SYLLABUS
Green Cities – CRP 3840/5257 - Spring 2015
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DESCRIPTION
Cities are centers of innovation, economic growth, and social mobility, and they provide economies of scale in the provision of infrastructure and social services. But cities are also sites of growing socio-economic inequalities and environmental problems. Do cities provide the opportunity to address environmental problems, or are they rather the source of pollution and environmental degradation? Is a truly ‘green city’ possible, and if so, what would it look like? This course examines social, economic, cultural, political and environmental dimensions of sustainability and sustainable development in urban areas. Specific areas to be addressed include indicators of local (and personal) sustainability, sprawl and smart growth, open space preservation and green infrastructure, sustainable transportation, the built environment, green architecture, climate change mitigation and adaptation, sustainable water management, local renewable energy systems, environmental justice, food systems, and urban environmental challenges in the developing world.

This course employs a wide variety of formats to engage students in the material, including lectures, guest speakers, case studies, small group discussions, documentary films, student response pieces and activities (both in and out of class) such as a role playing simulation, an in class design charrette, and a series of student-led debates. Each student will also complete a final case study project and presentation. The format of the course will generally be organized around a lecture, presentation or talk followed by small group discussion concerning the presentation, homework assignment or readings. We will (obviously) deviate from this format to accommodate the student debates, documentary films, role-playing simulation, and student presentations. There are no exams.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
The goals and learning outcomes of this course are as follows:

1. **Sustainability and environmental quality:** The student should be able to understand and critically assess the concept of urban sustainability, critically assess various approaches taken by different cities, and understand the opportunities and constraints that affect a city’s ability to implement sustainability initiatives.
2. **Emerging trends:** The student should be able to recognize, understand, and critically analyze new trends and best management practices and policies to enhance the sustainability of cities.
3. **Effective oral, written, and visual communication:** The student should be able to present an argument orally, in writing, and visually and assume/defend/ argue for a position on a major sustainability issue facing cities.
4. **Collaboration, negotiation and mediation:** The student should be familiar with the skills of mediation and decision making between parties in dispute or contention.

GRADING
Debates: 20%
Over the course of the semester, we will engage in a number of presentation-style debates over salient issues concerning green cities. These will include 1) smart growth vs. sprawl, 2) public transit vs. automobile, 3) fossil fuels vs. renewable energy sources, and 4) local vs. global economies. At the beginning of the semester, students will sign up for a team, each of which will assume a position on a
specific issue. Each debate team will be able to communicate with each other via Blackboard (go to ‘Communication’/ ‘Groups’, and click on your debate teams to send email, share documents, etc.). Some background readings outlining the major aspects of each side are provided on blackboard, but the teams are encouraged to explore outside sources and examples, as each team is free to define the issue as they see fit. On the appointed day, each team will have 20 minutes to make its presentation and 10 minutes for rebuttal. Teams are expected to provide a handout or outline of their main arguments. You will be evaluated on how well you prepare and present your ideas, not on the point-of-view you adopt. You might want to think about taking a “side” that is contrary to your opinion in order to stretch your thinking. Each team performance will be given a grade by the TA and the instructor. See sample debate rubrics for how the debates will be graded (located in the Course Documents folder on Blackboard). In addition, all teams will use a peer review process to grade each other’s performance internally.

Assignments: 25%
The course will include a total of eight weekly assignments that will vary in content and nature, along with one optional bonus assignment. They will be due by the start of class on the designated due date, and (generally) should be no more than one page long. They will be graded as follows; late responses will be docked a point, and they will be accepted up to three days late, after which they will not be accepted:

- Student has failed to fully complete all parts of the assignment
- Student has adequately answered the assignment requirements
- Student has gone above and beyond the assignment requirements

Please submit the assignments via the ‘Assignments’ link in Blackboard. Do NOT email the assignments as an attachment to the instructor or the TA, nor should you place the assignments in the ‘Dropbox’ on Blackboard. These will not be graded and you will receive no credit for them. In terms of their contribution to the final grade, the assignments will be graded as follows: If a student has received √'s for most or all of the individual assignments, the student will receive a B for the assignments portion of the final grade. √+’s or √-’s will move this grade up or down accordingly. The extra optional assignment may be completed any time prior to the last day of class, and for grading purposes may be used to replace a lower score on a different assignment.

Attendance/Participation/Effort: 10%
The course is organized around a number of activities to engage the students in the material. Your participation, whether through discussion, question and answer sessions, or small group activities, is vital to developing intellectual curiosity about the material. You should not only be present, but fully engaged.

Small Group Peer Evaluation: 15%
Several in-class activities, including the role-playing simulation and design charrette, will be highly participatory in nature. This component of your grade will in part be determined through peer evaluation, on a scale from 1 (lowest) to 10 (highest). Peer review will be based on the following rubrics:

1. Preparation: Did the student come prepared to discuss the material?
2. Comprehension: Did the student understand the material?
3. Engagement: Was the student involved and engaged in group participation?
4. Creativity: Did the student offer creative and insightful input?
5. Collaboration: Was the student will to listen, negotiate, and compromise?
**Final Project/Presentation: 30%**
The final project will consist of a case study of a green city best management practice. Undergraduate students should work in groups of two or three. Graduate students should work on their own projects. Although the overall format, scope and direction of the project is at the discretion of the student, some suggested formats include either:

A. A case study of green initiatives in a specific city or metropolitan area, or
B. An examination of a particular sustainability-related issue (water, buildings, energy), and compare and contrast how a number of cities are addressing this issue.

You should address why this US or international city (or cities) is an interesting example, and provide a critical analysis of the city’s overall efforts at sustainability: if it has a reputation for being green, to what extent is that justified? What are the specific practices, policies or projects that other cities can learn from and emulate? What are the most important lessons learned? In choosing a city (or cities), make sure it is one for which you will be able to collect relevant data. Draw from a wide variety of sources. Please do not rely on the city’s web site for all of your information. Look at the city’s newspapers and policy blogs to see how its initiatives are received. Find local advocacy organizations to get their responses to the city’s efforts. Read relevant plans, policies and studies. Contact people in city government and other organizations for interviews. The paper should be between 10 and 20 pages. Please provide complete references (Chicago style preferred) for all material cited. For both the project and presentation, your target audience is a mayor, city council member or similar policy maker. We will discuss the paper more in class.

A brief final project proposal (not more than one page in length) is due by the end of February (please submit via Blackboard). In addition, we will schedule time later in the semester for all groups to meet with the instructor. Each group will also present for 10 minutes on their project at the end of the semester. These various requirements will allow for multiple opportunities for feedback, and ultimately make for better projects. The final project will be evaluated using the following rubric. Consider the following when developing the project proposal and the overall format and structure of the paper:

a. The creativity of the project topic; that is, how compelling is the idea?
b. A strong, well-articulated introduction and conclusion
c. The structure and organization of the argument (ie particularly the use of sub-headings and transition paragraphs)
d. The methods, evidence, data used in constructing the argument
e. The level and degree of the analysis: was the project primarily descriptive, or did it include analysis as well? How was the analysis included?
f. Writing ability (ie everything from grammar to style)
g. The scope of the project (does the amount of work match the number of people working on it?)

**Laptops and Mobile Devices**
Use of laptops and mobile devices during class for web surfing and multi-tasking has generally been shown to decrease the level of student engagement and can corrode the classroom environment. Therefore, students are asked to not use laptops or other web-enabled devices during class, unless exclusively for note taking.

There are no required books for this class. Readings will be made available in digital format and will be posted on Blackboard (or if web based, a link will be available through Blackboard).
**Student Code of Conduct**

"Each student in this course is expected to abide by the Cornell University Code of Academic Integrity. Any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit will be the student’s own work. For this course, collaboration is allowed for group projects ".- Academic Integrity, Letter to the University Faculty, Aug. 20, 2012. For more information, please refer to the Cornell University Code of Academic Integrity, located online at [http://cuinfo.cornell.edu/Academic/AIIC.html](http://cuinfo.cornell.edu/Academic/AIIC.html).

The course outline including topics, schedule, assignments, readings, as well as assignment submission are available on Blackboard. Please click the ‘schedule’ tab.