

## **C212 Communicating Sustainability**

Fall 2010 (Enrollment limit: 75)

TR 2:30-3:45; WH 003 & 3 Tuesday screenings 7:15-10:15 (locations listed below)

Professor Phaedra C. Pezzullo

pezzullo@indiana.edu; <http://www.indiana.edu/~envtrhet>

Associate Instructor: Jeremy G. Gordon; [jeregord@indiana.edu](mailto:jeregord@indiana.edu)

Offices: Classroom Office Building Room C241 (Pezzullo) and C216 (Gordon)

“Communications will make sustainable development a reality.”

--Lucy Shea & Solitaire Townsend, United Nations Environmental Program, *Communicating Sustainability: How to produce effective public campaigns*. (Futerra and UNEP, 2005).

From U.S. President Barack Obama to Italian Slow Food Advocate Carlo Petrini, from Hollywood actor Leonardo DiCaprio to media mogul Oprah Winfrey, and from global retailers like Wal-Mart to the local Bloomington farmers' market, it seems as if everyone is talking about “sustainability” today. Answers to the global crisis of climate change vary from lobbying federal governments to pass international treaties to legally limit carbon emissions to flash media films on-line encouraging individuals to walk, ride bikes, or take public transportation. Amid this buzz, it can be challenging to discern what exactly anyone means when she/he uses the word “sustainability.” What is clear is that what we say about sustainability and how we represent the environmental challenges we face shape what we're going to do (or not) as individuals and collectives. Broadly, “sustainability” is the capacity to negotiate environmental, social, and economic needs and desires for current and future generations. Mostly focused on the U.S., this course provides an introductory survey of the study of sustainability primarily from a communication studies perspective, though the subject matter requires engaging transdisciplinary conversations and concepts. No prerequisite is required.

### **Course Objectives:**

This course will provide students introductory opportunities to:

- learn historical, global discourses of sustainability through pivotal events and figures;
- define key terms and frames of sustainability from a variety of political and disciplinary perspectives;
- engage related concepts of democracy, citizenship, and community;
- analyze cultural representations of unsustainable and sustainable practices and messages;
- become more reflexive about how individual and collective choices shape the ability of diverse human communities to flourish within ecological limits in ways that are environmentally just and economically viable; and
- develop critical thinking, research, and communication skills.

### **Course Assignments:**

Attendance is required.

Film Screening Position Papers (2 of 3, 4-5 pages): 20% + 20% = 40%

Midterm Exam: 30%

Final Exam: 30%

## **Required Readings:**

\* Robert Cox, *Environmental Communication and the Public Sphere*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Sage, 2009). [available at Boxcar Books: <http://www.boxcarbooks.org/> ]

\* Additional readings are available at our Oncourse site.

## **Course Requirements**

**Attendance: required.** Since you must be present to participate and to learn, attendance in class and for the three film screenings is required. Every two times one is late more than 10 minutes, it is equal to one day absent. There is no distinction between excused and unexcused absences. It is your responsibility to make sure your presence is noted. Everyone has 0-2 absences without penalty. Every absence after that is a deduction of one third a letter grade on your final grade (ex., 3 absences = A ⇒ B+ ; 4 absences = A ⇒ B ; 5 absences = A- ⇒ B- ; etc.). Screenings are required as part of attendance.

### **3 Film Screening Position Papers (2 total, 4-5 pages, 15% each): 30%**

You are expected to attend all three screenings, which are part of the Themester on Sustainability. You will need to submit a paper due the next class for two of the three screenings (your choice). Each paper should include: a one sentence thesis statement; at least three concrete examples to clarify you understand the relevant course term(s) and the film; and a conclusion that clarifies what is at stake in your argument.

**PAPER #1 (Due Tuesday, September 21):** As we will discuss in class, Aristotle introduced three primary modes of rhetorical appeal: ethos, pathos, and logos. This paper requires you to provide a rhetorical analysis of the film, *An Inconvenient Truth*, by making an argument in response to the question: how does the rhetorical appeal for a more sustainable future in *An Inconvenient Truth* draw on ethos, pathos, and/or logos?

**PAPER #2 (Due Tuesday, October 26):** As Benford and Hunt (1992: 50) argue, “social movement actors socially construct and communicate their conceptions of power.” For sustainability movements, power involves the relationship between the environment, economics, and social equity. Make an argument about how *Food, Inc.* socially constructs and communicates food as significant to power and, therefore, all three dimensions of sustainability.

**PAPER #3 (Due Tuesday, December 7):** In class, we will discuss “the circuit of culture” or what some activists call a “cradle to grave” approach to assessing sustainability. Identify which point(s) in the circuit of culture is/are the focus of the critique about the unsustainability of polyvinyl chloride (PVC) presented in *Blue Vinyl*. Then, make an argument about how the focus of the critique posed one/more rhetorical constraints for the filmmaker.

**Exams (two: Thursday, October 7 and the scheduled final date, 30% each): 60%**

Each exam will involve fill-in-the-blank, multiple choice, and two essays based on the readings, course lectures, and three film screenings (including discussions afterwards). You will receive a handout before each exam to guide your studies that will offer multiple essay options; three of those options will appear on the exam and the other two will assist you in preparing for some of the rest of the exam.

**Important notes on course requirements...**

- All paper assignments are expected to include: your name, the date, a title, numbered pages, a “reasonable” font size (i.e., 11-12 point in a style such as Times New Roman or Palatino), and have a staple or binder clip to keep all the pages together. You should cite all references used in your work other than your own in either Chicago or APA or MLA style. **IF YOU USE WEBSITES, FILMS, OR REFERENCE OTHER MEDIA, THEY MUST BE CITED PROPERLY.**
- Late work will be dropped one letter grade per day and one third for handing it in the day it is due past the first 10 minutes of class. Therefore, if you hand your paper in the day it is due past the first fifteen minutes of class an A- will become a B+; if it is handed in the next day, an A- will become a B-; etc. Days that we are not in class (including weekends) count as they do on the calendar, as one day. Technological difficulties are not excusable delays. All late materials should be handed into the teaching assistant’s mailbox with the date and time handed in marked on them.
- No matter whether you consider yourself a poor or excellent writer already, if you would like help in any phase of the writing process--from brainstorming to polishing the final draft--call Writing Tutorial Services [WTS, pronounced “wits”] at 855-6738 for an appointment. WTS is in Ballantine 206 and is open from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday and from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Friday. WTS also provides walk-in tutorials on the main level of the Undergraduate Library, with hours from 2:30 to 5:30 p.m. Sunday through Thursday and 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and at the Academic Support Centers in Briscoe, Ashton, and Forest residence halls, open from 7:00 to 11:00 p.m. Sunday through Thursday. The WTS website also offers helpful resources to students, including on-line pamphlets for common writing problems: <http://www.indiana.edu/~cwp/>
- The IU Code of Student Ethics applies and may be found at: <http://campuslife.indiana.edu/Code/index.html>
- If you miss class, know that you are expected to make up any work you miss during your absence with a peer first. If you would like to discuss your peer(s)’s notes with the professor or AI after you have read them, please feel welcome to come to our office hours. We do not distribute copies of notes. **\*\*ALL LECTURES AND COURSE MATERIALS ARE COPYRIGHTED BY PROFESSOR PEZZULLO. RECORDING OR DISTRIBUTING COPIES FOR PROFIT AND/OR TO PERSONS NOT ENROLLED IN THE COURSE IS ILLEGAL.\*\*** Do not use devices in the room in a way that disrupts the educational atmosphere.
- Feel welcome to email or to come to office hours to discuss learning challenges you face. In particular, if you have any special needs (i.e., economic constraints, illnesses, specific learning style requirements), please let us know as soon as possible so that we can try to work out a means to achieving the most optimal learning environment for you.

## C212 Schedule

### UNIT I: Establishing an Environmental Communication Perspective

**Tuesday, August 31: Unsustainability & the Inseparability of Nature from People**  
Introductions. Review syllabus and buy books.

This course is part of IUB's Themester: **sustain•ability: Thriving on a Small Planet**

**Thursday, September 2: Environmental Communication & "Green" Publics**  
Cox, "Chapter 1: Studying Environmental Communication," pp. 13-43.

**Tuesday, September 7: Cultural Discourses & U.S. Environmental Movements**  
Cox, "Chapter 2: Social/Symbolic Constructions of 'Environment,'" pp. 45-79.

**Thursday, September 9: Articulating Environmental Justice**  
Cox, "Chapter 8: Environmental Justice/Climate Justice: Voices from the Grassroots," pp. 263-295.

**Tuesday, September 14: Rhetorical Arguments, Accuracy, & An Inconvenient Truth**  
Felicity Mellor, "The Politics of Accuracy in Judging Global Warming Films,"  
*Environmental Communication: A Journal of Nature and Culture*, 3.2 (2009): 134-150.  
[Paper #1 Assignment discussed (ethos, pathos & logos); Also recommended: Al Gore,  
*The Assault on Reason* (New York: Penguin Press, 2007).]

**FILM SCREENING, Tues, Sept. 14, JH A100: *An Inconvenient Truth* (2006).** Dir. by Davis Guggenheim. Prod. by Lawrence Bender Productions and Participant Productions. 100 mins., plus a post-film panel discussion with: Beyond Coal Campaign student representative, INPIRG student representative, & Aliza Pain (CMCL Alumni, Stewardship Coordinator, IU Foundation).

### UNIT 2: Developing Discourses of "Sustainability"

**Thursday, September 16: A Brief History of "Sustainable Development"**  
Peterson, Chapter 1, "Introduction" + Chapter 2, "Sustainable Development Comes of Age," pp. 1-33.

**Tuesday, September 21: Revisiting Sustainable Justice Discourse**  
Julian Agyeman, "Ch. 2: The Sustainability Discourse and Sustainable Communities,"  
*Sustainable Communities and the Challenge of Environmental Justice*. (NYU Press, 2005), pp. 39-78. [Further recommended reading: Julian Agyeman, Robert D. Bullard, and Bob Evans, *Just Sustainabilities: Development in an Unequal World* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003); Julian Agyeman, "Communicating 'Just Sustainability,'" *Environmental Communication: A Journal of Nature and Culture* 1.2 (2007): 119-122.]  
**Paper #1 Due.**

**Thursday, September 23: Cross-Cultural Discourses of “Sustainability”**

M. Nils Peterson, Markus J. Peterson and Tarla Rai Peterson, “Moving Toward Sustainability: Integrating Social Practice and Material Process,” in Ronald Sandler and Phaedra C. Pezzullo, eds., *Environmental Justice and Environmentalism: The Social Justice Challenge to the Environmental Movement*. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2007), 189-222.

**Tuesday, September 28: Ecosystem Services, Ecological Footprints, & Sustainability**

Heather L. Reynolds, “Overview,” in Heather L. Reynolds, Eduardo Brondizio, and Jennifer Meta Robinson (Eds.), *Teaching Environmental Literacy: Across Campus and Across the Curriculum*, pp. 1-27. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009).  
In class screening: Annie Leonard (2009). *The Story of Stuff*. Free Range Studios. Accessed December 1, 2009. Available at: <http://www.storyofstuff.com/>. 20 mins.  
[see also: Annie Leonard (2010). *The Story of Cosmetics*. Annie Leonard, Free Range Studios, and The Campaign for Safe Cosmetics. Available at: <http://storyofstuff.org/cosmetics/>. 8:18 mins.]

**Thursday, September 30: Communicating Sustainability through Art**

\*\*REQUIRED TOUR @ the IU Art Museum. “Sustainability Tour.” 2:30-3:30pm.  
SEE ONCOURSE HANDOUT ON MUSEUM RULES & TOUR GROUPS

**Tuesday, October 5: Midterm Review**. No new readings.

**Thursday, October 7: MIDTERM EXAM**

**UNIT III: Communicating Sustainability in Contemporary Contexts**

**Tuesday, October 12: A Multi-Centered and Cross-Cultural Sense of “Home”**

David W. Orr, “Ch. 21: A World That Takes Its Environment Seriously,” *Earth in Mind: On Education, Environment, and the Human Prospect* (Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 1994), 154-171.

**Thursday, October 14: “Local Economy” as Simple Message/Complicated Idea**

Wendell Berry, “The Idea of a Local Economy,” *Orion Magazine* (2002, Winter).  
Viewed: August 8, 2010. Available at:  
<http://www.localenergy.org/pdfs/Document%20Library/Berry%20The%20Idea%20of%200a%20Local%20Economy.doc>. [Also recommended: Van Jones, *The Green Color Economy: How One Solution Can Fix Our Two Biggest Problems* (New York: HarperOne, 2008)]

**Tuesday, October 19: Communicating Power & the Food Industry’s Hidden Abode**

Robert D. Benford and Scott A. Hunt, “Dramaturgy and Social Movements: The Social Construction and Communication of Power,” *Sociological Inquiry*, 62.1 (1992, February): 36-55. [Paper #2 Assignment discussed]

**FILM SCREENING: Tues, Oct. 19, JH A100: *Food, Inc.*** (2008). Dir. by Robert Kenner. Prod. by Participant Media and River Road Entertainment. 94 minutes. Plus, a panel discussion afterwards: Marti Crouch (former IU Biology Professor, expert witness and researcher of bioengineering), Aaron Harmon (CMCL Graduate Student, intern at Mother Hubbard's Cupboard), Vanessa Caruso (Alumni, former Sustainability Food Intern, & Stranger's Hill Organic Farm worker), and Steve Stroup (Bloomingfoods).

**Thursday, October 21: Framing "Green" Entertainment and News**  
Cox, "Chapter 5: Media and the Environment Online," 151-187.

**Tuesday, October 26: "Viral" Communication & Humor**  
Dylan Wolfe, "The video rhizome: Taking technology seriously in The Meatrix," *Environmental Communication: A Journal of Nature and Culture*, 3.3 (2009), 317-334. In class screening: *The Meatrix I and II: Revolting*. (2003; 2006). Sustainable Table and Free Range Studies (prod.). Participant Productions. Accessed: December 1, 2009. Available at: <http://www.themeatrix.com/>. (each run approx. 5 mins.) **Paper #2 Due.**

**Thursday, October 28: Green Marketing**  
Cox, "Chapter 10: Green Marketing and Corporate Campaigns," 330-364.

**Tuesday, November 2: Staying on Message**  
Little, A. G. January 31 2007. "And Now, a Word From Our Detractor: GOP strategist Frank Luntz argues enviros are failing -- and they're mean to boot." *Grist: Magazine: Environmental News and Commentary*. Available at: <http://www.grist.org/news/maindish/2007/01/31/luntz/index.html>.  
\*\*Be sure to read Luntz's 2003 memo, "The Environment: A Cleaner, Safer, Healthier America," which is hyperlinked as a PDF in the first interview question.\*\*

**Thursday, November 4: Risk Communication & the Trap of Chicken Little**  
Cox, "Chapter 6: Risk Communication: Environmental Dangers and the Public," 188-222.

**Tuesday, November 9: The Trope of Uncertainty & The Precautionary Principle**  
Cox, "Chapter 9: Science Communication and Environmental Controversies," 298-329.

**Thursday, November 11: Democratic Right to Know and to Participate**  
Cox, "Chapter 3: Public Participation in Environmental Decisions," 82-117.

**Tuesday, November 16: No class. Professor at National Communication Association Convention.** If you have withdraw (and I know you will), attend Barry Lopez's lecture: <http://themester.indiana.edu/calendar.shtml>

**Thursday, November 18: Environmental Advocacy**  
Cox, "Chapter 7: Environmental Advocacy Campaigns," 224-261.

**Tuesday, November 23: *Catch up day—no additional readings.***

**Thursday, November 25: Thanksgiving Break. No class.**

**Tuesday, November 30: Boycotting for Sustainability**

Pezzullo, Phaedra C. "Contextualizing Boycotts and Buycotts: The Impure Politics of Consumer-Based Advocacy in an Age of Global Ecological Crises." *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, forthcoming.

**FILM SCREENING, Tues., Nov. 30, \*\*EP 220 @ 8pm\*\*:** *Blue Vinyl* (2002). Dir. by Judith Helfand and Daniel B. Gold. Bullfrog Films. 97 mins. Plus: a panel discussion on green buildings with: Jacqui Bauer (City of Bloomington Sustainability Director), McKenzie Beverage (CMCL Alumni & SPEA Graduate Student, IU Energy Challenge Coordinator and former intern of the Southface Energy Institute), and Bill Brown (Indiana University-Bloomington's Director of Sustainability). **\*NOTE TIME/PLACE\***

**Thursday, December 2: Radical Rubber Ducks**

Center for Health, Environment, and Justice (CHEJ) PVC-free schools fact-sheets, "PVC, the Poison Plastic – Unhealthy for Our Nation's Children and Schools," "Top Ten Reasons Your School Should Go PVC-Free," "PVC & Environmental Justice," Available at: <http://www.chej.org/BESAFE/pvc/about.htm>.

In class screening: *Sam Suds and the Case of PVC, the Poison Plastic*. Free Range Studios (prod.). Participant Productions. Accessed: May 17, 2010. Available at: <http://www.freerangestudios.com/podcast/itunes.xml>.

**Tuesday, December 7: The Role of Storytelling in Global Sustainability Campaigns**

United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP), *Communicating Sustainability: How to produce effective public campaigns*. "Bringing the story to life (international case studies)," pp. 24-57. (Lucy Shea, Futerra, and Solange Montillaud-Joyel, UNEP, 2005).

**Paper #3 Due.** (Note: This is "Free Week"; if you do not want to have a paper due during this time, write the first two Film Screening Position Papers & opt out of this one.)

**Thursday, December 9: Evaluations and Review**

No Readings.

**FINAL EXAM: 2:45-4:45 p.m., Thurs., December 16**