

The Oregon Extension  
Fall 2017

3 credit hours

### Segment Three: What is a Sustainable World?

**PURPOSE OF THE COURSE:** Sustainability is a concept at the crossroads of how we think about durable ecosystems, economies, and collective human life. It is a moral concept that upholds the value of conserving—rather than exhausting—the balance of energies that allows these things to exist together and thrive. Much thinking about sustainability has to do with practices, with how to act in ways that contribute to this balance of energies. In this course we will read and think about practices, about the theory of tacit knowledge by which the hands teach the head, and then turn to practicing some skills that will actually give our hands a chance to teach our heads ways to live more sustainable lives.

#### AIMS OF THE COURSE

- Bring into focus a working definition of sustainability
- Gain an understanding of the idea of tacit knowledge and its place in learning to live sustainably
- Become conversant with the sustainability spectrum: from institutional policies and macro-economics to personal lifestyle choices
- Learn to think broadly, critically, and responsibly about the concept of a carbon footprint
- Join a “guild” of craft apprentices under the guidance of a skilled practitioner, electing one of the following tracks:
  - sustainable business practices
  - nature writing
  - toolcraft: making and fixing
  - forest management

#### COURSE TEXTS

Elizabeth Royte, *Garbage Land: On the Secret Trail of Trash*  
 Matthew Crawford, *Shop Class as Soul Craft*  
 Additional texts to be assigned in each Skill Track (see below)

#### COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- 1) Book notes (for core books)
- 2) One Idea paper (1)
- 3) Attendance of daily lectures
- 4) Full participation in daily small group discussion
- 5) Full participation in one of the skill tracks
  - Each track will have its own requirements (see below)

#### EXPLANATION OF REQUIREMENTS

- 1) **Book notes**  
Students will continue note-taking of core books. Notes may be collected on a daily basis by professors, so students must bring them to discussion every day.
- 2) **One Idea Paper (1)**  
Isolate one major idea from the week’s assigned readings, then write one page in which you describe and analyze the idea in your own words, but being as faithful as possible to the author’s intent. Be prepared to read this to your Friday small group and handle questions and responses from the group.
- 3) **Attendance at daily lectures.**  
Absences must be excused.
- 4) **Full participation in daily small group discussion**  
Absences must be excused. Come prepared with all reading completed and book notes in hand. Dive in.
- 5) **Skill Tracks**
  - 1) **SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS PRACTICES**
    - **Assigned reading:**  
 Muhammad Yunus, *Building Social Business: The New Kind of Capitalism that Serves Humanity’s Most Pressing Needs*

Gary Erickson and Lois Lorentzen, *Raising the Bar: Integrity and Passion in Life and Business: The Story of Clif Bar Inc.*

Ian MacMillan and James Thompson, *The Social Entrepreneur's Playbook: Pressure Test, Plan, Launch and Scale Your Social Enterprise*

- **Workshop:** group meets for a week with Gary Erickson and Kit Crawford, founders and co-owners of Clif Bar & Co., to learn from them how Clif Bar was launched, about the evolution of CB's five sustainability aspirations, and interact with them about how they have navigated various crises and opportunities under the guidance of these aspirations
- **Final Project** will be a two-phase business plan that is written out, complete with graphics, and pitched to the focus group

## 2) NATURE WRITING

- **Assigned reading:**  
Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*
- **Workshop:** Intensive writing workshop
- **Final Project** will be a finely crafted and substantial piece of creative non-fiction reflecting on nature

## 3) TOOLCRAFT: MAKING AND FIXING

- **Assigned reading:**  
Peter Corn, *Why We Make Things and Why It Matters: The Education of a Craftsman*
- **Workshop:** we will fell a tree in our forest, mill it into dimensional lumber, then build writing desks in the OE woodshop out of seasoned lumber harvested last year from our forest. Students will do the work, learning as they go how to identify good lumber trees and to grade lumber, how to operate chainsaws, an outdoor sawmill, table saws, planers, jointers, drill presses, routers, and clamps. They will learn and practice techniques of joinery, drawer construction, sanding and finishing.
- **Final Project** will be finished writing desks that will be placed in the students' cabins. Students will have performed every step involved in transforming a living tree into a sturdy piece of furniture, and will have read about, thought about, and discussed what it means to immerse oneself in a craft.

## 4) FOREST MANAGEMENT (lab science)

- **Assigned reading:**  
David Lindenmayer and Jerry Franklin, *Towards Sustainable Forestry*
- **Workshop:** Two weeks in the woods with chainsaws, pole saws, shovels, drip torches, soil probes and augers, test kits, a drone and GIS maps to learn and practice forest fuels reduction techniques, controlled burning, soil testing, and engage in various valid scientific methods of monitoring and measuring the impact of these interventions and recovery timelines for micro-ecosystems.
- **Final Project** will be three acres of forestland that has undergone fuels reduction and stage one monitoring.

## 6) Research Project

Students may petition OE professors to do a more traditional Research Project as an alternative to these four tracks. If approved, follow general guidelines for Research Project process in Segment Two syllabus.

## GRADING

### Grades will be assessed based on the following:

- Quality of book notes, One Idea paper, and discussion group participation
- Documented completion of all reading and book notes on time
- Participation and engagement in requirements in all phases of Skill Track
- If approved to do a non-Track Research Project, see applicable "Grading" guidelines in Segment Two syllabus
- Self-evaluations, followed by faculty-student conferences, at the end of the segment

### Assessment will be performed according to the following guidelines:

- We reserve the **A** for the combination of consistently high *effort* and *achievement* displayed across the board in your written and spoken work during the segment. Participation in the Skill Track was whole-hearted, showed strong personal initiative, helpful collegial support of others in the track, and a notable learning curve in skills-acquisition. If student opts to do a Research Project, it must be well-written and well-researched, and the seminar presentation is confident, clear, and coherent.
- **B** indicates high effort but less than high achievement; or moderate effort but (nonetheless) relatively high achievement.
- **C** indicates moderate effort at best and significantly less than high achievement.
- **D** indicates low effort and low achievement generally.

## SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READINGS

See Segment Three calendar.

## COURSE CREDIT

*Students will choose from among the following course offerings, based upon the Skill Track they joined.*

### **BUAD 397 – Sustainable Business** *(pending approval)*

A study of sustainable business practices, understood as encompassing profit, brand, staff, sourcing of ingredients, and the surrounding community.

### **ENVS 397 – Toolcraft for a Sustainable World** *(pending approval)*

Beginning with the premise that making and fixing things is a core practice of sustainability, this course trains students to use tools to build and repair things, and to reflect on the meaning of practicing a craft.

### **LIT 397 – Nature Writing for a Sustainable World** *(pending approval)*

A writing workshop in the genre of nature writing, relying on rigorous cycles of writing and revision arising from constructive criticism offered by peers and instructor.

### **BIO 397 – Forest Management for a Sustainable World (Lab Science)** *(pending approval)*

A primarily field-based course that involves both fuel reducing intervention in wildfire-prone forestland and monitoring of the intervention with soil tests and ecosystem plot sampling.

*If an alternative Research Project is approved, it will be designated in advance as one of the following courses:*

### **ART 397 – Artistic Perspectives on Sustainability**

An examination of selected aspects of sustainability as interpreted by the work and/or thought of a major artist or artists.

### **BIST 397 – Biblical Perspectives on Sustainability**

An examination of sustainability by means of careful, detailed exegesis of selected, pertinent biblical texts.

### **HIST 397 – Historical Perspectives on Sustainability**

An examination of sustainability in light of selected significant historical events and/or thinkers.

### **PHIL 397 – Philosophical Perspectives on Sustainability**

An examination of sustainability as understood by selected philosophical thinkers or systems of thought.

### **PSYC 397 – Psychological Perspectives on Sustainability**

An examination of sustainability as understood by selected psychological theorists or systems of thought.

### **REL 397 – Religious Perspectives on Sustainability**

An examination of sustainability as understood by selected religious thinkers or systems.

### **SOC 397 – Sociological Perspectives on Sustainability**

An examination of sustainability in light of the scientific study of human social behavior and social theory.

### **INST 397 – Directed Study**

An individualized course of study, examining a topic of critical interest to a student in an academic area not included in the What Is a Sustainable World? course listings. Topic will be concurrently approved by the student's academic advisor and the Oregon Extension faculty.