### Course Description

*We travel together, passengers on a little space ship, dependent on its vulnerable reserves of air and soil; all committed for our safety to its security and peace; preserved from annihilation only by the care, the work, and, I will say, the love we give our fragile craft* (Adlai Stevenson, Speech to the UN, 1965).

*Spaceship Earth* is an image for our need to create a sustainable future. How can we improve the quality of human life in the face of Climate Change and conflicts over food, water, transportation, and energy resources? Our past and current choices impact the living conditions, even survival, of future generations. Income inequality is threatening sustainable development here in the U.S. and worldwide. How we act as human beings and as a society can change these conditions. Communication is key to individual behavior, social, economic and political choices and can help to make our lives sustainable. Through in-depth study of films, readings and online sources, we will explore the economic, social and ecological principles of sustainability. We will discuss the importance linking scientific evidence, public policies and individual behavior, and work on strategies for lasting change.

While technology will provide some improvements, changing human behavior is the key to reducing carbon emissions, pollution, and to reducing the dependence of our society on fossil fuels. Human behavior change research has mostly focused on health (e.g. smoking, diet, exercise) but it can also affect environmental sustainability. In other words, we can change the way we act and the choices we make. This can help create a world, which is ‘sustainable’ for future generations, and at the same time improve our own health and quality of life. Environmental sustainability and sustainable health behaviors are increasingly interconnected. Both are subject to long-term individual behavior change processes. Translating scientific insights into human behavior has been a challenge for many years.

Communication, film and other media can become positive change agents. We will investigate individual and mediated environmental messages; analyze and experiment with ways communication affects environmental knowledge, attitudes, and behavior; design communication campaigns to effect resource use and ecological responsibility. The course will analyze cinematic depictions from stewardship to destruction of ecosystems and ways in which film can catalyze change. Students will study the dramatic and/or narrative voice of film/documentary in conveying compelling stories about economic systems and ecosystems with a focus on sustainability. Major economic and ecological principles raised by the films will be discussed in tandem with the cinematic style employed to embrace and explore those principles. The course requires intensive participation both in-class and online, the completion of writings and/or projects as assigned and a final project to be determined by the students in concert with the professor.
Course Goals

- Define key issues in the relationships among, poverty, inequality, and environmental justice
- Identify research questions regarding climate change, environment, and sustainability
- Locate and examine reliable sources of information about climate change, and related social and environmental threats
- Determine ideological and pragmatic drivers of information quality, its selection and (possibly) distortion
- Investigate individual and mediated environmental messages
- Explore the ways to impact environmental knowledge, attitudes, and behavior
- Design communication campaigns to affect resource use, ecological and economic responsibility
- Become actively involved in campus and community environmental/sustainability activities

Student Learning Outcomes

If you successfully participate in this class you will be able to…

- Describe political, social and economic decisions through the lens of sustainability
- Articulate why and how your personal choices are important in achieving sustainable change
- Appreciate the relationships between poverty, inequality, and environmental justice
- Recognize the connection of local and global sustainability
- Analyze, identify and forecast potential unintended consequences of anthropogenic actions
- Describe and design film and media messages for diverse target audiences and channels
- Utilize film and electronic media as agents for social change
- Identify scientific and non-scientific sources and assess the quality of evidence
- Properly cite scientific and non-scientific sources, both conventional and electronic formats

General Education Information

This course is approved under the old General Education program (Catalog years 2015 and earlier) for English Communication (EC) and Social Science (S).

In the New General Education program (2016 Catalog): This is a Grand Challenge course, which is approved in the new General Education program for Information Literacy (IL) and Civic Knowledge and Responsibility (CKR).

Information for the New General Education program (2016 catalog):

General Education Competency and Social Responsibilities Areas & Grand Challenges

As a General Education course, this class will stress the outcomes Information Literacy as well as Civic Knowledge and Responsibility. This is also a Grand Challenges course, which addresses complex issues in an interdisciplinary context, and applies ethical principles to address these issues.

This course fulfills the Competency area Information Literacy as well as the area Civic Knowledge and Responsibilities. Information Literacy is the ability to know when there is a need for information, to be able to identify, locate, evaluate, and effectively and responsibly use and share that information for the problem at hand. Civic knowledge and responsibility encompasses actions wherein individuals participate in activities of personal and public concern that are both individually life enriching and socially beneficial to the community. Through exposure to civic engagement in a variety of learning environments, students will learn to clearly perceive and engage with the world in which they live (for details about these Outcomes, see: http://web.uri.edu/implementedrubrics/)

(1) This course will emphasize reflection and persuasion through writing, speaking, and media based on multiple information sources. Locate, analyze, and present information and ideas. This includes written analyses of movie and media content, reflect on a range of sustainability issues. Also, you will use writing in SAKAI regularly, competently, and extensively for class discussions (including written real-time chat) and group work. You will learn essential writing, public speaking and presentation skills.

(2) Global sustainability, climate change, resource conservation and social justice are closely connected and interrelated. Some call them wicked problems—seemingly insurmountable problems without simple solutions—or Grand Challenges. These complex problems cannot be addressed by one discipline alone but require the cooperation of different disciplines, such as environmental sciences, psychology, communication, ethics, and the arts. Addressing these problems involves ethical judgment of actors, actions, and circumstances.
To address these challenges we will apply theories of human behavior and behavior change along with environmental science and economics and culture. While we learn about environmental, social, economic, and cultural sustainability we will consider ways that we as individuals and groups can make a difference. We will identify local manifestations of environmental and other challenges to sustainability. As we discuss ways to address them, and you will design a behavior change campaign and take steps to implement this campaign. As our class is primarily focused on change at the individual, family, and community level we will mainly deal with campus, neighborhood and community groups. Think Global, Act Local! (not quite grammatically correct, but catchy 😊)

An important dimension of this course is learning to “know your audience.” We will utilize research to learn about different target audiences and their attitudes towards environmental, social, and economic dimensions of sustainability. In particular, we will analyze studies from multiple disciplines conducted to describe attitudes towards sustainability and environmental issues. For the final project, you will survey or interview a small group of people who are affected by the problem you are addressing in your project.

**EVALUATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>GRADE POLICY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APA/Climate Change Exercise</td>
<td>=10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Online Quizzes</td>
<td>=10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm Essay Exam</td>
<td>=20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Documentary Film Assignment</td>
<td>=20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Informative Speech</td>
<td>=20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Project</td>
<td>=20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>A = Superior work</td>
<td>95 – 99 =A</td>
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<tr>
<td>B = Above average work</td>
<td>87 – 89 =B+</td>
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<tr>
<td>C = Average work</td>
<td>77 – 79 =C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D = Below average work</td>
<td>67 – 69 =D+</td>
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<tr>
<td>F = Unacceptable work</td>
<td>50 – 66 =D</td>
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<tr>
<td>90 – 94 =A-</td>
<td>84 – 86 =B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74 – 76 =C-</td>
<td>60 – 66 =D</td>
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**Course Policies**

IN-CLASS: Come to class prepared by completing assigned readings and exercises. Participation also means: active involvement in discussions, individual and group activities, and online chat.

ONLINE (SAKAI): An important component of the course is our virtual classroom. I post your grades here throughout the semester. You have up to 72 HOURS from the time that I post a grade to discuss it with me. It is your responsibility to check in SAKAI regularly. GRADING AND DEADLINES: Assignment turned in after the due date will receive a grade penalty. WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS: It is essential that your work be well written, grammatically correct and free of typographical errors and misspellings. If you are concerned about an assignment, go to the Writing Center in Roosevelt Hall.

**Assignments (related to Information Literacy=IL; Civic Responsibility=CKR; Grand Challenges GC)**

(Rubrics and further details will be provided in class)

INFORMATIVE SPEECH (20% of final grade IL, GC): **Sustainability in Your Community**

You will prepare and present a 5-minute speech focusing on local dimensions of sustainability. You must conduct research to define and narrow the topic, but also include personal experiences, a strong local angle, and a connection to the sustainability. This is a Communication Course. Understanding the audience is key! You may cover topics such as:

- Transportation: local walking, biking, bus, or train travel (environment, health, economic angle)
- Sustainable Food: local farmers markets, reducing food waste in homes, restaurants, and stores
- Water/recreation: ocean, beaches, lakes/ponds, drinking water
- Recycling/Waste Reduction/Reduce and Reuse
- Renewable energy (wind, solar) and energy conservation
- Food security and food waste
- Health, poverty and sustainability
- Community initiatives across generations and cultures
- Mixed-use designs (of residential, shopping and working areas)
Define your topic. Once you decide on your general topic (e.g. Sustainable Transportation), find 2-3 general articles or book chapters related to the topic. Narrow down your topic to a sub-area (e.g. Biking), and find a focus for your speech (e.g. Environmental Benefits of Biking). Post your topic in Forums, so that we can avoid duplication.

Speaking Practice. During the first two class meetings we will cover some basics of public speaking, in addition to sustainability topics. Outlining is an excellent way to define and focus your topic. It helps with your speech, but is also critical for written text. We will practice speech outlining in class and online. As you gather your information, be sure to look for meaningful ways to organize your speech in 2 - 4 main points. For instance:

A spatial pattern might discuss 3 economically and socially diverse parts of Providence and describe healthy food and transportation options.

A chronological pattern might discuss the history of Farmers markets in your hometown, or the growth of bike paths in Rhode Island since the 1980s.

A cause-and-effect pattern may discuss changes in local zoning regulations, and the resulting impact on walking and biking in new neighborhoods.

A problem-solution pattern may discuss access to local food and the impact of improved SNAP (‘food stamps’) benefits.

APA STYLE FORMAT EXERCISE: Climate Change (IL, GC)

Step-1: Go to the Lessons tool and click on Links
Step-2: Click on APA Style Format and click on the provided link
Step-3: Scroll down the menu (left side of screen) and click on APA Guide under Suggested Resources
Step-4: Click on APA Overview and Workshop
Step-5: Read about APA In-text Citations and Reference Lists (skip the Footnotes and Endnotes section)
Step-6: Find 5 sources of your choice about Climate Change, its causes, and possible solutions. Provide your own example for each of the following types of in-text citations (do not copy the example you see in the Owl at Purdue; provide your own example):
    Short quotation
    Paraphrase
    Citing electronic sources

Step-7: Provide an example for each of the following types of reference lists:
    Basic book format
    Newspaper or Magazine article
    Article from an online periodical
    Website
Paste completed APA Exercise pasted into SAKAI Forums using the insert button.

Do not use an encyclopedia or a dictionary (hard copy or online) as an academic citation or reference source in this course!

FILM ANALYSIS: (20 % of final grade: chat presentation and paper, CKR & IL; GC).
Analyze a feature film or full-length documentary related to one of the following:

- Sustainability (social, political, economic, environmental)
- Climate Change, Resource Depletion (food, energy, water, forests)
- Threats to environment and/or health (nuclear accident, water pollution, obesity, threats to food supply)

Base your in-depth analysis on readings and class discussion; include a brief description of the sustainability issue addressed by the film. Discuss the impact of the film on you personally and on its target audience:

Who is the author and what is the purpose?
What techniques are used to attract and hold your attention?
What lifestyles, values and points of view are represented?
How might different people interpret the message?
Will the message change how we do things?
What is included in the message?
What is omitted (left out) from the message?

Be sure to clearly structure your essay, using headings and sub-headings. Length: 1500 -1700 words. A rubric will be provided.

TAKE-HOME MIDTERM: (20% of final grade CKR), post in SAKAI Forums.
Design a **Personal Sustainability Plan** for: The next Month - The next Year - The next 5 Years
On the backdrop of readings, video and class discussions, outline effective ways to ‘make a difference.’ Consider environmental sustainability for yourself, your friends, family, workplace, apartment/house, and transportation. Consider things you can do immediately, in the short run, and in the long term. Also, think about what you can do to make these changes last, and to promote them among others. Length: 1000 -1200 words.

ONLINE QUIZZES (10% of final grade IL); (in SAKAI Tests and Quizzes; available 7 am to midnight): Two brief online multiple-choice quizzes will test your knowledge of course material covered in class. You will read and critically evaluate a selection of articles and view informative videos related to Sustainability and Climate Change, and will identify key concepts and relationships covered in these sources.

FINAL GROUP PROJECT (20% of final grade CKR & IL; GC); presented in Class; paper posted in SAKAI Forums. **Communicating Sustainable Change.** This project incorporates the work you have done throughout the term, especially the group activities and video interviews. As a group, you will design and present a campaign designed to **Communicate Sustainable Change** related to your chosen topic area (including topics listed under Exploratory Speech above). Groups will design a project encouraging sustainable, and environmentally responsible behavior, along with meaningful and effective communication messages. The goal of the assignment is to create a campaign, which encourages environmentally responsible behavior among your target audience by providing information and persuasive material. Details will be discussed in class:

1. **Background:** Gather readings, videos and information collected throughout the term; add additional research from scientists, environmental groups, and decision makers.
2. **Create the campaign materials:** create a media campaign to advertise and promote the project, if possible with a short and a 1-minute video, and text/still picture ads.
3. **Combine your group’s material in a website using Webs.com or similar free hosting site OR in another meaningful electronic format.
4. **You will present your campaign in class as a group on Jan. 17, and post ONE report in SAKAI by Jan. 19.** Make sure your messages are adapted to your target audience(s).
5. **Submit:** as a group, a comprehensive list of references, materials, and interviews (who, what, when, where, how, why), as well as a URL if appropriate. Submit the Group Report, and all materials to COM/ECN/SUS108 Discussion and Private Messages by January 19, noon.

Active and meaningful IN-CLASS and ONLINE PARTICIPATION is expected from each student!

**Recommended viewing before class begins** (some are complete, some partial in YouTube):

*Six Degrees could Change the World:* [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R_pb1G2wIoA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R_pb1G2wIoA)

*The End of Suburbia* [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q3uvzcY2Xug](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q3uvzcY2Xug)

*Dive; The Age of Stupid; END:CIV; Building the Ecoloby* [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0HlFP6qPMW6](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0HlFP6qPMW6)

*Water Wars* [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B1a3tjqQ1BI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B1a3tjqQ1BI)

*Also, if you haven’t seen them yet, try to view at least 3 of these Top 10 Environmental Movies:* [http://www.mnn.com/green-tech/research-innovations/blogs/top-10-environmental-films-of-all-time](http://www.mnn.com/green-tech/research-innovations/blogs/top-10-environmental-films-of-all-time)

(I am not endorsing this list, btw, there are many others).

*Trashed:* [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2gwYwm2kA9A](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2gwYwm2kA9A)

*Dive—trailer* [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0HlFP_PMW6](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0HlFP_PMW6)

*Adapting to Climate Change (Dr. Prochaska):* [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZyCfhUXucC4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZyCfhUXucC4)

*A simple Message (Dr. Mundorf):* [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZeplndOLS-Y](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZeplndOLS-Y)
## Tentative Calendar

Class will meet Wednesdays and Fridays. Some of the class meetings will be conducted online, accommodating student preferences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wednesday, Jan 4</th>
<th>CLASS MEETING: What is Sustainability? Reflect on your Trash; post in SAKAI by 9 pm</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Readings:</strong></td>
<td>Miller/Spoolman Ch. 1 (in Course Materials: What is Sustainability? 5 ½ Utopias)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overview of course topics (students will choose preliminary speech topics tomorrow)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Introduction: Pairs introduce each other--sustainable &amp; unsustainable ideas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation: Sustainable Transportation/ Food Security</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spoolman Ch 1: Principles of Sustainability, Ecological Footprint, Why do we have Environmental Problems?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Groups Created:</strong></td>
<td>group activity: brainstorm project ideas</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Groups post ideas about campus sustainability in SAKAI by 9 pm</strong></td>
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### Friday, Jan 6

**CLASS MEETING: Communicating Sustainability; Know your Audience.**

Read: Hansen (2010). *Environment, Media and Communication*, Ch. 4

*Climate Communication and Behavior Change, p. 30-45*

**Speaking Workshop**

Presentation: Sea-level Rise and Extreme Weather

Audience Analysis (The 5 Ds; The Six Americas)

*View:* Ocean and local water supply around RI; URI Coastal Institute website URL TBA

(Patton, Oviatt, Gold, Gints, Moran); post 3-4 paragraph reaction in SAKAI by Sunday 9 pm

**Monday, Jan 9 ONLINE CHAT; discuss Speech Outline; Climate Communication**

Readings: Hansen, Ch. 5, 6. *Why isn’t the Brain Green; Climate Communications and Behavior Change (The 5 Ds); Discuss your Water Supply postings.*

### Wednesday, Jan 11

**Online class: Online QUIZ 1 in SAKAI available today 7 am – midnight**

Readings: Mundorf et al. *China Media Research*

Resilience and Sustainability

*The Beijing Smog: Between Media Frames and Public Perceptions* (Ma)

*Global Sustainability, Health and Resilience* (Mundorf & Prochaska)

Quiz 1 will be available in SAKAI 7am – midnight

**Post your choice for FILM ANALYSIS**

**Friday, Jan 13 ONLINE CHAT: FILM ANALYSIS presented and posted in SAKAI**

We will meet online and discuss your FILM ANALYSIS; post FILM ANALYSIS in SAKAI prior to the class

### Sunday, Jan 15

Post Midterm in SAKAI by 9 pm

Post Midterm (Personal Sustainability Plan) by 9 pm

### Monday, Jan 17

**Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday: No Class meeting—Reflect on Peace and Resilience**

Selected Readings on Ethics, Peace Studies & Resilience for tomorrow’s class discussion

*Nonviolence and Conflict Management through Media Interventions* (Friesem, Y.)

*Resilience and Sustainability in the Coverage of Political Crisis* (Mensah)

*Ethical Aspects of Sustainability* (Jennings, B.)

### Tuesday, Jan 17*

**ONLINE Chat APA exercise; Quiz 2; Final Project updates due**

Class topic: Sustainability, Resilience and Globalization

Readings (in SAKAI modules): Selected articles from *Special Issue, China Media Research*

*Communication as a Tool for Empowerment: A Model for Resilience* (Salzarulo, Mundorf, Sakar, Lei, & Terui)

*Global Communication for Organizing Sustainability and Resilience* (Long, Buzzanell, Wu, Mitra, Kuang & Suo)

Post **APA Assignment Climate Change** in SAKAI Forums by 6 pm tonight

Groups provide update in class

Quiz 2 Review available today

### Wednesday, Jan 18

**CLASS MEETING: Speeches Due**
Present YOUR SPEECH in class—see Speech Rubric
Sustainability and Film; Chose your film for film analysis assignment (see Rubric); Quiz Review

**Friday, Jan 20 CLASS MEETING: Campaign Presentations**

Groups will present their Final Projects (see Final Presentation rubric)
Class Discussion: Steps towards a Sustainable Future

**Sunday, Jan 22 Final Paper Due in SAKAI by 6 pm**
See Final Paper rubric
COURSE POLICIES

ATTENDANCE. You must attend class and scheduled online activities in order to participate in exercises and discussions. Absences will impact your final grade in this course. Two absences are acceptable without documentation (excluding scheduled presentations, quizzes and assignment due dates). Every absence beyond the first two, will reduce your final grade in this course. You are responsible for any materials you miss during a regular class meeting or chat, including assignments given in your absence.

CLASS PREPARATION. Come to class prepared. Follow the readings and assignments. Quizzes, impromptu class presentations and discussions are an essential feature of this course. You will be graded on the quality of your contributions in class, which should illustrate that you have completed the readings and can apply what you read about to examples from situations not found in the book. You are responsible for everything that is said in class and posted on our Sakai course site.

SAKAI. An important component of the course is our virtual classroom. It is your responsibility to know all of the information posted in the site, and to complete all assignments. You should check our Syllabus and Announcements often. Also, I post your grades in the Gradebook. You have up to three days from the time that I post a grade to discuss it (the grade and the assignment) with me. Weather related class meeting information is posted on our homepage under Announcements. You are responsible for reliable access to Sakai. System-wide technical issues will result in an alternative assignment. It is your responsibility to check in Sakai—Announcements for these assignments. Absences: If you are absent, look at our Sakai Calendar, Announcements, and ask a classmate. Email: You can communicate with me in Sakai—Private Messages, or make an appointment with me for a face-to-face meeting.

ASSIGNMENTS and DEADLINES
Failure to follow submission instructions will result in a substantial initial grade deduction, and additional deductions until the assignment is submitted correctly. You are expected to present/speak on the date for which you are scheduled. You are expected to submit your work by the date and time scheduled. There is no make-up work in this course.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS: All work submitted for a grade (online or on paper) must be word processed in Times New Roman, black, 12-point font, one-inch margin. It is essential that your work be well written, grammatically correct and free of typographical errors and misspellings (PROOFREAD!). Citations and References: Your work must consistently follow APA or another citation style. See the resource for the APA style under Course Materials.

ACADEMIC HONESTY: In an online environment it is imperative that you assign proper credit to work that is not your own. Plagiarism is a serious offense. In addition, when working in groups you have a moral and social responsibility to contribute consistently and to the best of your abilities. Be sure to communicate with your group members to be sure that credit is properly assigned.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: Any student with a documented disability should contact me at the beginning of the term to discuss specific needs. In addition, please contact the Disability Services for Students Office at 330 Memorial Union 401-874-2098 to coordinate reasonable accommodations.