Sustainable Development (2005)
- Krueger and Agyeman. Sustainability schizophrenia or actually existing sustainabilities?" toward a broader understanding of the politics and promise of local sustainability in the US. Geoforum (2005)
- Marcuse. Sustainability is not enough. Environment and Urbanization (1998) vol. 10 (2) pp. 103

Week Eight: Political Skepticism (Feb 22)

Readings:

- Hasan and Dwyer. Was the Copenhagen Summit doomed from the start? Some insights from Green IS research. Americas Conference on Information Systems 2010 Proceeding (2010) pp. 67
- Carvalho. Sustainable development: is it achievable within the existing international political economy context?. Sustainable Development (2001)
- Ratner. " Sustainability" as a Dialogue of Values: Challenges to the Sociology of Development. Sociological Inquiry (2004) vol. 74 (1) pp. 50-69
- Spain. Sustainability, Feminist Visions, and the Utopian Tradition. Journal of Planning Literature (1995)

Due: Midterm papers.

Week Nine: Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers (Feb 29)

SPRING BREAK, MARCH 5-9

SEGMENT THREE: Alternative Approaches

Week Ten: Environmental Justice (Mar 14)

Readings:

- Walker and Bulkeley. Geographies of environmental justice. Geoforum (2006)
- Miller et al. Feminist Politics and Environmental Justice, Chap. 3?. (2007) pp. 12
- Capek. Environmental Justice Frame: A Conceptual Discussion and an Application, The. Soc. Probs. (1993) vol. 40 pp. 5
- Pellow…. Power. Justice and the Environment: Toward Critical Environmental Justice Studies. Power (2005)
- Harner et al. Urban Environmental Justice Indices. The Professional Geographer (2002)

Week Eleven: Political Ecology (Mar 21)

Readings:

- Adger et al. Advancing a political ecology of global environmental discourses. Development and … (2001)
- Hagerman. Shaping neighborhoods and nature: Urban political ecologies of urban waterfront transformations in Portland, Oregon. Cities (2007)
- M'Gonigle. Ecological economics and political ecology: towards a necessary synthesis. Ecological Economics (1999)

- Keil. Progress Report: Urban Political Ecology. Urban Geography (2003) pp. 16
- Swyngedouw and Heynen. Urban Political Ecology, Justice and the Politics of Scale. (2003) pp. 21
- Christopher Brown and Purcell. There's nothing inherent about scale: political ecology, the local trap, and the politics of development in the Brazilian Amazon. Geoforum (2005)
- Rocheleau. Political ecology in the key of policy: From chains of explanation to webs of relation. Geoforum (2008) vol. 39 (2) pp. 716-727
- Walker. Political ecology: where is the ecology?. Progress in Human Geography (2005)

SEGMENT FIVE: Developments, Extensions, and Integrative Efforts

Week Twelve: Urban Sustainability (Mar 28)

Readings:

- Lee. Urban sustainability and the limits of classical environmentalism. ENVIRONMENT AND URBANIZATION (2006) vol. 18 (1) pp. 9-22
- Wolch. Green urban worlds. Annals of the Association of American Geographers (2007)
- Braun. Environmental issues: writing a more-than-human urban geography. Progress in Human Geography (2005) vol. 29 (5) pp. 635
- Wu. Making the Case for Landscape Ecology: An Effective Approach to Urban Sustainability. Landscape Journal (2008)
- Uzzell et al. Place Identification, Social Cohesion, and Enviornmental Sustainability. Environment and Behavior (2002)
- Pearsall and Pierce. Urban sustainability and environmental justice: evaluating the linkages in public planning/policy discourse. Local Environment (2010) vol. 15 (6) pp. 569-580

Week Thirteen: Sustainability and Justice (Apr 4)

Readings:

- Agyeman and Bullard…. Exploring the nexus: Bringing together sustainability, environmental justice and equity. Space and polity (2002)
- Agyeman and Evans. 'Just sustainability': the emerging discourse of environmental justice in Britain?. The Geographical Journal (2004) vol. 170 (2) pp. 155-164

- Agyeman and Evans. Toward just sustainability in urban communities: building equity rights with sustainable solutions. The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social … (2003)
- Burkett. Marx's Vision of Sustainable Human Development. MONTHLY REVIEW-NEW YORK- (2005)
- Medovoi. A Contribution to the Critique of Political Ecology: Sustainability as Disavowal. New Formations (2010) vol. 69 (1) pp. 129-143

Due: A one-paragraph description of your final paper topic. (You should be working on your final paper.)

Week Fourteen: Efforts at Inter/Intra-disciplinary Integration (Apr 11)

Readings:

- McMichael et al. New Visions for Addressing Sustainability. Science (2003)
- Fiksel. Sustainability and resilience: toward a systems approach. Sustainability: Science Practice and Policy (2006)
- Uiterkamp and Vlek. Practice and Outcomes of Multidisciplinary Research for Environmental Sustainability. Journal of Social Issues (2007)
- Marsden et al. Beyond the social construction of nature: rethinking political economies of the environment. Journal of Environmental Policy and Planning (2002) vol. 4 (2) pp. 103-105
- Turner and Robbins. Draft: Land Change Science and Political Ecology. Annual Review in Environment and Resources (2008) pp. 16
- Turner et al. A framework for vulnerability analysis in sustainability science. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (2003)
- Sumi. On several issues regarding efforts toward a sustainable society. Sustain Sci (2007) vol. 2 (1) pp. 67-76

Week Fifteen: Special Topics (Apr 18)

Readings:

- Will be generated by the class (instructions to follow).

Due: Final papers.