

# **BUTTE COLLEGE**

## **COURSE OUTLINE**

### **I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION**

**SOC 5 - Our Sustainable Future**

**3 Unit(s)**

**Prerequisite(s):** NONE

**Recommended Prep:** Reading Level IV; English Level III

**Transfer Status:** CSU/UC

51 hours Lecture

This course introduces students to the principles of ‘Sustainability’ within the global, national, regional, and local contexts. This course will increase students’ literacy of the three interconnected ‘pillars’ of sustainable systems, the ecosystem, human society, and the economy. To develop these literacies, students will begin by investigating the perils that currently effect each system, for example, resource depletion, species extinction, pollution, and global warming in the ecosphere; population growth, social inequality, disease, violence and conflict in human societies; and imperialism, unemployment, consumerism and waste in the global economy. The majority of the course will focus on social institutions and organizations that are re-imagining our common future by rethinking and redesigning how we live. Students will learn of new and innovative uses of renewable resources, production processes, and human capital; alternative forms of energy, transportation, building materials, food production, media, education, and urban planning; and new ways to build coalitions, community, trust, and democratic participation. Case studies will highlight sustainability practices in different parts of the world from a variety of perspectives.

### **II. OBJECTIVES**

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

- A. Demonstrate the historical, scientific, philosophical and institutional origins of the current sustainability movement.
- B. Define sustainability and evaluate the sustainability of particular systems and practices in contrast to others.
- C. Explain the interdependent relationship between the economy, society and the ecosphere using a systems theory approach.
- D. Evaluate the current problems that plague the ecosphere, and discuss remedies necessary to reverse these trends.
- E. Evaluate the common problems that plague human societies and discuss remedies that would create more just and equitable societies on a global scale.
- F. Evaluate the effects of modern industrial capitalism on societies throughout the world and on the ecosphere, and discuss a range of theoretical and applied technological and design innovations that make commodity production more sustainable.
- G. Demonstrate the mechanics of alternative energy, transportation, building materials, food production, community planning, and innovations of other industries and organizations that will provide new forms of employment and new forms of living.
- H. Analyze the political and cultural challenges of sustainability implementation.
- I. Develop ideas to create common ground and promote the principles of sustainability to diverse groups of people.
- J. Demonstrate the skills of civic participation and the importance of implementing them.
- K. Access and evaluate sources of information on sustainability issues.

### **III. COURSE CONTENT**

**A. Unit Titles/Suggested Time Schedule**

## Lecture

<u>Topics</u>	<u>Hours</u>
1. Introduction to Sustainability	3.00
2. Historical Background/Sustainability as a Social Movement	3.00
3. Sustainability in the Economic Sphere: Promoting Equity, Opportunity, and Well-Being	3.00
4. Sustainability in the Social Sphere: Promoting Justice, Peace, and Human Development	3.00
5. Sustainability in the Environmental Sphere: Promoting Conservation, Restoration, and Planetary Health	3.00
6. Populations and Habitat	3.00
7. Climate	3.00
8. Energy	3.00
9. Production and Consumption	3.00
10. Waste and Recycling	3.00
11. Greening the Built Environment	3.00
12. Sustainable Cities	3.00
13. Sustainable Agriculture	3.00
14. Water	3.00
15. Sustainability Education	3.00
16. Indigenous Wisdom Cultures	3.00
17. Biosphere Consciousness	3.00
Total Hours	51.00

#### IV. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION

- A. Lecture
- B. Group Discussions
- C. Guest Speakers
- D. Homework: Students are required to complete two hours of outside-of-class homework for each hour of lecture
- E. Problem-Solving Sessions
- F. Reading Assignments
- G. Multimedia Presentations
- H. Group service-learning project component
- I. Participating in Butte College Earth Day (spring) and Sustainability Day (fall) events with hands-on demonstrations, informational booths, or presentations.

#### V. METHODS OF EVALUATION

- A. Oral Presentation
- B. Projects
- C. Class participation
- D. Final Examination
- E. Short papers
- F. Class Discussion
- G. Writing Assignments a. Study Guides (tied to readings) b. Concept Papers (internet research)

#### VI. EXAMPLES OF ASSIGNMENTS

#### A. Reading Assignments

1. Read the required chapters from John Robbins' book "The Food Revolution" and Lierre Kieth's "The Vegetarian Myth" and be prepared to outline the arguments of each about the environmental and human health benefits and liabilities of animal consumption by humans.
2. Read Garrett Hardin's "Tragedy of the Commons" and be prepared (as a part of one of two groups in class) to discuss 1) the merits of 'private' versus 'public' ownership of natural resources 2) the outcome of 'short term individual interests' versus 'long term group interests' in the management of planetary resources.

#### B. Writing Assignments

1. Write a two page paper on two examples of ecological design products or processes that utilize the principles of Biomimicry.
2. Write a two page paper that explains your view on whether Sustainability Education is a viable mode of transforming culture and social institutions toward sustainable outcomes.

#### C. Out-of-Class Assignments

1. Go to [www.myfootprint.org](http://www.myfootprint.org) and study all the components that comprise the "Ecological Footprint" of each person on Earth. For the next week, track and record everything you consume from the natural world as described in on the web site. At the end of the week, calculate your own Ecological Footprint and then comment on ways you can reduce it.
2. Construct a 5 question interview on the topic of 'Abrupt Climate Change'. Interview 10 people of different ages, educational, economic, and political backgrounds on this topic. Analyze the responses of each interviewee based on Elizabeth Kubler-Ross' Stages of Grief. What do your conclusions tell you about public awareness of the dangers of anthropogenic climate change?

### VII. **RECOMMENDED MATERIALS OF INSTRUCTION**

#### Textbooks:

- A. Edward, Andres R. The Sustainability Revolution: Portrait of a Paradigm Shift. New Society Publishers, 2005.
- B. World Watch Institute, ed. State of the World 2013: Is Sustainability Still Possible?. World Watch Institute, 2013.
- C. Robertson, Margaret. Sustainability Principles and Practices. Earthscan/Routledge, 2014.
- D. McDonough, William and Michael Braungart. Cradle-to-Cradle: Remaking the Way We Make Things. North Point Press:New York, 2002.
- E. Meadows, Donella H. Thinking in Systems: A Primer. Chelsea Green, 2008.
- F. Rifkin, Jeremy. The Third Industrial Revolution: How Lateral Power is Transforming Energy, the Economy and the World. Palgrave MacMillan, 2013.
- G. McDonough, William and Michael Brungart. The Upcycle: Beyond Sustainability: Designing for Abundance. North Point Press, 2013.

#### Materials Other Than Textbooks:

- A. Photocopied or Web-Based Course Reader (journal articles, etc.)

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