I. Course description:

This course explores connections between human rights and environmental sustainability. Legal and scholarly approaches linking human rights and sustainability are emerging, due to the important resource dimensions of economic and social rights and the human dimensions of sustainability. The right to food, housing, and a healthy environment are all areas where the discourses and practices of both human rights and sustainability are invoked to address shortcomings in current practices.

Yet human rights and environmental concerns are not always in harmony. Conservation efforts have at times created obstacles for local communities in terms of access to land and livelihoods. At the same time, the world’s poor and indigenous populations often bear the costs of environmental degradation, pollution, and climate change that result from patterns of production and consumption from which they do not personally gain. The priorities of environmental justice movements, at times referred to as “environmentalism of the poor,” may differ from those of mainstream environmentalists. Furthermore, the emphasis within human rights law and practice on individual rights exists in tension with the collective and third-party impacts of sustainability challenges, while the context-specific, place-based nature of most environmental problems (and the populations that endure them) sits uneasily beside universal human rights claims.

This course addresses these dilemmas through theoretical and empirical readings on human rights and sustainability; grassroots accounts of struggles over environment-related human rights; and selections from literature and film that illustrate the environmental justice issues at stake. It also explores the routes by which rights can be realized beyond claims-making, emphasizing the importance of inclusive processes in the design and implementation of environmental policy.

The course is divided into several sections, including an introduction to the concepts of human rights and sustainability, an exploration of how these concepts are operationalized in the real
world, and a deeper examination of three substantive areas in which these ideas intersect and sometimes clash. The first substantive module will examine “urban ecology and human rights” including emerging claims for a “right to the city” and the sometimes conflicting mandates urbanization can create for states attempting to ensure adequate housing (including water and sanitation) while simultaneously protecting land and water resources.

The second substantive module will consider “the human right to food” and the related sustainability implications of the current global food system. The shift in the last 100 or so years from primarily rural agrarian societies to fossil fuel-based, urban industrial societies (and increasingly industrialized farming techniques) has created a number of challenges to both food security and environmental protection. The third substantive module investigates more deeply the consequences of industrialization processes for human rights, in particular, extractive industries such as oil and mining, and their implications for accelerated global climate change, community displacement, indigenous rights, and human health.

The objectives of the course are:

1. To clarify the official and unofficial meanings of “human rights” and “sustainability”

2. To acquaint students with theories and methodologies used to study and interrogate human rights and sustainability, in particular as they relate to one another

3. To demonstrate various ways that nations, communities, and advocates have attempted to promote human rights vis-à-vis sustainability challenges

4. To elucidate the structural characteristics of sustainability challenges, including the ways these challenges are shaped by dominant processes of production and consumption

5. To evaluate the role of power in the alleviation and/or perpetuation of environmental injustices, including the way it shapes struggles over solutions

6. To examine critically the unequal distribution of environmental injustices among poorer societies and vulnerable groups

7. To further student research on topics of human rights and sustainability

8. To foster a sense of political responsibility in regard to human rights and sustainability challenges, and ideas regarding how just and sustainable alternatives may be realized

Student learning outcomes: Students who have taken this course will have a theoretical and empirical basis for research in the fields of international development, human rights, and human dimensions of sustainability. It can serve as a foundation for future work in internationally-focused governmental agencies, non-governmental organizations, or policy institutes.
II. Course requirements and grading:

Students must:
   a) Attend all class meetings and participate in discussions
   b) Do all required readings prior to the class for which they are assigned
   c) Complete discussion posts outlining critical reactions to the assigned texts
   d) Lead class in a review and discussion once during the semester
   e) Complete 2 short (5-7 page) papers on substantive themes
   f) Submit an annotated bibliography of sources to be used for the final paper
   g) Complete a 18-22 page final paper with final bibliography (not annotated)

a) Both attendance and participation are vital to the success of the seminar and to your grade and are particularly important given the few number of class meetings during the semester. Students who miss more than one class will face penalties for their final grade.

b) This is a reading-intensive seminar; we will cover a lot of material (up to 175 pps/wk). All seminar participants are expected each week to allot the time required for reading assigned materials thoughtfully and thoroughly, and watching films, prior to class. This will provide the basis for your active participation in our in-class discussions. I strongly recommend, as a matter of good scholarly practice, to take extensive notes on all your assignments, outlining the main ideas and clarifying any unfamiliar terms or concepts.

c) Discussion posts of 500-800 words, outlining your critical reflections on the assigned texts, are required. A separate set of guidelines will be distributed to assist in completing these posts.

d) Student-led discussion: students will lead class discussion once during the semester. Sign-up will take place during the 1st session. If you join class after this, it is your responsibility to contact me in order to sign up. You will select one reading (not more than 25 pages) or video (not more than 25 minutes) for your peers to consider in addition to the week’s assigned materials and transmit this material electronically one week prior to your presentation. Your task as discussion leader will be to raise important questions and issues, based on the posts and critical reflections of all students. You should attempt to find common themes, points of divergence or confusion, and interesting observations that can guide the conversation in fruitful directions. You should not regurgitate the readings, as everyone will be expected to have done them prior to class. You are encouraged to link the week’s themes to current news.

e) There will be two short papers (5-7 pages) that explore and critique the arguments made in the readings from the first two substantive sections of the course:
   1) Urban ecology and human rights - due Week 9
   2) The human right to food - due Week 12

You can utilize (and cite) comments from your own weekly posts for these short papers, though I would like to see you synthesize, analyze, and critique the materials in a scholarly manner, and from the perspective of each topical area as a whole. I will provide guiding questions for these papers prior to their due date.
f) Your annotated bibliography is due two weeks before your final paper. It should consist of a brief (3-6 sentence) statement regarding the type of paper you will do (proposal, research paper, or theory paper) and its topic/questions, followed by a minimum of 10 scholarly sources that you intend to utilize, explaining in 2-3 sentences how each source will be useful for your topic. Please submit in hard copy in class on the due date. A PowerPoint presentation will be posted on Canvas to guide you in constructing this bibliography.

g) Your final paper should be approximately 18-22 pages and should link your research interests with theoretical approaches to - and empirical realities of - human rights and sustainability. You have three options in choosing the format of this paper:
   1) a dissertation (Ph.D.) or research grant (M.S. or Ph.D.) proposal
   2) an original research paper on a topic of human rights and sustainability (with intent to publish)
   3) a theoretical examination of a real-world human rights and sustainability issue (comparing/contrasting at least two theoretical perspectives), with a discussion of possible methodologies for testing these theoretical approaches

Your choice of format should depend on your year and progress toward degree, as well as on your professional goals. Regardless of your choice, I urge you to think in terms of praxis, defined as:
   “the process by which a theory or lesson becomes part of lived experience. Rather than a lesson being simply absorbed at the intellectual level in a classroom, ideas are tested and experienced in the real world, followed by an opportunity for reflective contemplation. In this way, abstract concepts are connected with lived reality.”

Thus, all papers should include a theoretical framework, a review of relevant literature, and a discussion of methodologies for understanding real problems posed by the issue. You are required to meet with me to discuss your paper at least once before you write it.

Important: I expect graduate students to have mastered the basics of writing papers, using a standard style manual and proofreading their work. Please take the time to present professional quality work. Get to know one of the social science style manuals – e.g., A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations (Kate L. Turabian), A Manual of Style (University of Chicago; see examples here: http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html → Author-Date Tab), or the APA Manual – and pay particular attention to the pages on bibliographic references. You can lose up to a full grade for sloppiness, noncompliance or inconsistency with an established style, or poor proofreading.

Summary of assignment due dates (discussion posts, short papers, bibliography, final paper):

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<td>Critical reflection posts</td>
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Please note that late work will not be accepted without a documented and dire reason.

III. Required Texts:

The following texts will be available online through ASU library (accessible via Canvas):


IV. Supplementary materials

A number of articles for this course will be handed out in class or posted to Canvas.

V. Miscellaneous course information:

*Obvious courtesies:*
- Arrive on time
- Turn off your cell phone
- Let me know in advance if you must leave early

*Incompletes:* A mark of ‘I’ (incomplete) is given by the instructor only when a student who is otherwise doing acceptable work is unable to complete a course because of illness or other conditions beyond the student’s control. You are required to arrange with the instructor for the completion of the course requirements. The arrangement is recorded on the [Request for Grade of Incomplete form](http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/ssm/ssm203-09.html). Do not re-register or pay fees to complete the course. The completion date is determined by the instructor but may not exceed one calendar year from the date the mark of “I” is recorded. When you complete the course, the instructor must submit an online grade change request. An "I" will be automatically changed to a failing grade "E" (0.00 for purposes of evaluating graduation requirements) if not completed within one calendar year. Official University policy can be found at: [http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/ssm/ssm203-09.html](http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/ssm/ssm203-09.html).
Academic integrity: Academic honesty is expected of all students in all examinations, papers, laboratory work, academic transactions and records. The possible sanctions include, but are not limited to, appropriate grade penalties, course failure (indicated on the transcript as a grade of E), course failure due to academic dishonesty (indicated on the transcript as a grade of XE), loss of registration privileges, disqualification and dismissal, not to mention lifelong shame and regret. For more information, see http://provost.asu.edu/academicintegrity/.

Disability Services: ASU’s Disability Resource Center (DRC) is the entity that provides services to students with disabilities. If you desire accommodation for this course, contact DRC at http://www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/ed/drc to establish your eligibility and make sure they can provide you with the services you will need for this course. Students with disabilities must meet the same standards, deadlines, etc. as any other student in the course. All information regarding disability is confidential.

COURSE OUTLINE

WEEK 1: August 22
Overview and Introduction to the Course

WEEK 2: August 29
What are Human Rights? [98 pps.]
Readings:
- Haglund, LaDawn and Robin Stryker. 2015. “Introduction: Making sense of the multiple and complex pathways by which human rights are realized.” In Haglund and Stryker (eds.) Closing the Rights Gap: From Human Rights to Social Transformation. UC Press. [Read pps. 1-6 - pay special attention to the social transformation model; skim pps. 7-22]

UN Activities: (Familiarize yourself with these activities and skim the reports, but do not read them word for word.)

Films: (Watch before class - two very short, very basic introductions to human rights):
1. www.humanrights.com/#/what-are-human-rights
2. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kbul3hxYGNU&list=PLCAA1D8F69131A393&index=3&feature=plpp_video

Questions to consider this week:
- How are human rights defined?
- Where did human rights come from?
• What are the key founding human rights instruments and institutions?
• What are the links between human rights and development?
• How can human “rights realization” be assessed?

WEEK 3: September 5
What is sustainability?

Readings:

UN Activities: (Familiarize yourself with these activities and skim the reports, but do not read them word for word.)
- 1987 - Our Common Future (“The Brundtland Report”) World Commission on Environment and Development. OVERVIEW ONLY (pp. 18-38) [the full report is there in case you are interested, but no need to print or bring to class]
- 1998 - Kyoto protocol (“an international agreement linked to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change“): http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/convkp/kpeng.pdf
- Rio+20 (Earth Summit follow up: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/rio20.html); official conclusions (“The Future We Want”) and conclusions of the “People’s Summit” (posted on Canvas - read the full "People's Summit" document - it's relatively short.)

Films:
- (Watch before class) The Story of Stuff: http://storyofstuff.org/movies/story-of-stuff/

Questions to consider this week:
• How is “sustainability” defined?
• What are the historical origins of ecological crises?
• What are some “root metaphors” that guide our thinking about the relationship between humans and the planet?
• How have key international environmental agreements (Rio summit, Kyoto protocol, The Brundtland Report, etc.) evolved?
• How is “development” explained and articulated in these different texts?
WEEK 4: September 12
Human Rights and Sustainability: Making the Linkages
Readings:

Film:
- (In Class) *The Carbon Rush* (52/84 min) [West HC79.P55 C27 2012 DVD]

Short informational articles:

Questions to consider this week:
- How are “economic rationality” and “ecological rationality” similar or different?
- What are the core rationalities and/or principles that characterize “environmental human rights,” “Eco-Justice,” and “Just Sustainabilities”
- Do efforts to promote “carbon markets” support or undermine human rights and sustainability? Why?

WEEKS 5-6: Consumption, production, and the role of capitalism
September 19: Economic rationality and global expansion
Readings:

Short news article:

Questions to consider this week:
- How do the following concepts help illuminate our current socio-ecological situation: ecological rift, treadmill of accumulation, Jevon’s Paradox, and paperless office paradox?
- How does capitalist accumulation operate? In particular, how is surplus value created and distributed, and what happens in the “black box” of production? What is considered “valuable” in capitalism?
• What are “externalities” and how do they come to be?
• How do capitalist social relations (of production and consumption) affect injustice? What differential impact do these social relations have on the working class, women, and people of color?
• What role does “commodification” play in creating social and ecological vulnerability? How does globalization exacerbate these vulnerabilities?
• What solutions are put forward by champions of capitalism as a way through ecological crises? Why does Foster et al. find these solutions misguided?
• What role do hegemony and structural power play in the reproduction of unsustainable practices?

September 26: Alternative Logics
Readings:

Website:
• The Happy Planet Index: http://www.happyplanetindex.org/

Film:
• (Watch before class) Wendell Berry: “Now We're Hearing from the World” (on the BP Gulf oil spill) - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=My2WJ5nZbAw [4min 50sec]

Questions to consider this week:
• What are some alternatives to the capitalist mode of production?
• What are public goods and why are they crucial to human rights and sustainability?
• What role do environmental human rights play in open space for alternatives?

WEEKS 7-8: CASE STUDY 1 - Urban ecology and human rights
October 3 – Ecology of Cities
Readings:
• BOOK: Brenner, Marcuse and Mayer (eds.) Cities for People, Not for Profit. Read chapters 1, 3, 5, 8, 13, 15-16; You will read one additional chapter each (two students will be assigned per chapter), and share your observations on that case, situated in the larger theoretical context of the book, with the rest of the class:
News article:

UN Activities: (Familiarize yourself with these activities, and their protagonists)
- Habitat III: https://www.habitat3.org/the-new-urban-agenda/about
- Draft New Urban Agenda: https://www.habitat3.org/draft_new_urban_agenda
- Special Rapporteur on the right to housing: http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Housing/Pages/HousingIndex.aspx

Websites of interest:
- “General Motors’ Destruction of California Transit Systems” http://moderntransit.org/ctc/ctc06.html
- Also check out this website: http://www.humanrightscity.com

Questions to consider this week:
- What is the meaning and utility of the following concepts: urban ecology, ecological footprint, and urban metabolism?
- How does global trade affect ecological footprints?
- What is the difference between “strong sustainability” and “weak sustainability”?
- What instruments and agencies promote basic human rights – housing, water, and sanitation – in urban areas, and how?
- What is the difference between a “Right to the City” and these specific rights? How can a “Right to the City” framing change how urban policy is evaluated?

October 10 – Livable Cities
Readings:
- Evans, Peter. 2002. Livable Cities: Urban Struggles for Livelihood and Sustainability. University of California Press. [Available online through ASU library] Please read Chapters 1 & 8, as well as the following one chapter each, and be prepared to share your observations on that case with the rest of the class:
  - Chapter 6: São Paulo, Brazil – Group A
  - Chapter 7: Mexico City – Group B

Film:

Questions to consider this week:
- Who are so-called “agents of livability”? What does it mean to say these agents operate within an “ecology of actors”?
In what ways might human rights and environmental sustainability goals complement and/or contradict each other in urban policy?

What are the key challenges to sustainable human rights realization in cities? What are some possible strategies for overcoming these challenges?

**WEEK 9: October 17**

No readings or discussion posts are due this week. Review will take place in class. Please start working on your annotated bibliographies for your final paper.

**WEEKS 10-11: CASE STUDY 2 - Sustainable agriculture and the human right to food**

**October 24 – Food Production**

**Assignment:**
- **First short paper is due Monday, October 21**

**Readings:**
- BOOK: Alkon and Agyeman, *Cultivating food justice*. Everyone reads chapters 1 and 14. You will read **one additional chapter each** (two students will be assigned per chapter, Chs. 2-4 & 6), summarize the main ideas, and share observations about food production and justice with the class.

**UN Activities:**

**News:**
- Blog about beef: [https://blog.ucusa.org/marcia-delounge/while-bbq-season-sizzles-a-case-for-healthy-farms-and-better-beef](https://blog.ucusa.org/marcia-delounge/while-bbq-season-sizzles-a-case-for-healthy-farms-and-better-beef)

**Film:**
- (In Class) “The Power of Community: How Cuba Survived Peak Oil”

**Questions to consider this week:**
- What is the meaning and utility of the following concepts: *socio-ecological metabolism, metabolic rift,* and *agrarian citizenship*?
- Historical perspectives:
  - What was the impact of *colonialism* on agriculture and farming?
  - What was the “*Green Revolution*” and how did it affect production processes and ecological and human health?
  - What was the global impact of *neoliberal economic policies* on agriculture/farming?
- What causes hunger and malnutrition in the world today?
- What is the “*human right to food*,” and what *instruments* are designed to promote it? How?
• What is “food security”? What threats to food security are posed by the global food system?

October 31 – Food Consumption – HAPPY HALLOWEEN!

Readings:
• BOOK: Alkon and Agyeman, Cultivating food justice. Everyone reads chapters 5-6, 12, and 15. You will read one additional chapter each (two students will be assigned per chapter, Chs. 7-9 & 11), summarize the main ideas, and share observations on consumption and food justice with the class.

UN Activities:
• Familiarize yourself with the FAO (http://www.fao.org/righttofood/en/), in particular, their “Voluntary Guidelines to support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security.” (http://www.fao.org/3/a-y7937e.pdf)
• Familiarize yourself with the Special Rapporteur on the right to food: http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Food/Pages/HilalElver.aspx; previous rapporteur: http://www.srfood.org/

Website of interest:
• https://whyhunger.org/

Questions to consider this week:
• What is food justice?
• How promising are the different possible alternatives to the current global food system? (e.g. Via Campesina, food sovereignty model, food justice movements, traditional and/or contemporary localism)

WEEKS 12-13: CASE STUDY 3 - Industrialization, extractive industry, and human rights

November 7

Assignment:
• Second short paper due Thursday, November 7

Readings:

UN Activities:
• United Nation Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)
News:
- https://rightsaction.org/hudbay-minerals-lawsuits-media/

Film:

Questions to consider this week:
- What are some negative impacts of mining, petroleum dependency, and extractive industry on the environment? In what ways do these outcomes violate indigenous human rights?
- What human rights instruments are designed to prevent, mitigate, or remedy industry-led violations (Ruggie Framework, UNDRIPS), and how they are used for this purpose?
- Why do violations of indigenous rights continue to occur?

November 14
Readings:

UN Activities:
- Universal Declaration on the Rights of Mother Earth, drafted at the World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth: http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=18931

MEET 1:1 WITH PROF regarding your final papers (sign-up will occur the week before)

Questions to consider this week:
- What are some alternative visions regarding our relationship with the earth put forward by indigenous communities?
• What are possible strategies to promote and/or protect indigenous rights and the earth vis-à-vis industry?

WEEK 14-15: SOLUTIONS
November 21
Assignment:
• Annotated bibliography for final paper due in class in hard copy Nov. 21

Readings:
  • One more reading TBD

Questions to consider:
• What are the root causes of the unsustainable pathways humanity has followed?
• What specific actions could be taken to reverse climate change, repair environmental degradation, build sustainable communities, and protect, respect, and fulfill environmental human rights?

November 28 (Thanksgiving – No Class)

WEEK 16: SEMESTER WRAP
December 5: Wrap up and LAST DAY OF CLASS (Thursday)
  • In-class presentations on student paper topics

Questions to consider as you prepare to discuss your paper topic in class (using the “social transformation model” of Haglund and Stryker):
• How have norms (of human rights) and ideas (of sustainability) evolved and been adopted as beliefs or values (or not) in your topical area? What alternative norms or ideas might address violations of human rights and/or environmental problems in your topical area?
• How and why have existing beliefs and perceptions led to actions that support or undermine human rights and sustainability in your topical area? How might actions in support of human rights or environmental protection be fostered or forced?
• What would be necessary for those actions to really make a difference; in other words, when would they represent truly meaningful social transformation?
• Which actors, operating within existing structures and power relations, use what kinds of mechanisms (e.g., policies, institutions, strategies) to promote or restrict change?

FINAL PAPER DUE Thursday, December 12 at NOON