

**SYLLABUS FOR PPD 461**  
**Sustainable Communities, Policy and Planning**  
**(Also known as, “Sustainable City Planning”)**  
**Sol Price School of Public Policy – Spring 2013**  
**University of Southern California**  
**Los Angeles, California**

**Note:** This syllabus will be periodically updated. Please check Blackboard for the most current version, and contact the instructor with any questions.

Schedule: Tuesday, Thursday at 2:00 – 3:50 PM, with a short break at about 3 PM.

Room: Waites Phillip Hall (WPH), Room B 28

Instructor: Richard H. (Dick) Platkin, AICP

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Section: 511529R

Final Exam: Thursday, May 8, 2-4 PM

**PPD 461 CATALOG COURSE DESCRIPTION:** As taken from the USC course catalog: “Planning as shaped by sustainability theories; sustainability indicators; topics include water resources, air quality, land use regulations, environmental design, carrying capacity, ecological footprint analysis.”

**PREREQUISITE(S):** At least one prior class related to environmental or city planning issues, or active participation in an environmentally-focused organization, or strong personal and professional interest in the topics of climate change, peak oil and gas, and sustainable city planning policies and practices.

**COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES:** This class has four learning objectives:

- 1) Development of professional writing and oral presentation skills, plus analytical tools essential to the development of good social policy.
- 2) Exposure to Los Angeles, including the legally mandates planning process, as well as local communities with either sustainable features or with a potential for a sustainable re-design.
- 3) Awareness of current trends and events related to the course, as they appear throughout semester. The instructor or a student will present and discuss a current news article related to the course at the beginning of each class. These articles will also be uploaded to Blackboard.
- 4) Knowledge about urban planning’s role in creating sustainable cities as part of broader efforts to plan for and promote sustainability. Sustainability will be first presented through a traditional definition: the political, social, and economic reorganization of society to ensure that the extraction, use, and disposal of non-renewable resources does not damage or destroy the planet’s fragile ecology, including the health of communities and individuals.

Based on the approach of *thinking globally and acting locally*, the first half of the course surveys important literature and debates on macro environmental crises and alternative solutions underlying discussions of sustainability, in particular economic processes, climate change, and peak oil and unconventional fossil fuels.

The second half of the course will, in contrast, present an updated definition of sustainability: the design and operation of cities to produce low cumulative and per capita carbon footprints in order to mitigate climate change through reduced Green House Gas emissions. In the second half of the semester, the course also identifies and evaluates regional and local sustainability policies and programs, especially at the municipal level, through lectures, guest speakers, and student research on Los Angeles neighborhoods. This section of the course examines a broad range of policy prescriptions, best practices, and implementation barriers -- with a careful look at the Los Angeles metropolitan area -- to make urban life more aligned with the quickly changing natural environment in terms of prevention of, mitigation of, and adaptation to climate change.

Because two environmental phenomena, climate change/global warming and peak oil and gas, are new, scientifically complex, and rapidly unfolding, in the first half of this course we will examine several approaches to these interlocking phenomena. This means an examination of the scientific debates regarding climate change/global warming and peak oil and gas, including underlying political and economic mechanisms, as well as a review of the debates over the best policies and programs to address the causes, problems, and alternatives to an advanced civilization dependent on finite and polluting fossil fuels for energy, transportation, chemistry, warfare, and business investments.

Among those who support the broad scientific consensus that climate change/global warming and peak oil are valid and dangerous trends, there are disagreements over consequences and remedies. For example, Michael Klare, one of whose books we will read in the course, argues that climate change and peak oil and gas are at hand and that the primary response of most governments to them, including our own, is not sustainable planning, but the use of new extraction technology and military force to secure oil, natural gas, and related shipping routes – despite catastrophic climate outcomes.

In contrast to Klare, Al Gore, Bill McKibben, and James Kunstler, and other authors of “doomsday” volumes on peak oil and climate change, focus on the deterioration and eventual collapse of modern life, in particular cities and suburbs, but with little emphasis on military conflict as a pervasive feature of the oil era, including the transition to unconventional fossil fuels and technologies (e.g., fracking).

One analyst, University of Oregon environmental sociologist John Bellamy Foster, attempts to synthesize both approaches and argues that technical solutions to a broad range of environmental crises will not succeed unless they are folded into a comprehensive program of political and economic restructuring to eliminate increasingly non-ecological business practices that ignore harmful, non-ecological externalities.

The remedies to current environmental crises, including climate change and peak oil and gas presented by these and other authors include broad, macro, global changes in energy production and consumption; national legislation; local, municipal and non-profit initiatives, such as changes in urban infrastructure and architecture; and many bottom-up community efforts focused on lifestyle changes, such as biking, gardening and tree-planting, improved farming and diet, clean energy, and recycling.

The second part of the course will carefully examine the full range of these local solutions, the theories behind them, their likely effects, their limitations, and policy and program gaps that must be addressed, with case studies drawn from the Los Angeles metropolitan area. In addition to lectures, films, and guest speakers, the study of local initiatives will also include student team research on local neighborhoods in Los Angeles.

The course will attempt to present alternative views on theoretical issues, broad policies, and specific programs related to sustainability. Students are encouraged to participate in these discussions through classroom questions and debates, research projects, supplementary readings, news items, and take-home essay exams. *Please remember to respect material that is new to you or with which you disagree. If you take issue with any of the interpretations you hear in class, please speak up or let the Instructor know.*

### **BLACKBOARD WEB SITE:**

In addition to assigned books that you should buy, articles and studies related to the course will be regularly posted on Blackboard. These include the latest version of the syllabus as it is updated throughout the semester, readings assigned for each class session, debate and news articles, announcements, PowerPoint presentations, instructor contact information, and the instructor's Resume and Curriculum Vita.

### **ABOUT THE INSTRUCTOR:**

Richard (Dick) Platkin is a Los Angeles based city planning consultant and writer whose professional experience includes 20 years as a city planner for the City of Los Angeles. He also worked for the City of Seattle, as well as several non-profits and a small private sector planning firm in Los Angeles. In addition to teaching at USC and CSUN, he works as a city-planning consultant, primarily for community organizations in Los Angeles, and also writes on planning issues in Los Angeles for Progressive Planning, City Watch LA, and Ron Kaye's LA.

His education includes a BA in history from the University of Michigan, a Master of Urban Planning from the University of Washington, and an MA and subsequent graduate work in sociology at UCLA.

Mr. Platkin is active in the Planners Network and on the board of the Beverly Wilshire Homes Association and East Hollywood Neighborhood Council Planning Committee.

Copies of his current Resume and Curriculum Vita are posted on the course website.

In addition to the course material, he is interested in meeting with students to discuss professional internships, volunteering, and careers and/or graduate school in city planning and related professional fields.

### **REQUIRED COURSE TEXTS, IN ORDER THAT WE WILL READ AND DISCUSS THEM:**

These books will be read in the following order and are available at the USC bookstore. They can also be purchased as new or used books through such on-line booksellers as Amazon and ABE books, usually without shipping charges.

The Vulnerable Planet: A Short History of the Environment, John Bellamy Foster, 1999, Monthly Review Press. *(Foster has several more recent books on the economic and political aspects of sustainability, but this is most accessible one. More recent Foster essays, including a new forward for this book, have been posted though Blackboard to bring the book up to date.)*

Hot: Living through the Next Fifty Years on Earth, Mark Hertsgaard, 2011, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. *(Hertsgaard is a widely published journalist whose recent articles have focused on the environment. This accessible book tells both a personal and global story. If any of his new essays on the environment are published during this course, we will fold them in as supplementary readings).*

The Long Emergency: Surviving the End of Oil, Climate Change, and Other Converging Catastrophes of the Twenty-First Century, James Howard Kuntsler, Grove Press, 2009 edition. *(This book is available on Blackboard as a PDF document, as well as through on-line merchants. We will only read several chapters, but the entire book will be uploaded.)*

Rising Powers, Shrinking Planet: The New Geopolitics of Energy, Michael T. Klare, Metropolitan Books, 2008. *(Michael Klare is Professor of Peace and World Security Studies at Hampshire College. This recent books focuses on current and likely energy wars intended to secure oil and gas reserves and shipping routes in response to peak oil and gas. Klare is a prolific writer, and several of his new essays will be included in the course. In addition, any essays that are published during the semester will also be uploaded to Blackboard.)*

Green Metropolis: Why Living Smaller, Living Closer, and Driving Less are the Keys to Sustainability, David Owen, Riverhead Books, 2009. *(This is a well-received book on the latest policies and programs to establish compact, sustainable cities based on mass transit and apartment living. It will be a source of debates about LEED and localization.)*

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**These books are recommended for students who want more detailed information or views on sustainable city planning beyond the assigned readings in this course.**

Eaarth: Making a Life on a Tough New Planet, Bill McKibben, Times Books, 2010.

Plan B 4.0: Mobilizing to Save Civilization, Lester R. Brown, Norton, 2009. This text is also available for a free download at [www.earthpolicy.org](http://www.earthpolicy.org).

The Ecological Revolution: Making Peace with the Planet, John Bellamy Foster, Monthly Review Press, 2009. A larger and updated successor volume, also edited by Foster, has been subsequently published: The Ecological Rift: Capitalism's War on the Earth, Monthly Review Press, 2010.

#### **COURSE DOCUMENTARY FILMS:**

The 11<sup>th</sup> Hour: Turn Mankind's Darkest Hour into its Finest, Leonardo Dicaprio, 2007

Gasland: Can You Light your Water on Fire? Josh Fox, 2010 *(This is an Oscar winning documentary on fracking. Fox's sequel is now available and, if possible, we will screen the new version instead of this documentary.)*

## SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS:

In addition to assigned books, related readings are listed on the syllabus for most class sessions and are uploaded in PDF form through PPD 461's Blackboard website.

## NEWS SOURCES:

Students enrolled in this course are strongly advised to monitor environmental news stories through free on-line blogs and news services, in particular **Climate Progress / Think Progress / Daily Climate** and **Streetsblog Los Angeles**. They are recommended for students who want a deeper understanding of the causes, consequences, and sustainable remedies for the environmental crises examined in the course at the global, national, regional, and especially municipal and neighborhood scales. This website/email services covers all major climate and energy-related stories as they unfold.

### Newspapers and Magazines:

*Discover Magazine* (Accessible scientific articles)

*E-The Environmental Magazine* (Also accessible scientific articles)

*Los Angeles Times* (LA's major newspaper. It is not what it used to be, but it is still the best source of local news related to this course.)

*Wall Street Journal* (Well regarded for its general and economic news, not its editorial-opinion section. This newspaper has many global and national articles relevant to PPD 461, but most articles are no longer available to non-subscribers.)

### On-line environmental news consolidators that you can subscribe to for free:

**Climate Progress/Think Progress/Daily Climate** (This daily email should be on your reading list for this course. It occasionally includes non-environmental article not related to this course and not necessary to read. It is also available for \$1/month from Amazon as a Kindle blog.)

*Atlantic Cities*

*Grist*

*Planetizen* (Based in LA, but consolidates news and original essays related to city planning, including sustainability. Also compiles evaluations of all city planning graduate programs.)

**Climate and Capitalism**. Particular relevant to the perspective of John Bellamy Foster, the first author we study in PPD 461.

*AlterNet* (General news, but offers the option of subscribing to top environmental news)

*Yahoo and Google Alerts* (You will receive daily posts on any key words you select)

*The Daily Good*

*Science Daily Environmental Headlines*

*ENN Daily Newsletter*

*Team Treehugger*

*IPS-Environment*

*On Earth - A Survival Guide to the Planet*

*The Daily Climate*

*Environmental Health News/Above the Fold*)

**The Oil Drum (Highly recommended on energy issues)**

### On-line E-zines and blogs focused on planning issues in Los Angeles:

*City Watch LA* (Published twice per week)

*The Planning Report* (Features in depth articles on planning issues in the Los Angeles area from a top-down perspective. The abridged, on-line version is free)

*Plan-itLosAngeles* (Instructor's occasional blog)  
*The City Maven / Maven's Morning Coffee* (Digest of local planning-related events and meetings)  
*LA Observed* (Published daily)  
***Streetsblog Los Angeles*** (*Highly recommended on sustainable planning issues in LA*)  
*Curbed LA*  
*The Transit Coalition*  
*Transit Newsletter*

**GUEST LECTURERS (Subject to change)**

Nate Baird, LADOT Bicycle Coordinator  
Eric Bruins, LA County Public Health, Bicycle advocate.  
Steve Factor, Alternative and clean energy entrepreneur.  
Monica Gilchrist, ICLEI, on City of LA sustainability programs.  
Eileen Hatrick, Certified Gardener, on community and school gardens.  
Ron Lorenzen, City of Los Angeles Arborist, on LA's Urban Forest.  
Maria Mehranian, City Planning Consultant, High-speed rail in California.  
Deborah Murphy, Landscape Architect, pedestrianization planner and advocate.  
Margot Ocanas, LADOT Pedestrian Coordinator.  
Derek Steele, Inglewood non-profit with gardening and food programs.  
Jeff Warner, Ph.D., Geologist, on The Science behind Peak Oil;

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING:**

<b>Course Engagement</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Quiz</b>	<b>05%</b>
<b>Team Presentation</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Mid-Term</b>	<b>25%</b>
<b>Team Field trip write-up</b>	<b>05%</b>
<b>Team Neighborhood Analysis</b>	<b>15 %</b>
<b>Final</b>	<b>30%</b>
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<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100 %</b>

**Course Engagement:** Ten percent (10 %) of your final grade will be determined by a subjective factor called Course Engagement. It will be based on your attendance and participation in class discussions, in-class demonstration of familiarity with the readings, meetings with the instructor during office hours or by appointment to discuss the course and related topics, the timeliness of your assignments, and your willingness to propose a custom exam question. If you have a viewpoint on sustainability not presented in the readings or lectures, you are invited to make a class presentation, as long as you agree to submit to questions from other students.

Skipping class or using class time for voice mail, personal email, Facebook, Twitter, texting, bills, Sudoku, and personal correspondence, or web-surfing is the opposite of Course Engagement. Cell phones are not allowed while class is in session, but you may use your netbook, laptop, or tablet to take notes, as long as you do NOT use them during class for anything else. If you do not find the classroom materials interesting or they do not require your full attention, then please ask questions or raise points that you think have been overlooked in the course.

Students who abuse these privileges and choose to surf the web, e-mail, or text during class will be asked to stop these practices as a condition of class participation. If you cannot abide by these rules, then you should consider enrolling in another course. Furthermore, if these rules are repeatedly flouted, then class notes may be restricted to hand-written summaries.

*You are also strongly encouraged to let the instructor know how the course can be improved – anonymously, if you prefer -- through notes left in the Instructor's mailbox in Lewis Hall 107A.*

**Quiz** (5% of your final grade). There will be one scheduled in-class quiz on course materials, for a potential of 5 points. The quiz date will be scheduled in advance.

**Team Debate / Reading Presentation** (10% of final grade): At the beginning of class sessions, two students will present a debate related to topics in the course, including scheduled readings, when relevant. Debate topics should include the following, but you can stage a debate on another topic if approved in advance by the instructor. Whenever possible debate topics have been linked to that day's readings, although several days have been left open because of guest lecturer.

1. The market system (capitalism) can be modified through treaties, regulations, and incentives to produce sufficient reductions in Green House Gases to reverse global warming and avert catastrophic climate change. (01-23-14)
2. Efficient products that use less energy in production and daily use should be substituted for current products to slow down the generation of the green house gases that contribute to climate change. (01-28-14)
3. Human-created global warming and climate changes are a hoax because the planet earth has a long geological history of major pre-industrial climate fluctuations. (01-30-14)
4. Climate change is so far advanced that the public and private sectors should their switch focus from mitigation to adaptation. (02-04-14)
5. The best way to reduce Green House Gas emissions is to cap or reduce the planet's population. (02-06-14)
6. Peak oil and peak natural gas are so far off that they are not worth considering because market forces will always find new fossil fuels, such as shale and tar sands. (02-20-14)
7. As climate change and peak oil unfold, large cities should be abandoned in favor of small towns and self-sufficient farming communities. (02-25-14)
8. It would be great to remake Los Angeles as a sustainable city, but there is just not enough money available to get the job done. (03-04-14)
9. Based on fracking and other new technologies, the United States will soon become energy independent. (03-06-15)
10. The California Environmental Quality Act is not effective and should it be changed/reformed by either strengthening or weakening. (03-16-14)
11. Voluntary changes in personal behavior are important and should be a central feature of sustainability policies and programs. (03-25-14)
12. The residents of Los Angeles are so addicted to their cars that they will never switch over to such alternative transportation modes as mass transit, buses, car and vanpooling, biking, walking, and telecommuting. (04-01-14)
13. Parks and open space are critical to efforts to create sustainable cities. (04-08-14)
14. LEED certified buildings, especially "green" private homes, could make a big difference in greening cities like Los Angeles. (04-15-14)
15. Alternate energy sources should rely on local sources of electrical generation, not distributional systems based on extended grid systems. (04-22-14)

When your class debate/reading presentation is done, the next step is to lead a class discussion on the same topic. You should have a well-written written summary of your presentation and discussion topics and questions available for electronic (.doc) and hard copy submission to the instructor when your team presents, and part of your grade will be based on this written report. Based on grading comments, you rewrite and resubmit the team debate write-up

If you do not have a debate partner or do not want to be paired with some in the class, you can make a solo presentation of a debate topic or reading, as long as your presentation includes the pros and the cons of your topic, as well as the written report.

**Walking Tour Team Write-Up** (5% of final grade): In the second half of the course, we will have a class walking tour of several gentrifying, pedestrian oriented neighborhoods in downtown Los Angeles. You should, if possible, access the field trip by mass transit. The same team members who will prepare a neighborhood analysis several weeks later should jointly write your write-up.

**Neighborhood Analysis Team Assignment** (15% of final grade): There will be one team field assignment, which will account for 15 percent of your grade. Teams are encouraged and should have two members. If you need help in assembling a team, please contact the instructor. Your team should be assembled by Tuesday, November 5, 2013, along with your team's first and second choices for a neighborhood to analyze.

The team report should be well written in a style that is accessible to a non-specialist reader, free of technical terms, jargon, and all mechanical writing errors.

To assist you with your team's neighborhood analysis, rain or shine, we will undertake a field trip of the new residential areas of downtown Los Angeles. Background articles will be uploaded to Blackboard and discussed in class. Students should use public transit or bikes to reach the field trip site, the Grand Central Market, at Third and Broadway. Students unable to join the field trip can walk it on their own, relying on articles uploaded to Blackboard and classroom discussion.

The team report is due in hard copy and electronic (Word file ending in .doc or .docx) copy emailed to [platkin@usc.edu](mailto:platkin@usc.edu) in class on Tuesday, November 19, 2013. The report should be limited to six pages or about 1250 words. Please follow all of the writing and formatting requirements outlined in this syllabus and provided in class, such as use of a spell checker, careful editing, and closely responding to the report prompts. Photos will be a welcome addition, and the project will be discussed in detail in class.

Questions to be addressed in your team report of about five pages (1000 words) on the field assignment include the following. They should be listed as prompts throughout your team essay.

- What could be done to improve transit and bike trips to and from your neighborhood's location?
- What design features of the neighborhood are auto-centric and which emphasize other transportation modes, including walking?
- Which housing alternatives and local amenities could be improved to make the neighborhood more sustainable and less auto-centric?
- Do any local municipal ordinances and plans address local sustainability issues?
- Other related questions of your choice that will improve your report, such as the ease of living a low carbon life-style in the neighborhood.

**Mid-Term and Final Exam** (55 % of grade): There will be two essay exams, both in the form of take home essays based on the course readings, PowerPoint's, lectures, student presentations, and class discussions. You must submit a hard copy and an electronic version of each essay to the Instructor as a Word (.doc, .dot, or .docx) document by the exam deadline. The electronic copy of the two exams must be e-mailed to [platkin@usc.edu](mailto:platkin@usc.edu) by the exam deadline. You can also drop off your hard copy in advance at the Department Office at Lewis Hall, Room 102.

For the Mid-term and Final Exam students can propose their own custom question based on issues examined in the course, but the Instructor must approve the wording before the Mid-Term and Final Exams are distributed in class.

Grading is not based on a curve, and the grading scheme for the Team Report and two take-home Exams is based on the following criteria:

**A level work:** Clear, well-written answers to questions demonstrating a mastery of all course readings, lectures, and class discussions, including outside materials and arguments, as well as ability to critically support or rebut the positions of the authors and interpretations presented in lectures. Writing in a professional voice without mechanical errors is required for A level work. If you have done the readings, attended and participated in lectures and discussions, met with the instructor, and followed directions, you should be able to get an A in this course.

**B level work:** General mastery of all course readings, lectures, and class discussions. In other words, if you can competently repeat back what you have read, as well as heard in lectures, you will at least get a B in this class. Clear writing without mechanical errors is also expected for B level work.

**C level work:** Weak essays with writing errors and partial mastery of all course readings, lectures, and discussions.

**D level work:** Failure to understand assignments, course readings, lectures, and discussions despite attending class and submitting team projects and mid-term and final exams.

**F level work:** Failure to attend class and submit team projects and mid-term and final exams responding to the description of the assignment.

The purpose of the assignments is to not only demonstrate a mastery of all course materials, but to learn how to make professional reports as preparation for future work in a public policy or academic position. This means that all assignments must be typed, double-spaced, and printed in an attractive font, such as Arial 12 point. Do not use colored inks or small fonts. Your format should include a 1.25 inch left and right margin and informative headers to structure your essays. References should be used for articles not covered in assigned readings, lectures, or classroom discussions.

**Report and Exam Format and Style Requirements:** Each report and exam essay must carry your name(s), date on the first page, along with the title of the paper, including the full text of the prompt, question(s) you are answering. Subsequent pages should have your name(s). **Your reports and exam essays must have page numbers and should be stapled, not clipped.**

Be sure to carefully edit all your work and to use your word processor's spelling and grammar checker to catch all errors. You should also have someone else read over your draft to catch errors that you and your word processor may have missed. **Based on USC requirements, you must submit an electronic copy of all written assignments, in Word (.doc or .docx), to [platkin@usc.edu](mailto:platkin@usc.edu) by the assignment deadline.**

You should also follow several other standard writing conventions for professional reports, in particular the use of headers and sub-headers throughout the essay, as well as short sentences and short paragraphs. You should also try to write precisely and avoid sweeping generalizations, such as attributing the actions of specific institutions, such as private companies or public agencies, to people, mankind, the entire country, society, or to the public. This means you should always avoid such expressions as "we think" or "society does".

You are strongly urged to make use of the course web site, campus library, and scholarly Internet resources, in-class discussion, recommended blogs and news sites, as well as office-hour meetings, to further your interests in sustainable cities. There is a vast storehouse of articles and reports potentially available, with this field rapidly expanding, so please feel free to chat with the instructor before or after class, explore ideas, and discuss options and obstacles. Furthermore, USC has a student writing center. Its staff will not only review written work, but offers coaching and training in writing, a critical skill that is now poorly taught in most K-12 schools, but which is essential for all policy-related professions and graduate school programs.

#### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:**

Students should maintain strict adherence to standards of academic integrity, as described in <http://www.usc.edu/dept/publications/SCAMPUS/>). For more information see "Guide to Avoiding Plagiarism," from USC's Expository Writing Program, [http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/student-conduct/ug\\_plag.htm](http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/student-conduct/ug_plag.htm). All references to or excerpts from the work of others must be properly cited using APA citation standards. This includes work made public on the Internet. Please be aware that the University has strict sanctions for plagiarism, including preliminary drafts. If you have questions about academic integrity or citation standards, please ask in advance.

#### **POLICY REGARDING DISABILITY SERVICES AND PROGRAMS:**

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to the instructor as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open early 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

**INCOMPLETES AND GRADING POLICY:** Full details are available at the following link: [http://www.usc.edu/dept/ARR/private/forms/Handbooks/Grade\\_Handbook\\_rev082010.pdf](http://www.usc.edu/dept/ARR/private/forms/Handbooks/Grade_Handbook_rev082010.pdf)

## COURSE SCHEDULE FOR LECTURES, READINGS, PROJECTS, AND EXAMS

**Note: Attendance and class participation is part of your Engagement grade. If you have scheduling conflicts because of medical issues, family emergencies, religious holidays, or inter-collegiate sports events, you must contact the instructor to make alternative arrangements in advance. This includes notes from physicians.**

**The format of classes will be lecture and discussion. If students have done the readings, then most of the class sessions will be related discussion. If students have not done the readings, and the discussions stall, then the mix will emphasize the instructor's lectures.**

### Theme 1 of Thinking Globally: The Environment and the Economic System

**Week 1:** **Tuesday, January 14, 2014.** Overview of Course, including the city-planning context of sustainability initiatives. Discussion of syllabus, including readings and assignments, and questions about the course and instructor. Brainstorming on how to give Los Angeles a sustainable "makeover."

Readings from course website: 1) *Forget Shorter Showers: Why Personal Change does not Equal Political Change*. 2) Michael Klare, *How to Fry a Planet*

**Thursday, January 16, 2014.** Documentary film: The 11<sup>th</sup> Hour: Turn Mankind's Darkest Hour into its Finest, Leonardo Dicaprio, 2007.

Reading from course website: *Al Gore – We Can't Wish Away Climate Change*

**Week 2:** **Tuesday, January 21, 2014.** Lecture and discussion of Foster, *Preface*, Chapters 1 (*The Ecological Crisis*), and 2 (*Ecological Conditions before the Industrial Revolution*), pp. 7- 49.

Reading from the course website: 1) *Foster, The Vulnerable Planet 15 Years Later*. 2) *Foster, The Planetary Emergency*

**Thursday, January 23, 2014.** Student presentation - Topic 1. Lecture and discussion of Foster, Chapters 3 (*The Environment at the Time of the Industrial Revolution*) and 4 (*Expansion and Conservation*), pp. 50-107.

Readings from the course website: 1) *Foster, Capitalism and the Accumulation of Catastrophe*. 2) *Foster, Economy and Environmental Catastrophe at OWS*.

**Week 3:** **Tuesday, January 28, 2014.** Student presentation - Topic 2. Lecture and discussion of Foster, Chapters 5 (*Imperialism and Ecology*) and 6 (*The Vulnerable Planet*), pp. 85-124.

Readings from the course website: 1) *Foster, The Return of Jevon's Paradox: Capitalism and the Curse of Energy Efficiency*. 2) *Foster, Why Ecological Revolution?*

**Thursday, January 30, 2014.** Student presentation - Topic 3. Lecture and discussion of Foster, Chapter 7 (*The Socialization of Nature*) and *Afterward*, pp. 125-150.

Readings from the course web-site: 1) *Isolated Peru Tribe makes Uncomfortable Contact*. 2) *McKibben on Why the Energy Elite has it in for the Planet*.

### Theme 2 of Thinking Globally: Oil and Climate Change

**Week 4:** **Tuesday, February 4, 2014.** Student presentation – Topic 4. Hertsgaard, Prologue (*Growing Up Under Global Warming*), Chapters 1 (*Living Through the Storm*) and 2 (*Three Feet of Water*), pp. 1-46.  
Reading from course website: 1) *Holden, Meeting the Climate Change Challenge, Chafee Memorial Lecture.* 2) *Biggest Ever Jump Seen in Global Warming Gases.*

**Thursday, February 6, 2014.** Student Presentation – Topic 5. Hertsgaard, Chapters 3 (*My Daughter's Earth*), 4 (*Ask the Climate Question*) and 5 (*The Two Hundred Year Plan*), pp. 47-127.  
Readings from the course website: 1) *Approaching a State Shift in the Earth's Biosphere.* 2) *Did Green House Gases cause the Earth's Greatest Mass Extinction?*

**Quiz.**

**Week 5:** **Tuesday, February 11, 2014.** Student Presentation. Hertsgaard, Chapters 6 (*Do You Know What it Means to Miss New Orleans?*), 7 (*In Vino Veritas: The Business of Climate Adaptation*), and 8 (*How Will We Feed Ourselves?*), pp. 128-217.  
Readings from course website: 1) *State's Levees Vulnerable to Quakes by Los Angeles Times.* 2) *State of California – Identifying Adaptation Strategies.* 3) *Preparing for Climate Change – A Guidebook for Local, Regional, and State Government.* 4) *PlanNYC 2011 Full Report.* 5) *Chicago Climate Action Plan.* (Note: Items 2-5 for scanning, not reading.)

**Thursday, February 13, 2014.** Student presentation (Topic ). Hertsgaard, Chapters 9 (*While the Rich Avert their Eyes*) and 10 (*"This Was a Crime"*), pp. 218-294.  
Reading from course website: *Metropolitan Water District Wages Costly War with Nature and Age.*

**Theme Three of Thinking Globally: Peak Oil and its Consequences**

**Week 6:** **Tuesday, February 18, 2014.** Guest Lecture, Dr. Jeff Warner, geologist, on the science and likely implications of peak oil.  
Readings from course website: 1) Dr. Jeff Warner, USC *PowerPoint on Peak Oil.* 2) George Monbiot, *Peak Oil cannot be Prevented.*

**Thursday, February 20, 2014.** Student presentation (Topic 6). Klare, Prologue (*The Unocal Affair*), Chapters 1 (*Altered States*) and 2 (*Seeking More, Finding Less*), pp. 1-62. Kuntsler, *Modernity and the Fossil Fuel Dilemma, in the The Long Emergency*, pages 2-60. PDF of entire Kuntsler book is on Blackboard.  
Reading from course website: *Klare, Extreme Energy Means an Extreme Planet.*

**Week 7:** **Tuesday, February 25, 2014.** Student presentation - Topic 7. Klare, Chapters 3 (*The "Chindia" Challenge*) and 4 (*An Energy Juggernaut*), pp. 82-114. Kunstler, *The Long Emergency*, pp. 235-307. *PDF of entire Kunstler book is on Blackboard.*  
Readings from course website. *US Annual Energy Outlook 2013.*

**Thursday, February 27, 2014.** Student presentation (Topic 7). Klare, Chapter 5 (*Draining the Caspian*) and 6 (*The Global Assault of Africa's Vital Resources*), pp. 115-176.

Readings from course website: 1) *A Tour of the New Politics of Global Warming by Scientific American.* 2) *Demonizing China - Pundits get China's Role in Africa Wrong*, by Barry Sautman.

**Week 8:** **Tuesday, March 4, 2014.** Student presentation - Topic 8. Klare, Chapters 7 (*Encroaching on "American Lake"*), 8 (*Crossing a Threshold*), and 9 (*Averting Catastrophe*), pp. 177-261.  
Reading from course website: *Western Oil Firms Remain as U.S. Exits Iraq.*

**Thursday, March 6, 2014.** Student presentation on fracking (Topic 9).  
Oscar winning Documentary film: *Gasland: Can you Light your Water on Fire?*  
By Josh Fox.

Readings from course website: 1) *Levi, A New Paper on Natural Gas as a Bridge Fuel.* 2) *McKibben, Why not Frack?* 3) *Oil Drum, Future Bakken Production and Hydrofracking.* 4) *The Fracked-up USA Shale Gas Bubble.* 5) *NY Times, Insiders Sound a Financial Alarm Amidst a Natural Gas.*

Discussion and distribution of take-home mid-term exam.

**Week 9:** **Tuesday, March 11, 2014. Introduction to Thinking Locally**  
Lecture and Discussion on relevance of thinking globally about climate change and peak oil, and then acting locally.  
***Mid-term due in class in both electronic copy to [platkin@usc.edu](mailto:platkin@usc.edu) and hard copy.***

**Thursday, March 16, 2014.** Student presentation – Topic 10. Lecture on Climate Change trends and legislation in California, including CEQA.

Readings from course web-site:

- 1) *Prof. Dan Kammen on UC Alternative Energy Research*
- 2) *Dr. Kelly Redmond on Climate Change Impacts Observed in California*
- 3) *Dr. Dan Cayan on Observable Climate Change in California*
- 4) *Dr. Michael Haneman on Climate Change in Context of Other Stresses on California's Future*
- 5) *Dr. Daniel Sperling on California Transportation Improvements to Address Climate Change*
- 6) *Executive Summary 2009 California Climate Adaptation Strategy Discussion*
- 7) *Institute for Good Government, California Climate Action Best Practices*
- 8) *AlterNet - California's Water Woes Threaten Food Supply*
- 9) *Legislation – Climate Change in California*

**Week 10:** **Spring recess: March 17-22, 2014**

**Week 11:** **Tuesday, March 25, 2014.** Student presentation (Topic 11). Discussion of mid-term exams, content and writing issues.  
Lecture and discussion of Owen, Chapter 1 (*More Like Manhattan*), pp. 1-4  
8. Reading from course web-site: *Green Urbanism – Formulating a Series of Holistic Principles*.

**Thursday, March 27, 2014.** Guest lectures on bicycle planning from Eric Bruins, LA Country Bicycle Coalition, and Nate Baird, LADOT.  
Readings from course web-site: 1) *Biking and Walking Media Fact Sheet*.  
2) *Rise of Urban Biking*. 3) *Problems with Spring Street Bike Lane*.  
4) *LA City Draft Bike Plan June 2010 Executive Summary*.

**Saturday, March 29, 2014.** Field trip to new pedestrian-oriented neighborhoods of downtown Los Angeles. Rain or shine, meet at The Last Bookstore, 4<sup>th</sup> and Spring Street, at 11 AM. Extra-credit reports on walking tour do on Thursday, November 7, in hard copy and Word file emailed to [platkin@usc.edu](mailto:platkin@usc.edu). Relevant background articles posted on Blackboard under "Field trip."

**Week 12:** **Tuesday, April 1, 2014.** Student presentation – Topic 12.  
Review of field trip findings. Lecture and discussion of Owen, Chapter 2 (*Liquid Civilization*) pp. 49-100. Reading from course web-site: *California gasoline consumers hurt by few suppliers*.  
Introduction to 2<sup>nd</sup> Team Report: Lists of second report teams and first and second neighborhood choice due in class. We will try to finalize neighborhoods and teams in class.

**Thursday, April 3, 2014.** Guest lecture on pedestrian planning and programs with focus on Los Angeles from Margot Ocanas (LADOT) and Deborah Murphy (Los Angeles Walks). PowerPoints uploaded to Blackboard.  
Reading from course website: 1) *California Complete Streets Act*. 2) *Caltrans Complete Streets Manual*. 3) *Update to the California General Plan Guidelines: Complete Streets and the Circulation Element* (California Governor's Office of Planning and Research). 4) *Model Design Manual for Living Streets*.  
5) *Jefferson Boulevard Streetscape Plan*.

**Week 13:** **Tuesday, April 8, 2014.** Student presentation - Topic 13.  
Lecture and discussion of Owen, Chapter 3, (*There and Back*, pp. 101-162) and 4 (*The Great Outdoors*, pp. 163-264).  
Reading from course website: 1) *Imagine a Future with Car-Free*. 2) *Panorama City Streetscape Plan*. 3) *Urban Living for Active Living* by Kristin Day. 4) *How to make Los Angeles a walkable city*.  
**Quiz.**

**Thursday, April 10, 2014.** Lecture by and discussion with Eileen Hatrick, Certified Gardener, on School and Community Gardens, Derek Steele, Inglewood non-profit.  
Readings from course website: 1) *LA Gardens - Issues of Location and Equity*.  
2) *Growing Pains for Curbside Gardening in Los Angeles*. 3) *Urban edible farming reading list*.

- Week 14:** **Tuesday, April 15, 2014.** Student presentation - Topic 14. Lecture and discussion of Owen, Chapters 5, *Embodied Efficiency*, pp. 203- . Reading from course website: 1) *Green Revolution comes to urban neighborhoods*.
- Thursday, April 17, 2014.** Guest Lecture from transportation engineers on sustainability-related plans and programs in Los Angeles: Readings from course website: 1) *Green LA Action Plan to Lead the Nation in Fighting Global Warming - Executive Summary*. 2) *City of LA Climate Action Plan*. 3) *Los Angeles METRO Climate Action and Adaptation Plan*. **Team Neighborhood Analysis deadline.** Email report to [platkin@usc.edu](mailto:platkin@usc.edu) by close of business. Hard copy can be left at RGL 102 or submitted in class.
- Week 15:** **Tuesday, April 22, 2014.** Student presentation – Topic 15. Lecture and discussion of Owen, Chapter 6, *The Shape of Things to Come*, pp. - 324
- Thursday, April 24, 2014.** Guest lecture by Ron Lorenzen, Los Angeles City Forester on the Los Angeles Urban Forest. Guest lecture by Monica Gilchrist, ICLEI, on LA's compliance with State of California climate legislation. Readings on course website: 1) *Managing a Sustainable Urban Forest by LA City Urban Forestry*. 2) *Smart Planting for the New Urban Forest*. 3) *Ron Lorenzen lecture outline*.
- Week 16:** **Tuesday, April 29, 2014.** Guest lecture by Steve Factor on alternative energy technologies and business models. Readings on course website: 1) *A Gold Rush in Clean Energy Search*. 2) *Solar Energy Proponents push California to adopt “feed-in tariff.”*
- Thursday, May 1, 2014.** Remaining student presentation(s). Concluding lecture summarizing the course. Explanation of on-line course evaluations and distribution of take-home final exam. ***Custom final exam questions are encouraged, but the instructor must approve them by the last day of instruction.***
- Week 17:** **Thursday, May 8, 2014 (2 – 4 PM)**  
Hard copy of Final Exam essay to be dropped off in classroom and emailed to [platkin@usc.edu](mailto:platkin@usc.edu). Hard copies may also be dropped off at the Department office, Lewis Hall 102, before class.

**If you are interested in occasional emails on environmental issues raised in the course over the next few years, please leave or email an off-campus email address with the instructor.**