**Course Description**

The 21st century is being called the ‘century of the city’. Now more than ever, humans across the globe call the city their home. Many of the world’s most pressing crises are manifest in cities, including: greenhouse gas emissions, land degradation, high mass production and consumption, widespread poverty and hunger, and expanding socio-economic disparities. As ‘sustainability’ becomes part of mainstream discourse, this course will explore what sustainability means for urban contexts around the globe. Arguably, the city has the potential to be the most efficient, equitable, and environmental form of modern human settlement. Covering all dimensions of sustainability from a social science perspective, this course will focus on theoretical groundings, practices of urban sustainability, and new research agendas. Major topics include: cities and nature; planning and land use; urban form; community and neighborhoods; transportation systems and accessibility; livelihood and urban economies; and social justice and the city.

**Course Objectives and Goals**

“Urban sustainability” is a very new field of study and practice; only a limited formal academic ‘legacy’ exists. Thus the primary objective of this course is to develop a core understanding of what urban sustainability means by drawing upon relevant literatures from many different urban-related disciplines. We also seek to identify elements across all environmental, social, and economic parameters of sustainability. Finally, during this current era of marketability and trendiness we seek to think critically of that which falls short of real action or achieves deep sustainability.

This will be accomplished primarily through engagement with academic and popular literature, as well as examining best practices and unique implementations of sustainability. Students will develop core knowledge and critical thought through: extensive reading and reflective writing; exploring real-world examples of the terrain and boundaries of ‘urban sustainability”; and verbally articulating ideas and opinions.
Course Readings
Students are expected to read all the assigned course readings. The following book will serve as the primary text for this course. Many used copies are available. One copy will be available on closed reserve at Anderson Academic Commons. Additional reading requirements, as noted on the course calendar, will be made available on Canvas.


Course Format
This is an advanced level course that relies more on student participation than instructor lecturing. Class sessions will consist of reading discussions, mini-lectures, activities, and student presentations. **This is a reading-intensive course.** All students are expected to fully read the material before class.

Course Policies
- Participate and respect others.
- Please turn off cell phones and computers during class. Please request permission if using laptops for note taking.
- **Honor yourself, Honor the code.** Please adhere to the University of Denver’s Honor Code.
- Please contact the Disabilities Services Program office if you need special accommodations in this class.

Course Requirements
1. Reading and reflective writing (40%)
   - As a discussion based course, it is imperative that students come prepared, having read the assigned readings.
   - Come to class ready to discuss. Bring questions or new insights. Students will be called upon.
   - My primary concern: *have you read the material? Have you formed an opinion?* When you read, *read for learning. not in preparation for an exam.*
   - **Requirement 1.** Before each class, post your reading notes on Canvas, or according to an agreed upon method.
   - **Requirement 2.** Due each Friday – a “Weekly Pager” a 350-word reflective writing on the contents of the week: readings, discussions, presentations, fieldtrips, etc… This can be summative, reflecting on key highlights, and to discuss remaining questions or concerns.
2. Participation (20%)
   - Thoughtful participation in class discussion, on a daily basis
   - Daily class attendance
   - Serving once as a ‘discussant’ following a presentation
   - Completing mini-assignments / exercises not otherwise incorporated into the reading and reflections
3. Self-guided field trip (10%)
   - During Week 3 you will take a self-guided field trip exploring 2 sustainable community neighborhoods across Denver, resulting in a written critique. More details forthcoming.
4. Exploring the terrain and boundaries of ‘urban sustainability’ : In-class presentations (15%)
   - The purpose of this requirement is for us to learn about new and different practices that may or may not fit with the confines of urban sustainability. During each class session there will be 1-3 presentations
   - I have already identified numerous potential interesting topics of interest; although you may name your own.
   - Presentations should be limited to about 11 minutes; thus practice for conciseness.
   - Please prepare a handout / document to distribute. (If submitted early enough, I can make copies)
   - A student-discussant will provide a brief response, draw connections, and pose questions for discussion.
5. Annotated Bibliography (15%)
   - The purpose of this requirement is for you to explore in-depth a topic of your interest.
   - You will find and read 10 scholarly publications, then write a brief summary and critique (a paragraph each) for each article. Then, you will also include a succinct summative 500-word synthesis.
   - This end of the quarter assignment takes the place of a term paper. More details forthcoming.

Course Grading Scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>94 – 100%</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90 – 93%</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87 – 89%</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83 – 86%</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80 – 82%</td>
<td>B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77 – 79%</td>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73 – 76%</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70 – 72%</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67 – 69%</td>
<td>D+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63 – 66%</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 – 62%</td>
<td>D-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>below 60%</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 These requirements are exclusive to undergraduate students. There are no graduate students enrolled this quarter.
GEOG 3425 Urban Sustainability
Course Calendar
Spring Quarter 2014

Note: [W + B] = Wheeler and Beatley, “...Reader”

Week 1
T, March 25  Course introduction
In what ways is Denver (not) a sustainable city?
Readings: None
Presentations: None

Th, March 27  Urban thought before sustainability discourse: The Industrial City
Readings: - F. Engels “The Great Towns”
- Warner “The American Industrial Metropolis”
Presentations: None

Week 2
T, April 1  Urban thought before sustainability discourse: Utopian visions beyond the industrial city
Readings:
- [W + B] Ch. 1 The Three Magnets... (7p)
- [W + B] Ch. 2 Cities and the crisis... (5p)
- [W + B] Ch. 46 Streets of Ecotopia (6p)
- [W + B] Ch. 47 Description of Abbenay (4p)
- [W + B] Ch. 48 The View (4p)
Presentations: 1) Topic: utopian cities???
Volunteer:

Th, April 3  Modern Sustainability Discourse: Global agendas
Readings:
- [W + B] Ch. 5 Plight and prospect (6p)
- [W + B] Ch. 7 Perspectives, problems, models (5p)
- [W + B] Ch. 9 Towards sustainable development (5p)
- [W + B] Ch. 10 The end of nature (8p)
- [W + B] Ch. 11 Rio Declaration... (9p)

Week 3
T, April 8  Urban Design
Readings:
- [W + B] Ch. 12 The next American metropolis (12p)
- [W + B] Ch. 13 Outdoor space... (5p)
- [W + B] Ch. 14 Infill development (9p)
- Choose one of the following:
  - Glaeser, “What is greener than blacktop?”
  - Owen, “Green Manhattan: Why NYC is the greenest city in the US”

In class: Urbanized (2011), Director: Gary Hustwit, 85 minutes.
(please include your notes, comments, and reflections on this documentary into your daily reading journal)

Presentations: None
Th, April 10  Self-guided fieldtrip: Sustainable residential communities
Readings:
- [W + B] Ch. 38 Seeing change (5p)

[Instructions on the self-guided fieldtrip are forthcoming]

Week 4

T, April 15  Urban Transportation
Readings:
- [W + B] Ch. 15 Transit and the metropolis (8p)
- [W + B] Ch. 16 Traffic calming (7p)
- [W + B] Ch. 17 Bicycling Renaissance… (7p)

Presentations:
1. Suggested topic: critiquing Denver’s transportation

2.

Th, April 17  Planning and urban redevelopment
Readings:
- [W + B] Ch. 4 Orthodox planning… (5p)
- Choose 1 of the following 2 readings
  - [W + B] Ch. 41 Urban Planning in Curitiba (11p)
  - [W + B] Ch. 42 Planning …in European cities (10p)

Presentations:
1. Two students to work together on the 10th and Osage area redevelopment.

2.

Week 5

T, April 22  Cities and Green Building 1  (FIELDTRIP)
Fieldtrip: Green Building tour at History Colorado
Depart: 2pm sharp. We will be taking NSM vans. Please meet just outside the south doors of Boettcher West building, near the Geography offices. (** we will try to be back on campus by 4pm – please talk with me if you have a class scheduled at 4pm**)

Readings:
- [W + B] Ch. 32 Design, ecology, ethics… (7p)
- [W + B] Ch. 33 Green architecture (5p)
- [W + B] Ch. 34 Sustainability and building codes (6p)
- [W + B] Ch. 35 LEED (6p)
- please include reflections on the green building tour in your reading journal
Th, April 24  Cities and Green Building 2  
Debrief green building tour

Readings:  

Presentations:  
1. Suggested topic: Masdar City  
Volunteer:  
2. Suggested topic: architecture and historic legacy  
Volunteer:  
3. Suggested topic: green roofs  
Volunteer:  

April 25 – Earth Day Summit at DU. <potential extra credit>

Week 6

T, April 29  Sprawl, Smart Growth, and Regionalism  
Readings:  

Presentations:  
Suggested topic for a pair of people: What is the future of U.S. suburbia?  
Volunteers:

Th, May 1  Urban governance: Cities taking the lead  
Readings:  
- Rosenzweig, Cynthia, William Solecki, Stephen A. Hammer and Shagun Mehrotra. 2010. Cities lead the way in climate change action Nature 467: 909-911  
- Green, Emma. 2013. Can mayors really save the world? The Atlantic Cities  

Assignment: examine the governmental website of your home city for sustainability statements.

Presentations:  
1. Suggested topic: Sustainability ranking systems  
Volunteer:  
2. Suggested topic: PlanNYC  
Volunteer:

* it is correct: he prefers to not capitalize his name.
Week 7

T, May 6  Social dimensions: Equity and Justice
           - Split up the following readings:
             - [W + B] Ch. 24 People-of-color... (7p)
             - [W + B] Ch. 25 Domesticating urban space (7p)
             - [W + B] Ch. 26 Fighting poverty... (12p)

Presentations:  1. Suggested topic: Grand Junction’s (CO) health care program
                Volunteer:

                      2. Suggested topic: Cities and human trafficking
                Volunteer:

Th, May 8  Social dimensions: Denver and homelessness
Guest speaker: Marcus Hyde, The Catholic Worker

Reflect: Is homelessness a matter of urban sustainability? Why or why not?

Week 8

T, May 13  Where does ‘economics’ fit within cities and sustainability?
Readings:  - [W + B] Ch. 27 The economic system... (6p)
           - [W + B] Ch. 28 Natural capitalism (9p)
           - [W + B] Ch. 31 Strengthening local economies (12p)

Presentations:  1. Suggested topic: the share economy / crowd consumption
               Volunteer:

                      2. Suggested topic: inequalities in cities and the minimum wage movement.
               Volunteer:

Th, May 15  Culture and Sense of place
Readings:  - Newman and Jennings “Sense of Place”

Presentations:  1. Suggested topic: the role of ‘third spaces’ (e.g. bars, coffee shops) (Benfield 18)
                Volunteer:

                Volunteer

                      3. Suggested topic: Art and sustainability in cities
                Volunteer
Week 9

T, May 20  Cities and ecology 1: Resources
Readings:
- [W + B] Ch. 21 Metabolism of cities (8p)
- [W + B] Ch. 22 Waste as resources (8p)
- [W + B] Ch. 23 Stabilization Wedges (9p)
- [W + B] Ch. 37 What is an ecological footprint? (9p)
- Nelson, “Closing the nutrient loop”

Presentations:
1. Suggested topic: Biophilic cities
Volunteer:
2. Suggested topic: critiquing Denver’s “Sustainability Park”
Volunteer:
3. Suggested topic: a topic on urban water issues
Volunteer:

Th, May 22  Cities and ecology 2: City-Nature interfaces
Readings:
- Miner, “Taking root in the city”
- [W + B] Ch. 18 City and Nature (6p)
- [W + B] Ch. 19 Land development and endangered species...(4p)
- [W + B] Ch. 20 What is restoration? (6p)

Presentations:
1. Suggested topic: Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge
Volunteer:
2. Suggested topic: Local food movement: A 100-mile diet in Denver
Volunteer:
Volunteer:

Week 10

T, May 27  Population and urbanization
Readings:
- Cohen “Human Population Grows Up”

Presentations:
1. Suggested topic: slums/shantytowns
Volunteer:
2. Suggested topic: other global south issue / city resilience to disaster
Volunteer:

Th, May 29  Course conclusion: Final Discussion

Reading:
- [W + B] Ch. 3 The Land Ethic (10p) (this is the best reading of the quarter! -eeb)
- (optional) [W + B] Ch. 39 A progressive politics of meaning (7p)

Presentations:
1. Suggested topic: City and faith/religion/spirituality/ethics (Benfield 22)
Volunteer:
2. Suggested topic: community (Benfield 9 and 10)
3