Green political theory is an increasingly urgent subject matter for political reflection. This semester we will examine how key questions about politics and the environment are being considered, and how political thinkers, researchers, and citizens that care about our common world are framing responses to these problems.

The course begins by assessing our current ecological situation, examining problems such as overpopulation, rising water and food scarcity, climate change, and resource depletion. We then turn to the parameters of contemporary ethical debates over the environment, including animal rights, eco-feminism, and environmental ethics. The last portion of the course examines the political questions and problems raised by the need to achieve sustainability in a “full world.” We will examine topics such as food politics, consumerism, ecological economics and political economy, glocalism, and de-growth.

By the end of term, students will have developed skills for researching, thinking, and writing critically about political ideas and issues, especially in environmental discourse. They will also have gained a general understanding of the current environmental situation, along with related policy debates and theories. Finally, they will have seriously considered the various alternatives for how to forge a sustainable relationship to the global ecosystem, and how political theory can help us think through the political implications of these alternatives.

Course Requirements

- The course assignments are made up of an in-class exam, a 5 page paper, a 4-5 page group book analysis, a 10 page final paper, and class participation. Grade percentages are as follows:
  - In class participation (15%)
  - 4-5 page group book analysis (15%)
  - Exam (20%)
  - 5 page paper (20%)
  - 10 page final paper (30%)
• **Class participation** will be based on attendance, preparation (i.e., doing the reading before class), and vocal participation during lectures and class and small group discussions.

• The **first exam** over Unit One will straightforwardly test your understanding of the basic concepts and facts related to the current ecological situation.

• The **first paper** will be written in response to your choice of one of 3-4 essay questions I will provide based on the environmental ethical issues raised in Unit Two. This should be a straightforward essay response, critically evaluating and responding to the readings. Because it is a short paper, no outside research is encouraged.

• The **final 7 class sessions** will be conducted partially in small groups and partially as full class discussion, which I will lead. You will remain with the same small group throughout the remainder of the class, so attendance will be important during these days.

• Your group will be required to turn in a **4-5 page critical analysis** of a book we discuss during the small group portion of the course (Pollan, McKibben, or Friedman). This should briefly outline the group’s consensus about the strengths and weaknesses of the book’s argument. It should also note if there were fundamental disagreements within the group, and what they concerned. **This project is due by the end of final exam week.**

• The **final project** will be a 10 page paper, which will be structured as a hypothetical memo to the new president-elect explaining the broad strategy you believe the United States should adopt in order to achieve sustainability. **This project is due during the final exam period.**

• Late papers will be marked down by a third of a grade (from an A to an A-, for example). For every 24 hours the paper is late, an additional third of a grade will be deducted. For example, papers handed in a day late will lose two thirds of a grade (from an A to B+).

• Plagiarism is absolutely forbidden. In addition to grading, each paper is evaluated with respect to possible plagiarism. Any act of plagiarism will be reported as a violation of academic integrity, and immediately result in course failure.

• Students are strongly encourage to comment on class lectures and to meet with me as often as desired. While I have specific office hours, I am happy to set up alternative meetings. In general, the more students participate and engage, the higher their grade often is.
Course Texts

- The following books are required:

- The remaining readings will be found either on the web or as pdfs which I will provide. Links to web readings are noted in the class schedule.

Class Schedule

**Unit One: Assessing an Ecological Crisis**

**Sept. 7:** Introduction


**Sept. 19:** L. Brown, *Plan B 4.0*, pp. 3-54.


Unit Two: Ethical Questions


In class exam, Mon., October 3

Oct. 3: In-class exam.


http://www.aislingmagazine.com/aislingmagazine/articles/TAM30/ValPlumwood.html


Unit Three: Theory and Practice

Nov. 2: M. Rowan, “We need to talk about growth (and we need to do the sums as well),” PersuadeMe.com, (February 27, 2014) (Accessed: August 4, 2016).


———Paper due in class, Wed., November 9———


———Small Group Discussion Segment———

Nov. 23: M. Pollan, The Omnivore’s Dilemma, pp. 15-108.


Nov. 30: T. Friedman, Hot, Flat, and Crowded, (selections).

Dec. 5: T. Friedman, Hot, Flat, and Crowded, (selections).


———Final Paper due on Final Exam Date: December 21, 2016, 7:25pm-9:25pm———

———Group book analysis due by the end of final exam week———