ADVANCED TOPICS: THE ECONOMICS OF SUSTAINABILITY

Goals:
The advanced topics course has a dual purpose: to engage you in the economic analysis of a particular topic at a level that requires intermediate theory; and to prepare you for the independent research and analysis required in the senior seminar. We therefore have two goal categories for the course:

Content Goals:
- To introduce you to some of the challenges and opportunities related to natural resources, energy, and the environment;
- To explore different concepts of sustainability in relation to each other and to conventional economic concepts of welfare, such as economic efficiency;
- To evaluate attempts measure sustainability;
- To apply the concepts you learn in the course to carefully analyze a policy or set of policies of your choosing.

Methodological Goals:
- To help you learn how to pull useful information out of technical, primary literature readings;
- To help you learn to identify an economic question;
- To help you learn to use library resources and primary literature to begin answering an economic question.

Course Format:
The course will follow a seminar format, so discussion in large and small groups will predominate. Sometimes discussions will be led by professors, but more often it will be led by small groups of students. Occasionally some lecture will be added to the mix.

We expect you to be actively involved in class discussions. This course will not go well unless you have adequately prepared for each class period!

Course Materials:
Course readings are drawn almost exclusively from primary sources, meaning journal articles and book (though rarely textbook) chapters. We will also be using WISE as a web-based course management tool. All of the course readings and assignments will be disseminated through the course WISE site.

Course Requirements and Grading:
Course assignments will include the following:
- Article abstracts: For each article we ask you to read, you will also be expected to fill out and submit electronically on WISE (before class on the day for which the reading is assigned) an article abstract form (abstract form is available on WISE site).
• **Discussion questions:** For each class period, you will be expected to post at least one discussion question on the Wise site by 8:00 pm on the night before class.

• **Leading discussion:** In pairs, you will be asked to lead discussion on at least one class day during the semester. Discussion leaders are responsible to read all blog postings prior to class and determine a strategy for discussing the assigned papers. Discussion leaders may choose which questions to address and in which order. It is not necessary for the leaders to address all of the proposed questions in class, and leaders may supplement or substitute with their own questions.

• **Participating in discussion:** We expect you to participate in class discussions, but speaking is not the only valuable way to participate in a discussion. Valuable contributions include (but are not limited to): active listening (body language, note taking, focused attention); responding thoughtfully to questions posed by discussion leaders and to the comments of other students; asking questions to help clarify what another student’s comments or to raise additional interesting and relevant issues; and posting thoughtful questions/responses to the blog before and/or after the classroom discussion.

We hope the discussions will give rise to vigorous debate, but it is absolutely essential that we create an inclusive atmosphere! Please be careful to communicate respect for the contributions of others, even when you are disagreeing. And be careful to avoid dominating the discussion, leave plenty of space for less assertive classmates to fill.

• **A research paper:** More detail in a separate assignment description.

• **A thesis prospectus:** More detail in separate assignment description.

For overall grading, these components will contribute the following amounts:

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<th>Course Component</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Posted Discussion Questions</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abstracts</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participating in &amp; Leading Discussion</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Paper</td>
<td>30</td>
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<td>Thesis Prospectus</td>
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**Academic Accommodation:**
Any student eligible for and desiring academic accommodation due to a disability should provide documentation to Disability Services located in the Bishop Wellness Center within the first two weeks of the semester.

Students with disabilities should check in with the Disability Services Office in Bishop Wellness Center as early as possible.

Students requesting accommodations due to a qualified disability must register with the Disability Office in Bishop Wellness Center.
Tentative Topics and Reading list: (~ 9 weeks)

I. Are there important limits to economic growth? Are we close to those limits?


What is sustainability? Are we living sustainably?

II. Neoclassical perspective (“weak” sustainability):


III. Ecological perspective (“strong” sustainability):

Economics 17 (1996) 147-156.


IV: Sustainability Policy: How do we move toward sustainability?


Contact Info:
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Email – nboyce@willamette.edu
My Class Hours – MWF 9:10-10:10, 10:20-11:20
TTH 12:50-2:20, 2:30 – 4:00
Office Hours – MWF 2:00-3:00pm & TTH 10 – 11am. You are also welcome to drop by my office at other times. However, I anticipate having a busy schedule this semester, so, I might be kind of hard to find. If you would like to see me outside of office hours, your best bet will probably be to send me an email to make an appointment.
Office Phone – x6916
Home Phone – (503) 246-0718. Please do not call me at home after 8 pm (or you may wake Aidan and Max up, and believe me, nobody wants that).

Don Negri:
Email – dnegri@willamette.edu
My Class Hours – MWF 8-9:00 & 12:40-1:40
TuTh 12:50 to 4:00
Office Hours – Monday & Wednesday 2:00 to 3:30, Thursday 10:30 to 11:30 and by appointment
Office Phone – X6326
Home Phone – (503) 364-3441