**Freshman Inquiry: Sustainability**  
**Fall 2012**

**Professor Robert Scheller**  
Environmental Science and Management  
rmschell@pdx.edu  
503-725-2497  
Science Building 2: B1-18  
Office Hours: Wed 1-2 and by appointment

**Peer Mentor: Emma Jo Sipe**  
esipe@pdx.edu

**OVERVIEW**

There is growing evidence that human activity is significantly harming the natural systems that sustain us. Although we may consider nature to be separate from our largely urban or suburban lives, we are inextricably connected to the natural world, and depend on the natural world for our survival. This course will explore the possibilities for creating and maintaining a sustainable relationship between human communities and the environment. To investigate this question we will examine the connections among ecological, cultural, social, and economic systems. We begin the fall term focusing on food production systems and how they affect the environment and different societies and cultures. In winter we explore how different economies, societies, and cultures have interacted with their natural surroundings. We conclude in spring by taking a critical look at the nexus of climate and energy. Throughout the course students will be encouraged to read and research widely on these issues, report on their findings, participate actively in discussions, and develop a deeper sense of responsibility for their own habits and choices.

Our central learning objective **Fall term** is to explore and examine our relationship with other cultures and with earth’s physical systems through a focused consideration of food and food production systems. The sustainability theme is only a portion of the course content. While we explore the topic, we will also be working on developing the basic skills that college graduates need for success, such as critical thinking and clear writing.

**INQUIRY-BASED GENERAL EDUCATION**

This is Freshman Inquiry, the first course in your general education program at Portland State University. A central purpose of this course is to help you succeed in college and beyond by exercising your abilities to integrate information, consider diverse points of view, articulate and support your positions, and see the consequences of your thoughts and actions. When you complete this year-long course, you will have completed the equivalent of **four** credits in the humanities, **four** credits in the social sciences, **four** credits in the natural sciences, and **three** composition credits.
**Required texts and supplies:**
2. Ways of Writing. Available at the bookstore.
3. Online Materials will be assigned via the course web site on a regular basis. Visit [http://d2l.pdx.edu](http://d2l.pdx.edu) to find our course web site.
   Use campus labs if you do not have home internet access.
4. Additional readings, audio recordings, or videos will be assigned and made available online or through the PSU library reserve.
5. Recommended supplies: A flashdrive and a planning calendar.

**Grading:**
The following table details how points are distributed for this quarter. Many assignments or sections are graded on a three point scale: $\checkmark-$, $\checkmark$, $\checkmark+$ (check minus, check, check plus). Assignments and tests are *never* ‘curved’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brief descriptions of course assignments (subject to change, with warning): <strong>Assignment</strong></th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Brief Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mentor Lab participation $\checkmark-$ = 5 pts $\checkmark$ = 15 pts $\checkmark+$ = 25 pts</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>“Participation” refers to your contribution to mentor lab activities and discussions, and any assignments conducted during the lab.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentor Lab assignments</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Mentor lab will include various assignments. These will be assessed by the mentor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Section Participation</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>You will be awarded points for <strong>speaking</strong>. You will be graded relative to the most talkative participant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Classes missed (<a href="#">includes main class AND mentor labs</a>) 0 - 2 = 50 points; 3 = 40 points; 4 = 30 points; 5 = 20 points; 6 = 10 points; 7 = 0 points; 8 = <strong>-15 points</strong>; 9 = <strong>-30 points</strong>; 10 = <strong>-45 points</strong>; 11 = etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Assignments</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Complete 3 short writing assignments related to readings, the topic of sustainability, or other relevant topics as determined.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Assignment and Presentation</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Prepare a written, visual, and verbal expression describing a culture through the lense of food.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly reflections 3 per week, each worth up to 5 pts, 8 weeks</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>At the <strong>beginning</strong> of each week (Monday, 8am), you are required to submit a reflection on 3 of the reading or video assignments.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Final Assignment | 65 | 13 | Annotated Bibliography
--- | --- | --- | ---
e-Portfolio reflection | 25 | 5 | Four essays about the four university studies goals for FRINQ (5 pts each). One overarching written reflection (5 pts).
TOTAL | 500 | 100 | |

**Final Grades:** Final grades will be assigned according to a scale (or ‘curve’ if you prefer). The following table is the basis for the scale. Adjustments to this scale may be made at the end of each quarter. Adjustments are rare.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>% of possible points</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>% of possible points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>92.5</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>72.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>89.5</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>69.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>86.5</td>
<td>D+</td>
<td>66.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>82.5</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>62.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>79.5</td>
<td>D-</td>
<td>59.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>76.5</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Below 59.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**
These policies apply equally to both the main session and mentor labs

**COURSE POLICIES:** The central goal of these policies is to foster the trust and respect necessary to build a strong learning community.

**Attendance:** Learning in this course involves discussions, questions, and participation. There are no tests or quizzes! Therefore, attendance is required in **BOTH main class and mentor lab** and attendance will count toward your grade. DO NOT arrive late to class or leave early or take long breaks. **Two partial absences** (missing more than 15 minutes of class) **will equal an absence.** If you miss more than 30 minutes of class, you **are absent.** Note: PSU clocks are unreliable!

Keep in mind that your two allowed absences are yours to use in any way you like. They are there to make sure you are not penalized for days you miss class because you are sick or have a family emergency. In other words, a **day you skip class because you are tired is the same as a day you miss class because you are ill.** USE YOUR ABSENCES WISELY. **Do NOT bring a doctor’s note** expecting an absence not to count. **If you are ill for an extended period of time, consider requesting a medical withdrawal from your classes** (see [http://www.pdx.edu/registration/deadline-appeals-petition-information](http://www.pdx.edu/registration/deadline-appeals-petition-information)).
EMAIL
Email is a critical link between you and your professors – use it wisely!
- Do not expect to reach me 24/7. I rarely check email after 5pm.
- Expect frequent emails with information about the class, so check regularly.
- All emails will be sent to your official PSU (@pdx) account.
- **DO NOT** use the D2L email program. **It does not work!**
- I expect **PROFESSIONAL** emails! Always include a subject, a salutation (‘Dear Dr. Scheller,’), complete sentences with correct grammar and pronunciation, and a signature (‘Thank you, Lydia’).

**Technology etiquette:** There is a zero-tolerance cell phone and other technology policy. When you enter the class your phone is set on silent or turned off and put away. **Failure to follow this policy will result in an automatic absence for the day.** Similarly, laptops and other hand-held devices are not to be used during class. In mentor sessions there will be NO facebook or checking of email or using the Internet unless you are instructed to do so by your mentor. These strict rules are to ensure that the class stays focused on our project of learning from one another.

**Late work:** All assigned work will be due at the **beginning of class on the day that it is due.** All individual assignments will be submitted via Desire 2 Learn. **Late work will not be accepted, except in cases of compelling emergencies.**

**Benefit of the Doubt:** Practicing the learning goals of University Studies requires that we address sensitive or controversial topics and ideas in unfamiliar ways, and we may sometimes misspeak. Give one another the benefit of the doubt. If someone says something that offends you, assume it was not said to offend—but do speak up. If you find yourself offended, either raise the issue at the time in class or discuss it privately with me or your mentor after class. Of course you will not intentionally offend someone else. **No one in this class should ever feel threatened or harassed.** If you do feel this way, please speak to me or your mentor immediately.

**Confidentiality:** The content of discussions in class or in mentor section, are **CONFIDENTIAL.** This means you can talk about what we’re learning in the class—and we hope you will!—but not about fellow students in or outside of the class and mentor lab.

**Listening:** Whether it is during small group work, a full class discussion, or a lecture, when someone else is talking, you are not.

**Plagiarism:** We expect that the writing you do for this course will be your own work. You violate this ethic if you copy materials without acknowledging the source, present a slightly rearranged wording of source materials as your own, or submit a copy of a paper identical to that submitted by another student. **Plagiarism will result in a zero grade for the assignment and possibly lead to more severe academic consequences.** If in doubt, ask your mentor or professor—and remember it’s better to over-attribute rather than to overlook a source. See the Student Code of Conduct.
for further information:  
http://www.pdx.edu/dos/codeofconduct#AcademicDishonesty

**Sustainability in the class:** While you’re taking Sustainability, try to lighten your impact on the planet. Turn off the lights if you’re last in the room. Put your computer to sleep when you won’t be using it for several minutes. Be glad that double-sided copying is the norm for labs on campus. **Assignment will be distributed and collected via D2L to reduce our use of paper.**

**Policy Enforcement:** If you are found disregarding any of these policies in class or in mentor lab, you will be warned once. If you choose to continue the behavior, you will be dismissed from class or mentor lab and the day will count as an absence. You will not be allowed to return to class or mentor lab until you have discussed your behavior with me.

**RESOURCES AT PSU**

**Writing center**  
The writing center is located in Cramer Hall and is a great resource for all students! writingcenter@pdx.edu; 503 725-357

**SHAC**  
The Center for Student Health and Counseling ([http://www.pdx.edu/shac/](http://www.pdx.edu/shac/)): is located at 1880 SW 6th Ave. (University Center Building, Suite 200.) 503-725-2800

**Millar Library**  503 725-5874

**Campus Public Safety** phone 503-725-4404

**Additional Resources:** If you have a disability and require assistance obtaining resources at PSU, please see me. We will be happy to accommodate you as best we can. You will also need to register at the Disability Resource Center in Smith 435 (503-725-4150).

**FINALLY ...**

We are here because we want you to succeed, and learning to ask for help when you need it is important to your success. If you are having problems with the course, with time management, or with your freshman year in general, PLEASE discuss it with me or your mentor so that we can address the issue.