

YORK UNIVERSITY
Faculty of Education
Course ED 3700 Outline (Summer Term 2013)

Course Topic: Educating for a Sustainable Future: A Multidisciplinary Approach

Course Director: Dr. Don Dippo

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Office: 274 Winters College (office hours by appointment)

Time and Location: - McLaughlin 050A – Monday, Wednesday and Thursday 1:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

July 3, 4, 8, 10, 11, 15, 17, 18, 22

Course Description

Education has been identified by leaders at all levels as a key tool in the move towards a more sustainable future. In order to solidify and give substance to this effort the UN has declared 2005 to 2014 as the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. Amongst other suggestions, education for sustainable development (ESD) calls for the reorientation of education at all levels. However, few models of ESD have been created or implemented at any level. To complicate matters, few processes for reorienting education to address sustainability exist to date. This course will help students gain background knowledge related to the complex concept of sustainability and issues related to its major components. The course will also deal with issues central to the concept of sustainability (e.g., globalization, development, poverty, violence, gender relations, and climate change). In addition the course will also focus on developing education-based skills, values, perspectives and knowledge to address these urgent issues.

This course provides an introduction to the role that education plays in creating a more sustainable future for all. The course aims to explain the emergence of the concept of global sustainability, global citizenship, and the anticipated contributions of education at various levels (e.g. elementary, secondary, postsecondary, adult education), various global scales (e.g. bioregional, national, international) and in various contexts (e.g. classroom, nature, intercultural). It begins with a critical and historical analysis of sustainable education, and then shifts to an examination of various different approaches to thinking about and practicing sustainable education. The course ends with the contemplation of questions concerned with 'educating for a sustainable future.' Students will have an opportunity to consider ways of bringing these issues into a school curriculum context, both through in-class group work and in their research topic. Finally, the course will provide students with opportunities to become skilled in the practice of teaching and learning outside.

Course Management – Teaching and Learning Philosophy

In this course, all of us (instructor and students) are teachers and learners, and to be involved in the class discussions requires an active engagement with course readings, lectures, discussions, and the on-going assignments. These activities act as touchstones for students to teach the instructor and each other about their understanding of the material and their questions. The instructor is responsible for preparing lectures and exercises that are meant to facilitate points of entry into these issues within a safe and challenging learning environment. Students are expected to do all readings, attend classes, engage appropriate practices/methods for assignments, think critically, and allow inspiration and imagination to infuse individual research and collective discussion.

Purpose & Objectives of the Course:

The purpose of this course is to encourage students to think about how issues of environmental sustainability can be incorporated in their pedagogical practice. There are four specific objectives:

- 1) To survey concepts of sustainability in relation to education, while recognizing that this survey is by no means comprehensive;
- 2) For students to pick one environmental issue and do a theoretical analysis of how one can pedagogically address the issue.
- 3) To be prepared to enter into dialogues and share knowledge with the instructor and other students in the class, such that different perspectives and approaches to sustainable education can provide insight to our future work.
- 4) To work outside in groups and attempt to formulate ways of integrating sustainability education into various outdoor learning environments (e.g. elementary, secondary, informal nature education).

Organization of Course:

The course is largely designed in a seminar format that requires each student lead two discussions of the weekly readings. The course director will supplement these seminar discussions with some lectures over the term that provide context for upcoming

readings, or deepen issues that have been presented with specific case studies. Multi-media may also be used in some classes. The class will also include presentations of sample lessons that students have developed collaboratively that make use of outdoor learning environments.

Evaluation:

The grades for the course will be based on the following percentages for each activity:

Assignment	Percentage and Due Date
Lead Small Group discussions of Readings	20% (students self-organize dates on which to lead)
Group Lesson Plan Project/Presentation	30% (groups will start presenting in week 2)
Research Paper Project: (2 components)	40% (2 components)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Paper/Unit Plan Proposal • Research Paper/Unit Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10% due class 4 • 30% due class 9
Self-Evaluation (in-class, small/large group; GLPP/P)	10% on-going

Small Group Discussions of Readings: (20%) – Each student will have one opportunity to lead the weekly small group discussions during class. Students can use the following questions as a guide for what is expected:

- Briefly outline what one of the readings is about (what is the main point of the reading?) and identify common theme(s) in the reading and their importance. Consider ways to incorporate aspects of the other weekly readings, previous discussions, and personal experiences that seem relevant to and expand your discussion.
- Is there a line or quote that resonates with you? What is it and why?
- Are there perspectives, approaches, questions left out of this reading which are important for understanding the topic?
- How has this article caused you to think about your role as a teacher?
- Connect one or more of the themes to an educational issue or experience that resonates with you (i.e., Where/when did the learning happen for you?) and/or connect the reading(s) to a current media event (How does the reading help to inform the media event and how does the media event inform the reading?).
- Identify one burning question the reading raises for you (e.g., What are the most important questions remaining unanswered?)

Students leading the discussion are expected to:

- Prepare a brief outline (using above guideline) of their response to the reading along with their discussion questions (1-2 page maximum double spaced). **(Due: the week when the discussion is lead)**

Students not leading the discussion for the week are expected to:

- Prepare by doing readings and sketching out responses to the above questions.

Research Paper/Unit Plan Proposal 10% (Due: Class 4)

This assignment entails preparing a 2-3 page proposal for the final research paper/unit plan. The proposal should include an introduction to the topic/question and a bibliography.

Research Paper/Unit Plan 30% (Due: Class 9)

The critically researched paper is to be approximately 6-7 pages in length. In this paper, students will do a critical analysis of sustainability education as it pertains to either a particular sustainability issue (e.g. social, economic, environmental) or to a particular approach to sustainability education (e.g. global education, environmental education, wilderness/nature activities, indigenous thought). The paper will make explicit connections to schooling and will be expected to draw on course readings. The unit plan should include at least five linked lessons focused on a sustainability issue that make use of the outdoors as a teaching and learning environment.

Group Lesson Plan Project/Presentation & Handout 30% (Due: the weeks when the presentations are made)

Small groups (3–5 students) will be asked to do a 30 minute lesson presentation starting on class 6. Dates will be arranged on class 2 when the groups will be formally put together and given time to brainstorm ideas and explore the campus as an outdoor learning environment. Each group will be asked to develop a lesson for a particular sustainability concept/issue that makes use of the outdoors as a teaching and learning environment. The presentation will take place outside and will include four components: 1) identify a particular sustainability concept/issue and explain its relevance for education; 2) identify the big idea or enduring idea they are trying to address (the big idea is usually not written in the curriculum documents, but is such that it is the major idea that

the teacher is trying to get across); 3) explain what the lesson is about, what ages it is targeted for, and what kinds of accommodations they might consider; and 4) use the different age group specialties in the group (e.g. elementary, secondary) as a way for highlighting different age-specific exercises and why they are useful for elaborating the sustainability concept/issue.

Self-Evaluation 10%

- *In-class participation (due ongoing)* – attendance, in-class small group/large group participation, outdoor activities.

*Parts of the above adapted from Timothy B. Leduc, Education for a Sustainable Future, Winter term, 2009, York University and Randa Khattar, Education for a Sustainable Future, Winter term 2011, York University

Required Reading:

1. Orr, David (2004). Earth in Mind: On Education, Environment, and the Human Prospect. Washington: Island Press.
2. Shiva, Vandana (2005). Earth Democracy: Justice, Sustainability, and Peace. Boston: South End Press.

WEEKLY READINGS/ACTIVITIES

July 3, Class 1: Introduction to Education for Sustainability (and to course purpose and to each other)

- Course introductions – Origins of Sustainable Development – What is Sustainability anyhow and what does it have to do with education?
- Understanding the assignments
- Student Groups (discussion groups of 8 and teaching/learning groups of 4)
- Sign-up for leading weekly small group discussion and outdoor lesson
- Campus tour -- York University as an outdoor learning environment

July 4, Class 2: Earth Democracy

- Readings to be discussed: Shiva, Introduction and Chapter One, “Living Economies”
 - Group leader:
- Learning Outside: Exploration #1.

July 8, Class 3: Earth in Mind

- Readings to be discussed: Orr, Introduction and Part One, “The Problem of Education”
 - Group leader:
- Learning Outside: Exploration #2.

July 10, Class 4: Earth Democracy

- Readings to be discussed: Shiva, Chapter Two, “Living Democracies”
 - Group leader:
- Learning Outside: Exploration #3
- Due In Class: Research Paper/Unit Plan Proposal

July 11, Class 5: Earth in Mind

- Readings to be discussed: Orr, Part Two, “First Principles”
 - Group leader:
- Learning Outside: Exploration #4

July 15, Class 6: Earth Democracy

- Readings to be discussed: Shiva, Chapter Three, “Living Cultures”
 - Group leader:
- Learning Outside: Group Lesson Plan Presentations (3 groups)

July 17, Class 7: Earth in Mind

- Readings to be discussed: Orr, Part Three, “Rethinking Education”
 - Group leader:
- Learning Outside: Group Lesson Plan Presentations (3 groups)

July 18, Class 8: Earth Democracy

- Readings to be discussed: Shiva, Chapter Four, “Earth Democracy in Action”
 - Group leader:
- Learning Outside: Group Lesson Plan Presentations (3 groups)

July 22, Class 9: Earth in Mind

- Readings to be discussed: Orr, Part Four, “Destinations”
 - Group leader:
- Learning Outside: Group Lesson Plan Presentations (3 groups)
- Course-Evaluation; Self-Evaluation
- Due in Class : Research Papers/Unit Plans

Electronic Resources

Shaping Our Schools, Shaping Our Future (a.k.a, The Bondar Report)
www.edu.gov.on.ca/curriculumcouncil/shapingschools.pdf

Ecological Footprints of Nations:
<http://www.ecouncil.ac.cr/rio/focus/report/english/footprint>

ESD Toolkit: www.esdtoolkit.org

Frameworks for Applying Sustainability in the City of Toronto:
<http://www.utoronto.ca/envstudy/INI498/Salsbergf.htm>

International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education:
<http://wwwmcb.do.uk/ijshe.htm>

The International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives:
<http://www.iclei.org>

Learning for a Sustainable Future: www.lsf-ist.ca

The Natural Step Web site: <http://www.naturalstep.org>

Revisiting Carrying Capacity: Area Based Indicators of Sustainability:
<http://dieoff.org/page110.htm>

Seventh Generation Initiative and the Canada Well-Being Measurement
 Act: <http://www.cyberus.ca/choose.sustain/7GI/election3.html>

The Sustainability Report: The issues and Trends Shaping Canada's Health,
 Economy, and Environment: <http://www.sustreport.org/home.html>

Toronto's Ecological Footprint:
<http://www.city.toronto.on.ca/energy/howbig.htm>

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
www.unesco.org/education/desd

Why Sustainability is Wrong:
<http://web.inter.nl.net/users/Paul.Treanor/sustainability.html>

World Resources Institute: <http://www.wri.org/wri/enved>

Earth Charter Resources:

The Earth Charter Initiative – www.earthcharter.org

Earth Charter in Action – www.earthcharterinaction.org

Earth Charter Community Action Tool – www.earthact.org

Canadian Earth Summit Coalition – www.earthsummit.ca

Documentaries:

Vandana Shiva on the Problem with Genetically-Modified Seeds

<http://billmoyers.com/segment/vandana-shiva-on-the-problem-with-genetically-modified-seeds/>

The documentary “I AM”

<http://iamthedoc.com/>

The documentary “The Great Milk Robbery”

<http://www.grain.org/article/entries/4426-the-great-milk-robbery>