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| http://www.ric.edu/webcommunications/images/SealWithText_Small_Black.png | **Rhode Island College**office of continuing educationcurr 580 the teaching and practice of environmental sustainability, Fall 2011 |

**Instructor:** Mark DeMoranville, mdemoranville@ric.edu

**Department**: Office of Continuing Education, Dante Del Giudice, Interim Director, 456-8428

##### Course Information

**Background:** In 1987, at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, a definition was generated for the concept of sustainable development. More than two decades later, this definition, “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs,” has stood the test of time.

**Context:** Despite the growing awareness among policymakers, business people, and community leaders of the need for all of us to live within our means, in light of the growth of the world’s population by two billion people since 1987, the loss of species and habitats, and the continuing damage being done to the world’s ecosystems, the message of sustainable living has not taken hold among the vast majority of Americans. While the extent of the average American’s environmental knowledge may be debatable, there is little evidence that behaviors have changed on a large scale.

Why has the message of sustainable living not taken hold? In a recent brochure printed by the Rhode Island Environmental Education Association, “Environmental Literacy Plan: Case for Support”, the writers argue that “Environmental education has been shown to contribute to overall academic achievement….In one study of 40 schools, 92 percent of students who were taught using the environment as the integrating context ‘academically outperformed their peers in traditional programs.’” Further, a persuasive case is made that “In our media-rich world, children are exposed daily to environmental news stories that range from global climate change to natural disasters to local fish kills. We need to ensure that our children have the critical thinking skills and content knowledge to process and assess this information effectively.”

**Purpose:** This course will first explore a selection of the classics of environmental literature, discuss and debate the concept, in theory and practice, of sustainable living from a range of perspectives, examine arguments pro and con for moving towards more sustainable patterns of economy and socio-cultural values, and demonstrate examples of effective lesson plans and activities on sustainability. Teachers will be challenged to draw from their own expertise, using their content knowledge and classroom experience to design innovative units that integrate the lessons of sustainability in ways that will inspire students. Further, they will be asked to consider ways they can advocate, in their schools and districts, and among colleagues, students and the larger school community, for moving towards a greater emphasis on sustainability as a teaching and learning priority.

Ultimately, this class will ask its teacher-participants to embrace sustainability in their own lives, recognizing the urgent need for a cultural shift in all of our thinking to assure that the children and youth they reach on a daily basis will enter the world of work and community with the tools and understanding to live prosperous lives and be effective stewards of our planet’s riches, both in their time and in their children’s time.

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| **Learning Objective** | **FSEHD** | **RIPTS** | Assessment |
| to gain a foundational understanding of the thought of key historical U.S. environmental philosophers | General Knowledge | 1.2, 2.1  | *Ecological Identity Paper* |
| to develop a deep personal understanding of the meaning of environmental sustainability through engagement in a number of reflective activities | General Knowledge, Professional Development | 2.4, 10.2  | *Ecological Identity Paper* |
| to examine the impact of a range of environmental issues on students’ daily lives, and the ways that approaches to sustainable living seek to address these issues | Knowledge of Contexts, Cultural Diversity, Collaboration & Advocacy | 4.2, 10.2, 10.3 | *Unit Plan* |
| to explore the role of K-12 education in fostering an ethic of sustainability in the current and in future generations of students.  | Human Learning & Development, Collaboration & Advocacy | 3.1, 4.2, 5.1  | *Unit Plan* |
| to engage in a range of hands-on activities designed to raise their awareness of the environmental crisis and empower them to work towards an ethic of sustainability | Teaching and Learning | 3.3, 5.1, 5.5 | *Unit Plan, Class Participation* |
| to align the teaching of environmental sustainability with GLEs, GSEs, and Standards | Assessment | 1.2, 2.2, 3.2, 3.3, 10.4 | *Unit Plan* |
| to demonstrate, through the creation of model lesson plans, an ability to consistently integrate the topic of environmental sustainability into their teaching | General Knowledge, Professional Development | 1.2, 1.3, 2.1 | *Unit Plan* |

##### Course Texts and materials

Carson, R. (2002). *Silent spring*, New York, NY : Mariner Books.

Edwards, A.R. (2005). *The sustainability revolution: Portrait of a paradigm shift,* Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers.

Ehrlich, P.R. & A.H. Ehrlich. (1996). *The betrayal of science and reason: How anti-environmental rhetoric threatens our future.*

Grant, T. & G. Littlejohn (eds.) (2004 & 2005). *Teaching green series*, Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers.

Leopold, A. (1949). *A Sand County almanac and Sketches here and there*, New York: Oxford University Press.

Meadows, D.H. (2004). *Limits to growth: The 30 year update*, White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green.

Merkel, J. (2003). *Radical simplicity: Small footprints on a finite Earth*, Gabriolia Island, BC: New Society Publishers.

Muir, J. (1981). *Our national parks*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Neuzil, M. & W. Kovarik (1996). *Mass media and environmental conflict: America’s green crusades*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Orr, D. W. (1994). *Earth in mind: On education, environment, and the human prospect*, Washington, DC: Island Press.

Putnam, R.D. (2001). *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community*, New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.

Schumacher, E.F. (2000). *Small is beautiful: 25th anniversary edition: Economics as if people mattered: 25 years later*…*with comments,* Point Roberts, WA: Hartley & Marks.

*Thomashow*, M. (1995). *Ecological identity: Becoming a reflective environmentalist*, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Thoreau, H. D. (1964). *The portable Thoreau*, London: Penguin.

##### Requirements

* Attendance (20 percent)
* Class Participation (20 percent)
* Mid-Semester Reflection Paper on Ecological Identity (20 percent)

-Must be 4-6 pages in length

-Must refer thoughtfully to readings, handouts, and class discussions

-Must be deeply personal and connect with writers’ teachings

* Creation of Unit Plan and Presentation of Lesson Plan to Class (40 percent)

-Lesson plan presentation of 30 minutes in class

-Submission of full unit plan

-Must demonstrate alignment with standards, GLEs and GSEs

**Note:** This course will be graded on an A, B, C, D, F grading scale.

##### RIC Policies

* Academic Dishonesty Policy (*Rhode Island College Handbook of Policies, Practices, and Regulations* (Spring 2010), Chapter 3: Academic policies and procedures. Pp. 32-34, section 3.9.1.): <http://www.ric.edu/administration/pdf/College_handbook_Chapter_3.pdf#28>
* Request for Reasonable Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: <http://www.ric.edu/disabilityservices/faq.php>
* The instructor reserves the right to change the syllabus at any point in the semester to accommodate learners’ needs and pace of progress. Students will be notified in class of any changes.
* Students’ assignments may be duplicated and utilized anonymously for the Department’s program folios, for purposes of accreditation. All information that identifies a document as belonging to a particular student will be removed before it is used.

##### Course CALENDAR

**Tentative Agenda.**  The following list of topics and/or assigned readings is subject to change.

**Note:** All class meetings will include at least one interactive hands-on demonstration of a lesson plan and/or presentation and discussion of an on-line resource.

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| Day/week | Class topic | Readings  | Assignments  |
| Week One | Introductions and Expectations |  | Edwards, Chapter One |
| Week Two | Sustainability as “The ThirdRevolution” | Edwards, Chapter One | Orr, Chapters One to Four |
| Week Three | The Role of Education | Orr, Chapters One to Four | Orr, Chapters Five to Twelve |
| Week Four | “First Principles” of a Philosophy of Sustainability | Orr, Chapters Five to Twelve | Thoreau, “Walking” |
| Week Five | Environmental Philosophers I | Thoreau, “Walking” | Muir, “The American Forests”, Leopold, “The Land Ethic” |
| Week Six | Environmental Philosophers II | Muir, “The American Forests”, Leopold, The Land Ethic” | Carson, Chapters One to Three, Eight; Snyder, Chapter One |
| Week Seven | Environmental Philosophers III | Carson, Chapters One to Three, Eight; Snyder, Chapter One | Ehrlich, Chapters One to Three, Five; Mid-Semester Reflection Paper |
| Week Eight | Sustainability Issues: Population | Ehrlich, Chapters One to Three, Five | Meadows, Chapter Three |
| Week Nine | Sustainability Issues: Resource Consumption | Meadows, Chapter Three | Meadows, Chapter Four |
| Week Ten | Sustainability Issues: Habitat Loss | Meadows, Chapter Four | Neuzil & Kovarik, Chapters Two and Seven |
| Week Eleven | Sustainability Issues: The Role of the Media | Neuzil & Kovarik, Chapters Two and Seven | Putnam, Chapters One to Five, Eight |
| Week Twelve | Sustainability Issues: The Role of Social Capital and Community | Putnam, Chapters One to Five, Eight | Schumacher, Chapters One to Five |
| Week Thirteen | Sustainability Issues: Re-Imagining Economy – Towards a Green Economy | Schumacher, Chapters One to Five | Lesson Plan Presentations |
| Week Fourteen | Lesson Plan Presentations | Lesson Plan Presentations | Lesson Plan Presentations |
| Week Fifteen | Lesson Plan Presentations | Lesson Plan Presentations | Final Unit Plans |