

Transitioning to Sustainable Communities

PuEnAf 324/ES&P 596

Hybrid Online Course Fall 2010

Professor Laurel E. Phoenix

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Office Hours: MWF 11:35-12:35

Changing climate, dwindling and more costly energy supplies, emerging scarcities in other natural resources, and instabilities developing from globalization require communities to transition to an ecosystem model that can buffer them from these shifting external forces. Simply put, this course offers the theory, tools, and living examples for “going local.” This online course introduces local, sustainable planning emphasizing an ecosystem model of local inputs and outputs to support housing, schools, jobs, transportation, food, city services, civic involvement, and more. “Going local” is a way to increase the resilience of a community to the outside forces of climate change, national economic swings, and increasing scarcity coupled with rising prices for energy resources. We will explore several systems for sustainable communities already developing around the world like Transition Towns, Eco-communities, the CASE model, and others, but with emphasis on a practical transformation of a community with its present layout, current funding, and current population. In other words, we will not look at environmental planning for new developments, but how to refashion and use the current community template differently so new physical, social, and energetic arrangements can support the natural and built infrastructures upon which humans depend. Resilient planning strengthens our communities so we are cushioned from distant disasters (e.g. hurricanes damaging oil rigs in the Gulf, Iowa River flooding stopping the flow of goods by train/truck from reaching our area) and can more flexibly adapt to a changing world. How can we change our local economic, social, and educational systems to adapt to a “going local” and “powering down” approach? Would buildings/plots of land be used the same way they were previously? Could we redefine waste streams to capture energy or vitamins/minerals/fibers for re-use? We will look at the flow of goods and energy and develop ways to transition to smaller-scale, more intimately connected systems that support citizen’s “sense of place” and civic pride.

Books:

There are three required books for this course. Additional readings and instructions for the map assignment based on the readings will be found in the course syllabus or in the “General Announcements” section.

Cities as Sustainable Ecosystems: Principles and Practices by Peter Newman and Isabella Jennings. 2008. Washington, DC: Island Press.

Plan C: Community Survival Strategies for Peak Oil and Climate Change by Pat Murphy. 2008. Gabriola Island, British Columbia: New Society Publishers.

The Transition Handbook: From oil dependency to local resilience by Rob Hopkins. 2008. Foxhole, Devon, England: Green Books.

<u>Methods of Student Evaluation</u>		(test available)	(due)
1 st Exam	20%	Fri. 10/8, 3:00 pm	Mon., 10/11, 5:00 pm
2 nd Exam	20%	Fri. 11/12, 3:00 pm	Mon., 11/15, 5:00 pm
Final	20%	Mon 12/13, 3:00 pm	Thur., 12/16, 5:00 pm
Online discussions	25%		
Map project of a transition city	<u>15%</u>		postmarked by 12/20 (Wisc.)
	100%		map rec'd by 12/22

Attention graduate students:

Students taking this course for graduate credit will be expected to perform at a graduate level.

Reading Schedule by subject

Besides readings listed by topic on your D2L CONTENTS page, also read the readings below:

In the matrix below, here are the short-hand names for each book:

CASE - Cities as Sustainable Ecosystems: Principles and Practices

Plan C - Plan C: Community Survival Strategies for Peak Oil and Climate Change

Transitions - The Transition Handbook: From oil dependency to local resilience

	<u>Case</u>	<u>Plan C</u>	<u>Transitions</u>
<u>Week of 9-6</u>			
Peak Oil Envir. infrastructure	p. 244-251	Chap. 1-4, 6	Forward, Intro, Chap.1-2
<u>Week of 9-13</u>			
How does Peak Oil and other resource competition affect our energy supply & options?			
<u>Week of 9-20</u>			
Resilient Models	Chap. 3-5		Chap. 3
<u>Week of 9-27</u>			
Psych. of change			Chap. 5-6
<u>Week of 10-4</u>			
Media & information		Chap. 7, 14-15	
<u>Week 10-11</u>			
Localization	Chap. 6	Chap. 16	
<u>Week 10-18&25</u>			
Food	p. 113-116, 120, 179-182, 209-210	Chap. 12-13	Chap. 4 p. 15, 65-66, 74-75, 78 180, 190-192, 196-197
<u>Week 11-1&8</u>			
Transportation	p. 45-46, 127-131 142, 166, 176	Chap. 5, 11	p. 59(s), 62(s) 70-71, 113.
<u>Week 11-15</u>			
Housing		Chap. 10	p. 114-117
<u>Week 11-22</u>			
Schooling		p. 228-230	p. 118-120

Week 11-29

Economy/jobs	Chap. 2, 9	Chap. 9, 14, 16-17 p. 251, 255-256, 269	197-199(s)
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Week of 12-6

Governance	Chap. 7, 8, 10	Chap. 4, 10, 12 p. 14, 45, 70-71, 73-75
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Directions

First click on all of the D2L pages to familiarize yourself with them. Check the homepage each time you log in to see if there is anything new posted in NEWS. The CONTENTS page has the syllabus, a document called NETIQUETTE that you must read, the COURSE SEQUENCE, and many interesting readings sorted by topic. The DISCUSSIONS page is the most used page. Here I may post something under GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS, if you have a question for me you can post it under RAISE YOUR HAND, or you can post a general interest comment to the whole class under HALLWAY, and don't forget to introduce yourself to the rest of the class under INTRODUCTIONS. Farther down the discussions page is where you will post comments and replies to the reading topics of the week. The two other D2L pages you will use are the DROPBOX page for submitting your essay exams, and the GRADES page to see your grades.

Discussions

The discussion questions are posted for each week on the course webpages. Post your answers to the different questions as often as you like. Also, check the "NEWS" page or the "General Announcements" section on the discussions page from me. Often I will direct you to a website related to the readings and you can incorporate what you learned from the website in your discussion answers. Participation through discussions is vital for this internet class – both reading what other people post and posting your own comments and replies. The computer system tracks not only the amount of posts you read but also the ones you post. I also re-sort all posts by author so I can re-read your posts and the quality/thought process of your answers.

Map Assignment

Find an already-printed street map of the city/village of your choice. You will be choosing a 5-10 mile section of this city/village to "refashion" how buildings or areas are used according to the theories we learn about from our readings. You will need to Xerox or transfer onto tracing paper (using several sheets if you have to) what your new vision for this community is. So, on the "before" map, you will mark where there are grocery stores, shopping malls, schools, houses, businesses, etc., and then on the "after" map you will mark the changes in how buildings or areas are used to adapt to a post Peak Oil world. So, as you are doing the readings, imagine what changes would need to take place in the community of your choice so you will be able to map these "before and after" uses and then send the two maps to me postmarked in Wisconsin by Dec. 20. You can either drop the maps off on campus M-F between 8:30-4:30 to the secretary Chris Terrien in MAC Hall 3rd floor, B wing (office B321) or mail them to:

Dr. Laurel Phoenix, UWGB
MAC Hall B310
2420 Nicolet Dr.
Green Bay, WI. 54311

Exams

Exams are all in the form of long essay answers. Your answers must demonstrate to me what you have read, and possible creative solutions to the problems.

Students with Disabilities

Consistent with the federal law and the policies of the University of Wisconsin, it is the policy of the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay to provide appropriate and necessary accommodations to students with documented physical and learning disabilities. If you anticipate requiring any auxiliary aids or services, you should contact me or the Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities at 465-2841 as soon as possible to discuss your needs and arrange for the provision of services.