Human Rights and Sustainability
Meets: Tuesdays & Thursdays 3:00-4:15
Location: CDS (Design South) Room 13
(Syllabus subject to revision)

Professor: LaDawn Haglund
E-mail: ladawn.haglund@asu.edu
Office Location: Wilson Hall Room 265
Phone number: 480-965-7083
Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 12:30-2:00

TA: Lisa Reber-Rider
E-mail: ereberri@asu.edu
Office Location: Wilson Hall 207
Office Hours: Wednesday 2:00-3:30

“Failure to grasp the enormous potential that human rights have on sustaining environment ... will only lead to a larger scale of dispossession and homelessness across the world.”

- Miloon Kothari, Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing, Statement at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg South Africa, August 2002

I. Course description:

This course addresses the connections between human rights and environmental sustainability. Legal and scholarly approaches linking human rights and sustainability are just beginning to emerge, given the important resource dimensions of economic and social rights realization 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 demands 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 are often forced to bear the costs of environmental degradation, pollution, and climate change resulting from patterns of production and consumption from which they do not personally gain. The priorities of environmental justice movements, sometimes referred to as “environmentalism of the poor,” can thus differ considerably from those of mainstream environmental organizations. Furthermore, the emphasis within human rights law and practice on individual rights exists in tension with the collective and third-party impacts of many sustainability challenges, while the context-specific, place-based nature of most environmental problems (and the populations that endure them) sits uneasily aside claims to universal human rights.
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 will be 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, as well as develop a set of ideas regarding how more just and sustainable alternatives may be realized
This course provides a basis for research in the fields of international development and human rights. 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 class discussions
- b) Do all required assignments prior to the class for which they are due
- c) Post weekly blogs outlining your critical reactions to the assigned texts
- d) Lead class discussion once during the semester
- e) Complete 2 short (4-6 page) papers on substantive themes
- f) Submit an annotated bibliography of sources to be used for your final paper
- g) Complete a 12-15 page final paper with final bibliography (not annotated)

Attendance and class participation: This course is organized primarily around class discussion of, and assessments based on, assigned readings and video materials. Please note that readings are not optional! Students are expected to read assigned materials carefully and thoughtfully prior to the lecture for which they are due. Students may also be asked to watch films outside of class if necessary (available online or on reserve at Hayden). They are required to participate meaningfully in class discussions by contributing relevant information, addressing controversial issues, and raising probing questions based on readings and films. Attendance will be tracked and grades lowered for excessive absences (defined as more than 4 absences for any reason).

Study suggestion: You should take notes on the readings and films to help you prepare for discussions, short papers, and your final longer paper. In particular:
- 1. note the main points of each source, and if there is more than one source, consider how they are related (with one main point from each work as an example);
- 2. consider what is new to you about the topics discussed and how (if at all) they have changed your conception of human rights and sustainability; and
- 3. develop an understanding of how the week’s readings, films, and lecture material apply to current events

I want you to engage the readings, so you should have questions ready each week regarding how they relate to modern life and/or current events. Each week in class, you should be able, if called upon, to cite at least one news article relevant to the week’s readings from an alternative media source (see below, “supplemental materials”). Take note of the article’s title, source, and date.

Weekly blogs on the assigned materials will be required. Complete your blog entries as follows:
- 1. Read/watch the material that is due for the upcoming week.
- 2. Use the following triangle, square, and circle method to analyze the texts.¹
  - a. Triangle: Find three points in the materials as a whole that you believe are important and/or had an impact on your thinking about human rights and sustainability, points that you find to be critical or poignant.

¹ Acknowledgements (and thanks) to Dr. Sher Ratnabalasuriar for these guidelines
b. **Square:** Consider at least one point that *sits well with you* in some way, either from the three above or elsewhere in the materials. Perhaps it reflects your own ideas about human rights and sustainability, or it intrigues you in some way.

c. **Circle:** Identify 2-3 questions *not answered in the materials* that you think are important or intriguing, or that require more research to understand.

3. Your posts should be *no more than 1-2 pages*, *double-spaced*, in a standard Word document. Do not regurgitate the materials; concisely analyze them.

4. Consider including links to images, articles or other relevant sources on the web.

5. As a scholarly product, your post should never be composed directly online. Use a text editor (e.g., Microsoft Word) to draft and finalize your post before adding it to your blog. All posts should adhere to conventional grammar and punctuation.

6. **Post** your blog entry covering each week’s materials **no later than 3pm on Mondays.**
   This will allow your professor, TA, and classmates time to review it before class on Tuesdays. Your first post (covering the material for September 4th and 6th) is due Monday, September 3rd.

7. In addition to your blog, you should skim the blogs of all other students and comment on at least two other person’s posts per week. This can be done anytime **between Monday at 3pm and Friday at 3pm.** Try commenting on different people’s blogs each week.

d) **Student-led discussion:** two students will co-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 an additional news article or informative video (not more than 20 minutes) for your peers to consider that is *relevant to the week’s assigned materials,* and transmit this material through Blackboard or the Internet on the Friday prior to your presentation. Your task as discussion leader will be to raise important questions and issues, based on the materials and critical reflections posted by all students on Blackboard. 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.

e) There will be **two short papers** (4-6 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 October 18
   2) The human right to food - due November 8

These short papers should incorporate:
   1) An analysis of the group of readings on each theme in light of the following questions:
      o In what ways does a human rights approach compliment a sustainability approach in this area? In what ways do these approaches contradict each other?
      o What are the key challenges to sustainable human rights realization in this area?
      o What are some possible strategies for overcoming challenges to human rights and sustainability in this area?
   2) A concise summary of main arguments of at least four key readings (not short articles)
   3) Your **scholarly** (not personal) reactions to or reflections on the readings (noting the strongest points of each reading before critiquing it)
I encourage you to have discussions with your classmates, but your short paper must be your own work, and in your own words. Short papers must be submitted on Blackboard via SafeAssignment by 3:00 p.m. on the day they are due.

You can utilize comments from your own weekly blogs 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 topic of your paper and the questions it seeks to answer, 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 via SafeAssignment prior to class on the due date. A PowerPoint presentation is posted on Blackboard to guide you in constructing this bibliography.

g) Your final paper should be approximately 12-15 pages, and should link your substantive interests with theoretical approaches to - and empirical realities of - human rights and sustainability. You must meet in person with me at least once to discuss your paper before you write it. My office hours are posted at the top of this syllabus.

Important: I expect 300-level 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* (The University of Chicago - use the “Author, Date” system for the social sciences), 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.

Your grade will be based on the following:
- Attendance, participation, presentation 15%
- Critical reflection blogs: 15%
- Paper #1: 20%
- Paper #2: 20%
- Final paper: 30%

Please note that late work will not be accepted without a documented and dire reason.

III. Required Texts:

IV. Supplementary materials
2. A number of articles for this course will be handed out in class or posted to Blackboard.
V. Miscellaneous course information:

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

ASU e-mail and Blackboard: As in other areas of the University, you must use ASU e-mail for this course. You will need to be sure that your e-mail is working in order to keep up with course information disseminated by e-mail. If your e-mail account rejects my messages, it is not my problem. If you send me something and I do not respond within 48 hours, you should assume that I did not receive it. If it is an assignment, I suggest you bring a hard copy and put it into my mailbox instead of relying on e-mail, to ensure that you receive credit. We will be using Blackboard extensively, so please familiarize yourself with this interface if you have not done so already. It can be reached through MyASU.

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” (from the ASU General Catalog).

Academic integrity: I hope it is unnecessary to inform you that cheating and plagiarism will be dealt with severely. This includes failing to cite sources that you use for your work, representing others’ work as your own, or allowing others to represent your work as theirs. If you have doubts about what constitutes academic dishonesty, ask me. The Faculty of Justice and Social Inquiry adheres to university policies regarding academic integrity, which you are encouraged to read and take very seriously: http://provost.asu.edu/academicintegrity/policy.

Writing mentorship program: The Writing Mentorship Program (WMP) is available to all students enrolled in Justice and Social Inquiry classes. The WMP student-mentors help students improve their writing skills through peer review and advisement. If you would like advice on an assignment, or help with reviewing or editing your papers before turning them in, make an appointment by contacting the WMP directly. Office hours are posted in Wilson Hall, Room 212 or you may contact them at writing@asu.edu or by phone (480) 965-7025. The ASU Writing Centers website also contains handouts and services that can help you write better papers: http://studentsuccess.asu.edu/home/writingcenters

Disability Services: If you have a learning disability, need disability accommodations in this class, or have other particular needs, please let me know as soon as possible. All information regarding disability is confidential.
WEEK 1: August 23
Overview and Introduction to the Course

WEEK 2: August 28-30
What are Human Rights?
Topics: Where do rights come from? How do we know they exist? How can we gauge rights realization?

Readings:
- Review (skim) the latest United Nations’ Millennium Development Goals Report, which can be found at: http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/reports.shtml

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

WEEK 3: September 4-6
What is sustainability?
Topics: Historical roots of ecological crises; Rio summit, Kyoto protocol, The Brundtland Report, etc.; Alternative definitions of sustainability

Readings:
- Ontology: [the nature of the problem, in essence]
- Epistemology: [how do we know what we know]

**UN Activities:** (Familiarize yourself with these activities and skim the reports, but do not read them word for word. * Asterisked sources are posted on Blackboard)

- *1987 - Our Common Future (“The Brundtland Report”) World Commission on Environment and Development. OVERVIEW ONLY (pp. 18-38) [I have posted the full report 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](http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/convkp/kpeng.pdf)
- * Rio+20 (follow up to 1992 Earth Summit: [http://www.earthsummit2012.org/](http://www.earthsummit2012.org/)); official conclusions (“The Future We Want”) and conclusions of the “People’s Summit” are both posted on Blackboard for review. (Try to read the full "People's Summit" document - it's relatively short.)

**Films:**


**WEEK 4: September 11-13**

**Human Rights and Sustainability: Making the Linkages**

*Topics: Environmental human rights, Eco-Justice*

**Readings:**

**Film:**

**WEEKS 5-6: Consumption, production, and the role of capitalism**

**Topics:** Economic rationality and global expansion; Industrialization, carbon-based economies, technological advances and pollution, transportation; Inequality in costs and benefits, winners and losers at all scales/levels, gender/class/race; exploitation; Public goods; Alternative logics

**September 18-20: Economic rationality and global expansion**

**Readings:**

**Film:**
- (In class) TBD

**September 25-27: Alternative Logics**

**Readings:**
- The Happy Planet Index: [http://www.happyplanetindex.org/](http://www.happyplanetindex.org/)

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

**WEEKS 7-8: CASE STUDY 1 - Urban ecology and human rights**

**Topics:** “Right to the City”; Right to housing, water, sanitation; Impact of building, urbanization

**October 2-4**

**Readings:**

“GM Destruction of California Transit Systems” [http://moderntransit.org/ctc/ctc06.html]

UN Activities:

• Special Rapporteur on the right to housing (familiarize yourself with this page, and read at least one of the “reports”): [http://www.righttohousing.org]

Film:

• The Unforeseen (93 min.) – PART 1

October 9-11

Readings:

• Evans, Peter. 2002. Livable Cities: Urban Struggles for Livelihood and Sustainability. University of California Press. [Chapters 1 & 6-8; also available online- ASU library]

Film:

• The Unforeseen (93 min.) – PART 2

Special Event:

• Screening and critical discussion of “América’s Home” (ASU Professors C.A. Griffith and H.L.T. Quan): October 12, 11:50 to 1:25 p.m. in Social Sciences Building, Rm. 105

WEEK 9: October 16-18

First short paper is due Thursday; no blog is due this week. Discussions will take place in class. Please start working on your annotated bibliographies for your final paper.

WEEKS 10-11: CASE STUDY 2 - The human right to food

Topics: Trade, intellectual property rights; Agricultural policy; Green revolution; Land and energy use; Hunger and malnutrition; Food security; Biodiversity; GMOs

October 23-25

Readings:


UN Activities:

• FAO website: [http://www.fao.org/righttofood] (check out these links specifically: “strategy” and “implementation goals”)
Film:

- (Watch before class): Pro-GM vs. anti-GM crops:
  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EGDGbSLcfRQ;
- (In Class) “Troubled Waters: A Mississippi River Story.” (57 min.)

October 30-November 1

Readings:

- Gottlieb, Robert and Anupama Joshi. 2010. Food Justice. [Everyone read pp. 1-120 and 221-238; we will split up the remaining case studies so students summarize selections.]

Film:

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

OPTIONAL EXTRA CREDIT Film:

- Michael Pollan, Omnivore's Dilemma: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kFpjskn3_Pc

WEEKS 12-13: CASE STUDY 3 - Industrialization processes and human rights

Topics: Mining; Petroleum dependency and extraction; Climate change; Indigenous Rights

November 6-8

Readings:

- United Nation Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)
- Familiarize yourself with the Oil/Tar Sands: http://www.energybulletin.net/node/50186
- [Optional but interesting] “Dark Lord of Coal Country,” Rolling Stone, November 9, 2010

UN Activities:

- UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues:
Film:
- (Watch before class): Very brief video on the Oil/Tar Sands in Alberta: http://iturn.tv/content/2009/h2oil-das-business-mit-wasser-und-oel-318
- (In class) Crude Impact (30 min.)

Second short paper due Thursday, November 8

November 13-15

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

Film:
- (In class): “Power paths.” (2009; 56 min.)

WEEK 14:

November 20
In-class activities (no readings due)

November 22
HAPPY THANKSGIVING!
No class, but please continue working on your final paper!

WEEKS 15-16: SOLUTIONS
Topics: Deep ecology, deep economy; Global public goods and global commons; Governance, right to participation, autonomy, decision-making, inclusion

November 27-29

Readings:
- McKibben, Bill. 2007. Deep Economy: The Wealth of Communities and the Durable Future. New York: Henry Holt and Company. [Read to Ch. 1 (p. 45) and skim Ch. 2 (to p. 94)]
Film:
- (Watch before class) Very brief definition of “deep ecology”: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R2gZ6FRhc3w&feature=player_embedded
- (In class) “Climate of Change”

Annotated bibliography for final paper due today

December 4-6: Wrap up (4th) and LAST DAY OF CLASS (6th)

Readings:

Film:

FINAL PAPER DUE December 13th - NO EXCEPTIONS!