

Documenting Sustainable Business Practices
Community Partner: *Northwest History Network*

Time: 5:30 – 8:30 pm Tuesday/Thursday
Classroom: Cramer Hall 196
Instructors: Joshua Binus, binus@pdx.edu (external-facing); jbinus@gmail.com (internal)
Office Hours: By Appointment (limited to 4:30 – 5:30, Tuesdays or Thursdays)

Course Description:

The *Sustainability History Project* was launched by PSU in 2007 in order to begin formally collecting source material that can inform future investigations into the Pacific Northwest's response to various drivers facing the region (and beyond) at turn of the 21st Century. The goal of the project has been to collect source material, especially oral history interviews, generated by individuals whose actions were considered to be examples of real world efforts to develop or foster more sustainable business practices. The project will wind to a close this term, at least as a PSU University Studies endeavor. Over the course of the term, students will work individually and in teams to complete the collection and shepherd its delivery to the PSU Library, where it will be preserved and made available to the general public. Along the way, students will also develop a nuanced understanding of many issues woven into the fabric of a wide swath of sustainability issues.

Note: This capstone is very heavy in reading and research, especially during the first half of the course. This work builds a foundation for the community project that follows. Class time is a critical part of this process, as we will use the time available for the class to get much of our work done. Missing more than two classes may be detrimental to the project, your research team, and your grade in the course. If you see any foreseeable issues in missing class, please talk to me ASAP.

Skill-Building Course Objectives

- **Inquiry & Critical Thinking:** Interdisciplinary Research, Writing, Discussions, Questioning
- **Communication:** Teamwork, Professional Correspondence, Presentations, Media Outreach
- **Ethics & Social Responsibility:** Civic Engagement, Self-reflection, Behavioral Modification
- **The Diversity of Human Experiences:** Societal and Intergenerational Equity, Conservation Burdens, Faith in Technology

Text: *The Portland Plan, October 2011 Draft*

- Additional reading assignments are accessible digitally via JSTOR or Academic Search Complete (PSU Library databases) or are available online.

Grading:

- Papers = 30 %
- Attendance, Class Participation, and Group Participation = 30 %
- Research Log = 20 %
- Project Management = 20 %

Papers (30%): The rubric below will be used to grade all papers due this term. Please note that late papers will be downgraded 2 points for each day they are not received.

Grading Rubric—Papers

- 4 Successfully fulfills criteria
- 3 Fulfills much of the criteria but omits some important aspects
- 2 Fulfills some of the criteria but omits much of the criteria
- 1 Omits most significant aspects of the criteria
- 0 Does not fulfill the requirement at all

Evaluation Criteria

Content:

- A thought-provoking thesis
- Skillful analysis demonstrating critical thinking and creativity
- Arguments supported by evidence and examples
- General avoidance of the use of generalizations
- Mastery of details
- Willingness to consider alternative interpretations and include complexities
- Subject matter that addresses the assignment
- Fulfillment of assignment length requirement

Organization:

- A focused thesis that is developed throughout the essay
- Sentences that follow logically
- Coherent, focused paragraphs with topic sentences and effective transitions
- A thought-provoking conclusion, one that brings the different strands of the essay together and provides closure

Mechanics:

- Avoidance of mechanical and grammatical errors
- Strong, active, well-constructed sentences
- Attention to parallel structure and proper verb tenses

Citations:

- Proper footnote/endnote and bibliography citations following the *Chicago Manual of Style* guidelines
- All sources for information and ideas cited

Style:

- An effective voice that engages the reader
- Writing style that avoids needless repetition and redundancy
- Sophisticated vocabulary

Format:

- Typed, double-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman, with 1-inch margins
- Generally free of typographical errors
- Proper margins and spacing
- Pages numbered
- Proper information: name, class, date, title of essay
- Pages attached with staple

There will be 3 papers due during the term:

- 1) 3-5 page interpretive essay on *The Portland Plan*
- 2) 3-5 page historical essay on chosen sustainability topic
- 3) 7-9 page historical essay that builds on the previous paper by including research from the collected interviews and any other collected primary or secondary source material collected during the second half of the course

Attendance & Participation (30%): Because this class involves collaboration with others on several levels and because we move quickly through material, attendance and participation is weighted heavily. Roll will be taken twice during each class: once at the start of class and once again immediately after our mid-class break. Students present for the roll call will receive one point each time. Absence during roll call will result in missed points. Points will also be tallied for all in-class assignments: 1 pt. for each completed in-class assignment; 2 pts. for each (timely) emailed community work summary. If a portion of your work is conducted as part of a team, I will also evaluate your overall team participation (taking suggestions from all of your teammates into consideration) at the end of the term. This subjective evaluation will be worth 20 pts. total and will be evaluated using the criteria below:

- Equitably shared responsibility in the completion of research logs and other work undertaken by team
- Communicated in a timely and efficient manner with all teammates
- Provided quality assistance to teammates during their interviews
- Demonstrated respect in all aspects of inter-group communications
- Professionally represented Portland State University and research team in the community

Research Logs (20%): During the term, your research will be guided by research worksheets. These worksheets are collectively referred to as your research log. You will be required to answer all questions on each worksheet. Each answer will be evaluated for content using the rubric below. If for some reason, a question does not apply to the research topic you have undertaken, or you are unable to answer the question, the responsibility is on you to document your reason(s) for leaving the question unanswered.

Grading Rubric—Research Logs

- | | |
|---|--|
| 2 | Thoroughly and accurately answered all aspects of the question |
| 1 | Answered some, but not all, aspects of the question correctly |
| 0 | Did not answer the question |

Project Management (20%): Each student will be required to manage their own slice of the overall team effort. Tasks will include communication with oral history interviewees and the collection of supplemental source material related to topics covered in the interview. Each student will likely spend approximately 15 - 20 hours of work in the community by the end of the course.

The quality of your project management will be evaluated using the criteria below:

- Communication with interviewees is conducted to a professional standard
- Paperwork on each interview is complete
- Supplemental source material collected is relevant for preservation, in quality condition, and adds value to the overall project
- All project-based work is complete and turned in on time

*It is strongly recommended that you read the Student Code of Conduct. It details your rights and responsibilities as a member of the Portland State Community. (www.pdx.edu/dos/conduct.html)

Plagiarism

The PSU Writing Center identifies 5 types of plagiarism:

- 1) Quoting, paraphrasing or summarizing without giving the author credit.
- 2) Copying word-for-word whole pieces of writing and passing them off as your own.

- 3) Mixing your own writing with segments of word-for-word copying that is unquoted and uncited. This is known as "Mosaic Plagiarism."
- 4) Having another person, such as a friend or family member, write a paper for which you claim credit.
- 5) Turning in a paper for an assignment in one class that was originally written for a different class. It is possible to do this, but you must first obtain the consent of both instructors; otherwise it is considered plagiarism.

(see http://www.writingcenter.pdx.edu/resources/library.php?step09_detail_5.html)

Plagiarism of any kind will result in immediate failure of the course, and will be reported to the Office of the Dean of Students. The Dean's Office will then determine additional repercussions, which can include academic suspension.

There are two simple ways to avoid the possibility of plagiarism: 1) Ask the instructor for help; 2) When in doubt, cite.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Accommodations are collaborative efforts between students, faculty, and the Disability Resource Center. Students with accommodations approved through the DRC are responsible for contacting the faculty member in charge of the course prior to or during the first week of the term to discuss accommodations. Students who believe they are eligible for accommodations but who have not yet obtained approval through the DRC should contact the DRC immediately.

Disability Resource Center
Portland State University
435 Smith Memorial Student Union
1825 SW Broadway
Portland, OR 97201
Phone: (503) 725-4150
Fax: (503) 725-4103
TTY or Relay: (503) 725-6504

Email: drc@pdx.e

Class Schedule

Tuesday, 10 January

- Review syllabus and capstone project
- Defining Sustainability and History

Assignment: **Begin reading *The Portland Plan* (Essay due on Tuesday, Jan. 24)**

Assignment: **Bring 6 primary sources to next class that provide evidence for a past event**

Thursday, 12 January

- Present histories to class (using primary sources as evidence to support your interpretation)
- Internet Research 101
- Guided Research 1: National/International Sustainability Websites (**due Thursday, Jan. 19**)

Assignment: Finish reading *The Portland Plan*

Tuesday, 17 January

- Guided Research 2: Regional Sustainability Websites (**due Thursday, Jan. 19**)
- Assignment:* Howe, "Dimensions of Sustainability," Speth, "The Transition to a Sustainable Society," Wilbanks, "Presidential Address: 'Sustainable Development in Geographic Perspective'"; Robert W. Kates, Thomas M. Parris, and Anthony A. Leiserowitz. "What is Sustainable Development?"

Thursday, 19 January

- Group presentations on websites
 - Divide into project workgroups
- Assignment:* Read Langhelle, "Sustainable Development: Exploring the Ethics of *Our Common Future*"; Rosenberg et al, "Achieving Sustainable Use of Renewable Resources"; Wheeler, Stephen M. "The Evolution of Urban Form in Portland and Toronto: Implications for Sustainability Planning."

Tuesday, 24 January

- **3-5 page essay due on *The Portland Plan***
 - Oral history interviews as primary source material
 - Guided Research 3: Oral History Interviews
- Assignment:* Read: Lang and Mercier, "Getting It Down Right: Oral History's Reliability in Local History Research"; and Gordon, "Oral Documentation and the Sustainable Agriculture Movement in Wisconsin"

Thursday, 26 January

- Continue Guided Research 3: Oral History Interviews
- Assignment:* Read McAdoo, "Oral History as a Primary Resource in Educational Research"; and Blatz, "Craftsmanship and Flexibility in Oral History: A Pluralistic Approach to Methodology and Theory"

Tuesday, 31 January

- Writing History 101
 - Pitch-deck Development (for NHN and PSU Library)
- Assignment:* Read Clark and Dickson, "Sustainability Science: The Emerging Research Program," Merkel, "The Role of Science in Sustainable Development"

Thursday, 2 February

- Continue Pitch-deck Development (for NHN and PSU Library)
- Assignment:* Read Shrivastava, "The Role of Corporations in Achieving Ecological Sustainability," Daly, "Sustainable Development: From Concept and Theory to Operational Principles," Meadowcroft, "The Politics of Sustainable Development: Emergent Arenas and Challenges for Political Science"

Tuesday, 7 February

- Pitch to Northwest History Network
- Project Planning 101
- Develop Team and Individual Project Plans

Assignment: Read Meadowcroft, "Planning, Democracy and the Challenge of Sustainable Development," Haque, "The Fate of Sustainable Development under Neo-Liberal Regimes in Developing Countries," Myers *et al*, "Consumption: Challenge to Sustainable Development...", Stern *et al*, "Consumption and Sustainable Development," Myers, "Sustainable Consumption"

Thursday, 9 February

- Review/Modify Team and Individual Project Plans
- Professional Correspondence 101
- Craft letters to interviewees
- **3 – 5 page history paper due**

Assignment: Read "US Population and Sustainable Development," Parris and Kates, "Characterizing a Sustainability Transition: Goals, Targets, Trends, and Driving Forces"

Tuesday, 14 February

- Review/Send letters
- Deeds of Gift
- Execute Project Plan Action Items (Maintain Contact Logs)

Assignment: Read Gibson, Robert B. "Sustainability Assessment: Basic Components of a Practical Approach."

Thursday, 16 February — NO CLASS

- Responsible for 3 hours of community work

Assignment: **Email work summary by Friday night, Feb. 17**

Tuesday, 21 February

- **Guest Speaker: TBD**
- Group and Individual Check-ins
- Exploration of Diversity Issues Related to Sustainability

Thursday, 23 February — NO CLASS

- Responsible for 3 hours of community work

Assignment: **Email work summary by Friday night, Feb. 24**

Tuesday, 28 February

- **Guest Speaker: TBD**
- Group and Individual Check-ins
- Continued exploration of Diversity Issues Related to Sustainability

Thursday, 1 March — NO CLASS

- Responsible for 3 hours of community work

Assignment: **Email work summary by Friday night, Feb. 24**

Tuesday, 6 March

- **Guest Speaker: TBD**
- Group and Individual Check-ins
- Continued Exploration of Diversity Issues Related to Sustainability

Thursday, 8 March

- History Paper Peer Review (Bring 7 – 9 page drafts of history paper)
- Prepare Group Presentations on Subtopic Collections

Tuesday, 13 March

- Group Presentations on Subtopic Collections
- Revise Pitch Deck for PSU Library

Thursday, 15 March

- **7 – 9 Page History Paper Due**
- **Research Logs Due**

Tuesday, 20 March

- **Public Event for Collection Handoff**

