Signs of devastation from climate change, environmental degradation, energy crises and conflicts from environmental destructions are causing alarms all around the world. Whether or not we embrace a new ethics for our relationship with nature is a survival issue for the humanity and the Earth planet. What do we need to do?

This course attempts to explore answers to the current crises in environmental sustainability and human survival.

- The course discusses tremendous challenges the humanity is facing such as global climate change, environmental degradation, energy crises and conflicts from environmental destructions.
- Ecological ethics as embedded in Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism and Confucianism are discussed, as well as Native American and Indigenous perspectives and wisdom.
- New environmental ethics, new concepts and frameworks as well as practices for a new form of relationship with nature are explored. These include Gaia Hypothesis, Deep Ecology, Ecofeminism, Ecological Economics, sustainable energy and new lifestyles for sustainability.
- In education, the course examines how sustainability education takes place in K-12 settings, communities, and universities, and we explore creative pedagogies and programs that can be employed to raise awareness and cultivate awe and love for nature.
- Finally, the course also discusses eco-justice issues, and emergency education for the prevention of, and healing from, natural disasters.

The objective of this course is to equip students with values, attitudes, knowledge, skills and abilities to appreciate, protect and preserve the Earth planet.

TEACHING APPROACHES

The teaching approach in this course will be an interactive seminar style in which students are expected to actively engage in discussions and sharing of information and materials, thereby having the opportunities to learn from one another and developing ecological awareness and experiences. Classes will take on a variety of forms, which will include lectures, discussions, group activities, videos, demonstrations and presentations.

EXPECTATIONS
- Students are expected to come to class having completed at least three assigned readings for the day and be active participants in the discussions and presentations.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

1. **Participation: 10%**. Students are expected to have done the readings, and to actively participate in the activities of the class. *Missing classes without valid reasons will affect participation score.*

2. **1st Reflection Paper: What Strike You as Vital Environmental Problems and Why?** Synthesize what you have learned from the readings and class, what key concepts/ideas that impress you, and what connections you can make to your daily life and education. Include your own research on certain issues. 5-7 pages, 20%. **Due Sept. 21.**

3. **2nd Reflection Paper: Describe You Most Powerful Encounter with Nature, and What Eco Ethics and Sustainable Frameworks or Practices You Embrace and Why?** The first part of the paper is a description of your experiences with nature (2-3 pages). The second part is a synthesis of what you have learned from the readings and class, and your own research on a new eco framework or technology. Total: 6-8 pages, 20%. **Due Oct. 12.**

4. **3rd Reflection Paper: What Educational Issues Are You Most Concerned about? How Can Education Incorporate Sustainability and Raise Awareness?** Synthesize what you have learned from the readings and class, discuss what key concepts/ideas that impress you, and focus on some effective approaches in education that you have explored. 5-7 pages, 20%. **Due Nov. 9.**

5. **4th Assignment: Conduct Empirical Research on a Local or International Environmental Issue, and Propose a Transformative Education Project for a Sustainable Future.** The students should empirically investigate an issue locally or internationally, identify the sources of the problem, review relevant literature, and design an educational program or project that will transform students/citizens to have respect for and preserve Mother Nature. *There will be a presentation of the paper.* 8-10 pages for undergrads, and 10-15 pages for graduate students, 30%. **Due Dec. 7.**

**Grading Scale**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>96-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84-86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>76-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>72-75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>68-71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>64-67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60-63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;F</td>
<td>&lt;60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TEXTBOOK AND READINGS:**

Textbook To Be Purchased:
Articles are posted on Canvas.

---

**AUG. 31:**

**INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW**

Act 1: Introduction, and what will happen in this class

Act 2: Let’s first do a body scan
   - Five minutes: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nA5AyqFs5kE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nA5AyqFs5kE)
   - Ten minutes: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zsCVqFrj1g](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zsCVqFrj1g)

Then the class do a collective body scan for Mother Nature (hair as forest, bone as mountains, rivers as veins, animals as our siblings, etc). **Share:** What images come to your mind? What problems are besetting Mother Nature? What do you feel for Mother Nature?


   - Observation of nature with a spiritual eye: What do you see? How are we related to all that exist?
   - Mindfulness practices, such as mindful eating, shopping, walking, etc
   - Types of contemplative methods:
     - [http://marc.ucla.edu/body.cfm?id=22](http://marc.ucla.edu/body.cfm?id=22)
     - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7nsmuPT7Zfw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7nsmuPT7Zfw)
SEPT. 7:
MAJOR ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES FACING HUMANITY TODAY

Weekly report: Your engagement with nature

Act 1: Awareness raising:
- Song: Tell me why!
- The 2015 Paris Agreement: Humanity in critical crossroad!

Act 2: Jing leads discussion on the readings

Act 3: Jing’s ppt presentation
- Global warming/climate change/glacier retreat/melting of ice caps/hurricanes/tsunamis/typhoons/sea levels rising/flooding/drought
- Ozone layer depletion/health impact
- Deforestation/desertization/dust storms/land loss/top soil erosion
- Fog and haze – China as an example
- Mass extinction of species and loss of biodiversity
- Water scarcity/water pollution/overdraw of underground water/danger of war and conflicts due to water resources in Southeast Asia and Africa
- Disappearance of lakes/wetlands and pollution of oceans
- The cost of “development” – Smog and pollution: water, air, land
- Problems of trash and waste and environmental and human damages
- Overpopulation, urbanization and major problems
- Energy crises: over extraction of oil; food crises; inflation.
- Western Honey Bee Colony Collapse Disorder
- Diseases: autism, Ebola, viruses etc.
- Wastage

Readings:


“Overpopulation.” Wikipedea.


SEPT 14:
CURRENT ECOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL PARADIGMS AND PROBLEMS

Weekly report: Your mindful engagement with nature

Act 1: Students presents on one of the current paradigms/practices that contribute to the destruction of nature.

Topics:
- Anthropocentrism: How does it manifest? Is it right or wrong? Real life examples
- Judo-Christian beliefs
- Capitalism and its ethos against nature
- Materialism and consumerism: Is it sustainable?
- Cruelty to animals/agricultural practices
- Unsustainable economic frameworks and practices

“Anthropocentrism.” Wikipedia. Mindful reflection on how we see ourselves as above other existence


Mass tourism and unsustainability: https://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/six-reasons-mass-tourism-unsustainable

SEPT. 21
ECO ETHICS FROM RELIGIOUS
AND CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES ON HUMAN-NATURE RELATIONSHIP
Weekly report: Your mindful engagement with nature

Act 1: Students present on one of the topics and class discussion

Topics:
- Taoism and Confucianism – Human Nature Correspondence and Oneness
- Buddhism – Beliefs and Practice
- Islam
- Christianity and Judaism
- Hinduism, Jainism, Shinto,....
- Indigenous Spirituality and Shamanism
- Naturalism and Transcendentalism

Act 2: Using the scenario of a child and a chicken, discuss the notion of anthropocentrism, and discuss where various religions fall on a spectrum of anthropocentrism. Discuss zoos, human treatment of health crises, culture and human nature.

Readings:
“Taoism and Education” by Jing Lin
“Buddhism and Ecology”
“Confucianism and Ecology”
“Indigenous Tradition and Ecology”
“Christianity and Ecology”
“Judaism and Ecology”
“Jainism and Ecology”
“Shinto and Ecology”
SEPT. 28:
NEW ECO ETHICS AND SUSTAINABILITY PARADIGMS (1):
Gaia Theory, Animism, Deep Ecology, Ecofeminism, Biodiversity, Sustainable Frameworks and Ecological Economics

❖ Report: Your mindful engagement with nature

Act 1: Students choose a topic in the following list and give a presentation followed by discussion in the class (individual or group)

Topics:
- Gaia Theory – Earth as a Live Being
- Deep Ecology
- Biodiversity
- Animism
- Biodiversity
- Sustainable development
- Ecofeminism
- Plants as alive and intelligent – Re-animating the universe.

Act 2: ppt by Jing on New Environmental Paradigms

Readings:

“Reconstructing Femininity and Masculinity” by Jing Lin


“Sustainable Development.” Wikipedia.


**OCT. 5:**
**NEW ECO ETHICS AND SUSTAINABILITY PARADIGMS (2):**

**Act 1:** Students present on one of the following topics.
- Treatment of animals and Animal Protection Laws
- Organic food and ecological farming/sustainable forestry
- Alternative energy; clean, renewable and environmentally friendly energies; new energy technologies: solar powered houses, planes, and solar farms
- Life style changes. Examples: zero carbon foot print; summer air conditioning; office light; business suit; plastic shopping bag, and others…
- Eco villages; vegetarianism; organic food and local markets
- Ecological Economics; de-growth; divestment; alternative investment; Green GDP
- Carbon tax; emission trade; carbon credit; Green accounting; green economy; green finance; eco commerce
- Green building: LEED – Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design
- Sustainable transport: Electric cars (Tesla’s new models)
- Ecological architecture; green technology for green schools and universities
- Land rights for the indigenous people; stopping farming to reforest the land
- Eco city farms
- Profitable sustainability technology
- Sustainability and market incentives
- “Just sustainability” - [http://smartandsustainable.umd.edu/sessions/opening-keynote](http://smartandsustainable.umd.edu/sessions/opening-keynote)
- The infinite mind and energy and social transformation

**Readings:**

Colin Beavan: No Impact Man: [http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x3njbr3](http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x3njbr3)


“Ecological Economics” by Farber and Bradley. [http://www.fs.fed.us/eco/s21pre.htm](http://www.fs.fed.us/eco/s21pre.htm)
OCT. 12:
NATURE DEFICIT DISORDER, AND GREENING THE CURRICULUM

2nd Assignment Due: Oct. 12
Describe Your Most Powerful Encounter with Nature, and
What Eco Ethics and Framework/s & Practices You Embrace and Why?
Summary of the Readings and Your Own Research

Weekly report: Your mindful engagement with nature

Act 1: Free writing

Act 2: Jing leads a discussion on the readings
- Industrial, mechanistic views in curriculum: examples
- Anthropocentrism in textbooks: examples
- Recovering “childhood”: What do we need to do in all levels?

Readings:


Act 3: Group Activity: *What are the Core Competencies for Sustainability Education?*


**OCT. 19**

**ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AROUND THE WORLD AND IN THE UNITED STATES**

Act 1: Environmental Education Around the World

**Guest speaker: Nooruddin Shah**

*Ppt by Students; Jing’s ppt on China*

**Readings:**

(S)he Who Will Transform the Universe: Ecological Lessons in Community Education from the Indigenous Americas. *Elizabeth Sumida Huaman* [Textbook]


Act 2: Integrating Sustainability into Teaching and Curriculum: U. S.
Guest speaker: Timothy and Natalie


Human-Environmental Relationships as Curriculum Context. *Thomas Nelson and Cynthia Coleman* [Textbook]

Hensley, Nathan S. (2011). Beyond a Carbon Copy Curriculum: Cultivating Stewardship and Awareness through Sustainable Education. [Textbook]

*Molly Lawrence, Rosalie Romano, Victor Nolet, and Wendy Church*. (2001). Necessary Tensions within Present Possibilities: Juxtaposing Voices from the Field to Envision Sustainability Teaching and Learning. [Textbook]

OCT. 26
NEW PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES FOR CONNECTION WITH NATURE IN THE UNITED STATES

- Weekly report: Your mindful engagement with nature

  Students sign up as a group to give a presentation about ecotourism, eco/sustainable fashion, school/community garden, and field trip, and Jing will present a summer camp that incorporate sustainability education.


**NOV. 2:**
CREATIVE ECO-EDUCATION THROUGH ARTS, DANCE, FILMS, MUSIC, AND VARIOUS OTHER APPROACHES

- Weekly report: Your mindful engagement with nature

**Act. 1:** Jing leads discussion on the readings, first Sachi Edward’s Hula article and video, then Chinese Taoist arts. Peacock Dance and Yang Liping.

**Act 2:** Students find arts, dance, music, poems, videos etc, to share in class: How do they contribute to the building of a sustainable ecological ethics and education?

**Readings:**


**NOV. 9**
SUSTAINABILITY EDUCATION IN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

---

3rd Assignment Due: Oct. 19
What Eco Ethics and Environmental Practice/s You Embrace and Why?
Summary of the Readings and Your Own Research
Act 1: UMD and Initiatives by Other Universities

Guest Speaker: Mark Stewart

Readings:
Stewart, Mark. (2011). Greening the Campus, Culture, and Curriculum. [Textbook]


Act 2: Teaching Methods That Can Promote Participation and Critical/Creative Thinking

NOV. 16:
ECO-JUSTICE AND ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCACY

 Weekly report: Your mindful engagement with nature


Act 2: Jing and students share examples of social justice issues in environmental sustainability

Topics:
- Development at whose cost and sacrifice
- equal and fair distribution of resources and benefits
- Indigenous land rights
- Racism, classism and environmental justice
- Just transition
- Health equity
- Food security
- Intellectual property and indigenous tradition/knowledge
- Microcredit and microenterprise

Readings:


**NOV. 23:**

*NOC CLASS, THANKSGIVING*

**NOV. 30:**

**EMERGENCY/POST DISASTER EDUCATION; SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS ENDEAVORS**

- Weekly report: Your mindful engagement with nature

**Act 1: Emergency Education; Post-Disasters Education**

**Guest speaker: Buffy Kirby**

Natural Disasters around the world and rescue efforts; efforts to provide disaster education afterwards

- Focus of emergency education
- Healing and reconstruction
- Beyond 2016: Global climate change and what we need to do?


**Act 2: Business and Sustainability**

*Jing’s presentation*
DEC. 7:

PRESENTATION AND ENVISIONING A NEW FUTURE

Act 1: Presentation of Your Transformative Project

Act 2: Discussion:

- UN Sustainable Development Goals, 2015.  
- The 2015 Paris Agreement: Humanity in critical crossroad!  

Act 3: Envisioning Your Ideal Life and World, and Pledge of Actions

Write Down Thoughts and Share With Class:

- I want to help create a world where…
- My discipline contributes to that vision by…
- I want to help myself and others become change agents for sustainability by …
- I want to be healthier, happier and more sustainable by …