Freshman Inquiry Spring 2011: Sustainability

Professor Robert Scheller

Environmental Science and Management
rmschell@pdx.edu
503-725-2497
B1-18, Science Building 2
Office Hours: Thursdays 1-3 or by appointment.

Eli Pursiful, Peer Mentor
elip@pdx.edu

OVERVIEW

There is growing evidence that human activity is significantly harming the natural systems that sustain us. Although we may think of nature as something separate from our largely urban lives, we are inextricably connected to the natural world, and depend on the health of earth 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.

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 for Spring term is to learn about the current and impending energy and climate change challenges facing our society. 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:**

3. Online Materials will be assigned via the course web site on a regular basis. Blackboard: http://bb.pdx.edu/ Use campus labs if you do not have home internet access. See http://www.uss.pdx.edu/ for labs.
4. Online style guides (free of charge):
   - APA: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/
   - MLA: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01/
5. Additional readings, audio recordings, or videos will be assigned and made available online, through Blackboard.

**Grading:**

**NOTE:** This section is subject to change!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brief descriptions of course assignments (subject to change, with warning): Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Brief Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<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>75</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>You will be awarded points for speaking. You will be graded on a curve. (Up to 3 points per session)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Classes missed (includes main class AND mentor sessions) 0 - 2 = 50 points; 3 = 40 points; 4 = 30 points; 5 = 20 points; 6 = 0 points; 7 or more = AUTOMATIC COURSE FAILURE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Reflections (15 points per week; weeks 2-10)</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Summarize and reflect on three of the readings for upcoming week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solutions: Written</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Prepare a written summary of your chosen climate/energy solution. Points will be given for a draft and draft reviews.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solutions: Group Presentation</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Groups of 4 or 5 will use a FULL class period to teach other students about a climate/energy solution. Field trip or activity REQUIRED.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e-Portfolio reflections</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Four written reflections about the four university studies goals for FRINQ. One overarching reflections</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
which can written, sung, danced, spoken, or other.

| TOTAL | 500 | 100 |

**Final Grades:** A grade calculator is available on Blackboard to help you estimate your final grade. Final grades will be assigned according to a curve. The following table is an example from previous years:

<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, first and foremost, your bodily presence. Thus, attendance is required in BOTH main class and mentor lab and attendance will count toward your grade. **If you miss 7 or more class meetings, you will automatically fail the course.**  

**Tardiness:** Do not arrive late to class (two late arrivals will equal an absence). You are late if you arrive three minutes after the class period begins. Note: PSU clocks are unreliable!  

**D2L Email:** Do NOT use the D2L email system to try to contact me. This does not get forwarded to my regular email account. ALWAYS use your regular email program (Gmail, yahoo, etc.) and send messages to: rmschell@pdx.edu.  

**E-mail Etiquette:** I expect professional communications. This is an absolutely essential skill to practice. After college, you can quickly ruin your chances for jobs, promotions, raises, customers, etc. with unprofessional correspondence – primarily email. I expect an informational SUBJECT (begin with FRINQ, e.g., “FRINQ: Question about grades”), a proper SALUTATION (e.g., “Dr. Scheller”), correct GRAMMAR and PUNCTUATION, and a SIGNATURE. Do not expect to reach me 24/7. If you have a question or missed class, ask a classmate. We will send frequent emails with information about the class, so check regularly.
Late work: All assigned work will be collected at the beginning of class on the day that it is due. If you are going to be absent on an assignment due date, make sure you arrange to get the assignment to me BEFORE the start of class. Late work turned in within 48 hours following the due date will receive a deduction. **Work beyond this time 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.

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 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.

Sustainability in the class: While you’re taking Sustainability (and ever after?), 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. We will doing as many things electronically as possible, to minimize waste 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 IN THE UNIVERSITY**

**Writing center**
writingcenter@pdx.edu; 503 725-35700CH 188F Hours M & Th: 9AM-6PM Tu & W: 9AM-8PM; F 9-5

**SHAC**
The Center for Student Health and Counseling 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

GEOG computer lab (for students majoring in geography or enrolled in GEOG teachers or w. GEOG instructor) CH 475 (different software from the University Studies labs)

**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.