Reading Course for Sustainability and Environmental Justice

Topics: Sustainable Development, Aboriginal Community Development, Environmental Health, Environmental Justice, Aboriginal Resource Use and Land Use, Cultural Landscapes,

Course Description:

Sustainability is, at its most fundamental level, about sharing the planet’s resources with the future in equitable ways. This distributive justice, when extended to present generations, recognizes that the costs of resource development and technological expansion should be born by those who reap its benefits. Choosing between environment and inequality, rather than seeing these issues as integrated, separates issues from lived realities. To drink deeply from the well of sustainable development, to realize both its possibilities as well as its barriers in society, both these issues must be viewed in tandem.

The definition of sustainability will be expanded to include land distribution, traditional ecological knowledge, social impacts and the many stories of people’s relationship to the land. These stories often tell of struggles with resource alienation, loss of subsistence economies and destruction of cultures. In looking through the eyes of the poor and marginalized we realize that humans cannot live apart from the rest of nature, which is our life-sustaining context. After all, the poor and marginalized of the world are the ones who bear the brunt of pollution, resource degradation and dislocation, whether as a result of a dam, toxic waste, lack of arable land, ozone depletion or global climate change, simply because they are more vulnerable and lack alternatives.

Course Objectives:


2. Co-author a paper with Dr. Shirley Thompson about community health and development in Aboriginal communities.

3. Do a library search for sources for literature review for dissertation research proposal.

4. Edit the poster produced for an assignment in Dr. Thompson’s class, 56.720 The Role of Information Technology in Resource Management.

5. Prepare a paper to present at the SSHRC congress or Ocean’s Management Research Network.

6. Write a proposal to receive funding.
Course Format:

The course will consist of working on projects (presentation, paper, library search, poster, funding proposal). Discussions will result from the reading material and its potential for informing the content and direction of the projects.

Evaluation:

Five assignments will constitute 100 percent of the course mark: These involve:
1) Presentation (15 percent)
2) Environmental Health Article (30 percent)
3) Funding Proposal (30 percent)
4) Poster (15 percent)
5) Literature Review (10 percent)

Reading List (we will select from these references based on interest and requirements of projects):


Brown, P., and Ferguson, F. 1995. “Making a big stink: Women’s work, women’s relationships, and toxic waste activism” in Gender Society. 9, 145-172


Canadian Center for Occupational Health and Safety: http://www.ccohs.ca


Cobb, C. and T. Halstead, and J. Rowe. 1995. “If the GDP is Up, Why is America Down: Why we need new measures of progress, why we do not have them, and how they would change the social and political landscape” in Atlantic Monthly October 1995. 12-25.

Environment Canada. Environmental Conservation Service. Indicators and


Paul, D. 2000. *We were not the Savages: a Mi’kmaq Perspective on the Collision between European and Native American Civilizations*. Halifax: Fernwood Publishing.


Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. 1996. *People to people, nation to nation.* Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada. Available at http://www.indigenous.bc.ca/rcap.htm


