

ERS 253: Communities and Sustainability

Winter 2020

Meetings: Tuesdays 11:30–2:20 pm, RCH 301

Instructor: Bob Gibson, EV2, room 2037, ext. 33407, rbgibson@uwaterloo.ca

office hours: Tuesdays, 2:30-3:30

TA: Emily Bass, e2bass@uwaterloo.ca

Roles and purposes of the course

This course explores communities and sustainability as a useful pairing of ideas and practices. The emphasis will be on building understandings for practical application. This will involve

- applying a broad and critically advanced approach to community and sustainability (plus a few closely related concepts, including complexity, governance and decision making as key factors for attention); and
- aiming to identify the practical implications, including for particular undertakings that aim to contribute the lasting wellbeing at the community scale.

The course begins with community as the focal venue, sustainability as the objective and participative engagement as a major tool.

Communities are human collectivities that can take many forms. Not all communities are defined spatially (e.g., as a neighbourhood or village). There are cultural, occupational, ideological and interest-based, etc. communities. For the purposes of this course, however, we will focus on communities that are of particular places, and that involve some degree of shared experience, commitment and capacity.

Sustainability is lasting wellbeing or, more realistically, progress towards the conditions for and characteristics of lasting wellbeing in a complex world. The generic requirements for progress towards sustainability cover the usual social, economic and ecological pillars, but recognize these to be interacting and often inseparable. Communities are participants in complex and dynamic socio-ecological systems that are entwined through all scales from the individual to the planet. Accordingly, progress towards sustainability involves building resilience to protect desirable systems and system qualities, and guiding transitions and transformations from undesirable systems and system qualities to more sustainable ones.

Participative engagement in governance represents the approach to deliberation and decision making most easily linked to sustainability and community goals. In this course, the emphasis is on the local to regional scale but with recognition that local and regional decision making interacts with decision making at many other scales from the individual to the planet and involves an enormous diversity of participants, issues, opportunities, structures and uncertainties, among other considerations.

The course work will include development and application of capacities to build an integrated understanding of communities, sustainability and engagement and to expand this understanding in discussions about issues and actions in a variety of particular areas of concern and opportunity (food systems, growth, decline, economic greening, ecosystems, etc.).

Perhaps most importantly, each participant will integrate the broad insights, specify them for the particular context of a community of her or his choice, and apply the results in the conception and evaluation of a sustainability-enhancing undertaking in that community.

Readings

The course will rely heavily on individual readings that are or will be available on the course UW Learn website plus other materials available on the internet (see the schedule of events and readings). Users can login to UW Learn via <http://learn.uwaterloo.ca/>. Use your WatIAM/Quest username and password. Some of the readings on the course UW Learn site are long reports. You are not expected to read them all through. Skim as needed.

In addition, there is one recommended course text, which should soon be available at the UW bookstore:

Shaun Loney with Will Braun, *An Army of Problem Solvers* (2016).

It is about taking on big community sustainability challenges. It is also short, readable and admirably positive.

Course structure, assignments and evaluation

From week 2 to week 10, each weekly session of the course will be divided into two parts. The first half or less will feature a lecture or the rough equivalent (often with discussion, sometimes with a guest or guests). The second half will be devoted to discussion of weekly issues or questions related to the lecture and readings, and/or the individual application projects that each participant will be developing.

The weekly schedule is set out below. The first four sessions provide an overview and background to the main big issues of community, sustainability and engagement and their interactions and the initial steps in the participants' projects. The next seven sessions consider a suite of big issue areas in which innovative initiatives are needed and underway at the community level. Sessions 11 and 12 will be devoted to "the conference" where the participants will present the findings of their case projects and the rest of the class will have comments, questions, occasion for standing ovations, etc.

Assignments and evaluations summary

Each student's graded work in the course will centre on three basic components:

- the case project:
 - initial description 5%
 - initial framework 10%
 - conference presentation notes and delivery 5%
 - final report 25%

- the weekly class preparation and reflection notes:
 - first set of 4 covering weeks 2-5: 20%
 - second set covering any 4 of weeks 6-10: 20%
- class participation:
 - weeks 1-11 and conference responses 15%

Late penalties will be assessed for written assignments received after the due dates set out below. The standard penalty is 0.5% per day (20/25 one day late becomes 19.5/25). Deadlines for dropbox submissions are 11:59 pm on the due date.

The case project

For each participant, the case project centres on the design and decision making surrounding a sustainability-enhancing community-based undertaking. The community involved must be real and at least to some significant extent place-based at a local scale (to be discussed in class). Otherwise, the community is open to selection by the individual participant. The community-based undertaking is also largely open to selection by the individual participant. The undertaking may be based on an actual current or recent undertaking or be largely an invention, but must be realistic (plausibly doable by residents of the actual community, perhaps including you). As well, the undertaking must have objectives and involve deliberations and decision making that should contribute to sustainability at the community scale and beyond (to be discussed in class).

For project ideas, see the document, “Communities and Sustainability Project Examples,” on course UW Learn site, in the content section on project ideas. Also, there is a list of projects from previous versions of the course.

The objective of the exercise is to integrate an understanding of community, sustainability and appropriate decision making in a way that is likely to deliver multiple lasting, mutually reinforcing and fairly distributed gains for the community while avoiding significant adverse effects and risks.

The core of the assignment consists of the following five components:

- to identify and outline the essential sustainability-related characteristics of the selected community and the main sustainability-related issues and opportunities the community faces;
- to outline the basic nature and core purposes of the selected project to address sustainability-related issues in the community, usually with an immediate focus on a smaller set of particular issues and/or opportunities but with elements to contribute to other sustainability objectives;
- to develop a sustainability-based framework that is specified for the selected community and appropriate for application to the selected project;
- to apply the framework in the design of the undertaking and in the description of a suitable decision-making process(es) to be used in developing the project implementing it and managing it through its lifetime;

- to conclude with an assessment of the strengths and limitations of the project in light of the sustainability- and community-building objectives outlined above and using the framework specified for the case.

The project assignment proceeds in four steps:

- an initial description of the community and the general nature of the selected undertaking – maximum 200 words, due Tuesday, January 14 (bring to class);
- an initial version of the framework specified for the case and community context – maximum 300 words, due Thursday, January 30 (submit to dropbox);
- pre-conference project session – test presentation of 2-minute pitch to conference session group members;
- conference presentation – 2-minute pitch (in class week 12, Tuesday, March 31), with presentation notes to be submitted in class after the presentation; and
- final report – maximum 2000 words, due Wednesday, April 8 (submit to dropbox)

All case report submissions should adopt a scholarly and professional approach to writing and incorporate proper bibliographic references to written materials or other sources you've used. The references are not included in the word limit for this or any other written assignments in this course.

The final report, especially, should feature the following:

- evidence of familiarity (though not necessarily agreement) with the key points raised in the readings, lectures and discussions, though you are also encouraged to incorporate material from other sources;
- an integrated understanding of the significance and practical implications (directly and indirectly) of these points; and
- recognition of uncertainties, diverse interests and competing perspectives.

The report should draw from the lectures, readings and discussions, as well as from any material you dig up that is relevant to your community and undertaking. Always provide proper references to your sources.

Given the complexities involved (many different sustainability-related objectives, players, issues, possible responses, etc.), you cannot discuss everything. In choosing what to include pay particular attention to what you consider to be most significant for community sustainability and for communicating your ideas clearly. You will have to consider carefully what is and is not crucial here.

Be concise. Even the final report is quite short. This is, among other things, an exercise in presenting key information in a way that facilitates a quick grasp of the material, but that also includes necessary clarifications and evidence (or references to evidence) supporting the argument. Remember that you are, at least implicitly, making an argument. Remember also that these are scholarly papers, expected to meet the usual expectations for sound argument, proper references and reasonable adherence to the conventions of grammar, even if you choose to rely to some extent on bulleted lists of major points.

In addition to the considerations noted above, grading of the papers will be based primarily on evidence of

- familiarity with (or mastery of) the concepts and sources, ideas and implications covered by the course;
- coherence (or brilliance) of argument; and
- clarity (or elegance) of writing.

Note the lateness penalties discussed above.

The not-quite-weekly class preparation and reflection notes

Each week from week 2 to 5 inclusive and for weeks 6 to 9, each participant must submit class preparation and reflection notes. The notes

- should address the big issue(s) posed for the week, focusing on the key insights and their interconnections;
- should be based roughly equally on key insights from the course readings for that week (and any additional readings or other research that the student may choose to consult) and on the lecture and discussions for that week;
- should demonstrate familiarity with at least two of the week's readings;
- may be largely in point form, so long as the result is comprehensible to an outside reader;
- must include proper references to all sources used (not just to ones from which quotations are taken);
- should not exceed 600 words; and
- must be submitted to the course dropbox for the weekly notes before midnight on the Thursday after the class on the relevant week.

The class preparation notes will be graded in two packages: the first four covering weeks 2-5 and the second four covering four of the five weeks 6-10.

Note the lateness penalties discussed above.

Participation

Each week at least half of the class time will be devoted to discussion of issues surrounding the ideas raised in the lectures and readings and the implications for the case projects. The anticipated discussion topics are noted below in the section on the weekly topics, readings and questions.

Each student is encouraged and expected to participate thoughtfully in the class discussions. Given the size of the class, we will for some discussions break up into smaller groups (probably 10 groups of 5 individuals) to permit more active engagement in the deliberations. One group member will report back to the whole class when we reconvene together. The reporting should rotate among group members from week to week to ensure equal opportunities.

Special arrangements for participation in the conference are set out below in the section on the weekly activities.

Evaluation of participation will be based on the quality as well as the extent of contributions. Evaluation of participation quality will take the following criteria into account:

- understanding of the concepts and issues introduced and insight into their practical implications;
- evident familiarity with the readings;
- careful listening and thoughtful reflection before making comments;
- communication skills (clear, concise, constructive, etc.);
- synthesis, integration and drawing connections between and among the immediate subject matter and ideas, issues and insights from the course materials or elsewhere; and
- accuracy and creativity in illustrating implications.

There will be bonus marks for humour.

Important UW policies and services on key course-related topics

Mental Health: The University of Waterloo, the Faculty of Environment and our Departments/Schools consider students' well-being to be extremely important. We recognize that throughout the term students may face health challenges – physical and/or emotional. *Help is available.* Mental health is a serious issue for everyone and can affect your ability to do your best work. Counselling Services is an inclusive, non-judgmental, and confidential space for anyone to seek support (<http://www.uwaterloo.ca/counselling-services>). They offer confidential counselling for a variety of areas including anxiety, stress management, depression, grief, substance use, sexuality, relationship issues, and much more.

Disabilities: AccessAbility Services (<https://uwaterloo.ca/accessability-services/>), located in Needles Hall, Room 1401, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with AccessAbility Services at the beginning of each academic term.

Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. See <http://www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/>. Every student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his or her actions. Please review the material provided by the university's Academic Integrity office specifically for students: <http://uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/Students/index.html>. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating), should visit the on-line tutorial at <https://uwaterloo.ca/library/get-assignment-and-research-help/academic-integrity/academic-integrity-tutorial>, and seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean.

When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 (Student Discipline). For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 (Student Discipline):

<https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat-general-counsel/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-71>.

Within the Faculty of Environment, those committing academic offences (e.g. cheating, plagiarism) will be placed on disciplinary probation and will be subject to penalties that may include a grade of 0 on affected course elements, 0 on the course, suspension, and expulsion.

Grievances: Students who believe that they have been wrongfully or unjustly penalized have the right to grieve; refer to Policy 70, Student Grievance:

<https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat-general-counsel/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-70>.

Appeals: A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70 (Student Petitions and Grievances) on matters other than a petition, or Policy 71 (Student Discipline) may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he or she has a ground for an appeal should refer to Policy 72 (Student Appeals):

www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm.

Religious observances: Students need to inform the instructor at the beginning of term if special accommodation needs to be made for religious observances that are not otherwise accounted for in the scheduling of classes and assignments.

Communications with Instructor and Teaching Assistants: All communication with students must be through either the student's University of Waterloo email account or via Learn. Students who email the instructor or TA from a personal account will be requested to resend the email using their personal University of Waterloo email account.

Intellectual Property: Students should be aware that this course contains the intellectual property of their instructor, TA, and/or the University of Waterloo. Intellectual property includes items such as: lecture content, spoken and written (and any audio/video recording thereof); lecture handouts, presentations, and other materials prepared for the course (e.g., PowerPoint slides); questions or solution sets from various types of assessments (e.g., assignments); and work protected by copyright (e.g., any work authored by the instructor or TA or used by the instructor or TA with permission of the copyright owner).

Course materials and the intellectual property contained therein, are used to enhance a student's educational experience. However, sharing this intellectual property without the intellectual property owner's permission is a violation of intellectual property rights. For this reason, it is necessary to ask the instructor, TA and/or the University of Waterloo for permission before uploading and sharing the intellectual property of others online (e.g., to an online repository).

Permission from an instructor, TA or the University is also necessary before sharing the intellectual property of others from completed courses with students taking the same/similar courses in subsequent terms/years. In many cases, instructors might be happy to allow distribution of certain materials. However, doing so without expressed permission is considered a violation of intellectual property rights.

Please alert the instructor if you become aware of intellectual property belonging to others (past or present) circulating, either through the student body or online. The intellectual property rights owner deserves to know (and may have already given their consent).

Unclaimed assignments: Unclaimed assignments will be retained until one month after term grades become official in Quest. After that time, they will be destroyed in compliance with UW's confidential shredding procedures.

Recording lecture: Use of recording devices during lectures is only allowed with explicit permission of the instructor of the course. Only audio recordings will be permitted. Posting of videos or links to the video to any website, including but not limited to social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, etc., is strictly prohibited.

Summary of the course schedule

1. January 7 Introductions and planning
2. January 14 Community
3. January 21 Sustainability
4. January 28 Engagement: building understanding and making good decisions
5. February 4 Community prospects: facing growth and decline
6. February 11 Tools, motivations and structures for change
7. February 25 Food systems
8. March 3 Energy, transportation and community design
9. March 10 Green spaces and ecosystems
10. March 17 Economy, diversity, opportunity and equity
11. March 24 Conference prep session
12. March 31 The conference

Details on the course sessions, issues, readings, etc.

1. January 7 Introductions and planning

big issue: What is at the intersection of community, sustainability and politics, and what is to be done there?

initial introduction by each participant: name and program/specialization(s); major interest related to this course (e.g., sustainability, communities, participative engagement, ecology, social change, economy, decision making); spatial community (neighbourhood, village, etc.) that you know best.

break out group discussion questions for each participant: What is your main place-based community? What is one significant sustainability-related issue in your community? Who is affected? What kinds of responses might be useful (at least one project idea)? [And if there is time] Who is/should be involved in developing responses?

2. January 14 Community

big issues: What is community and what are the characteristics of a desirable and sustainable or sustainability-enhancing community (community vitality, social capital, resilience and innovation/transition, economic and ecological dimensions, various indicators of community wellbeing, etc.)?

discussion:

- individual assignment: Each participant makes a brief initial presentation on his or her individual project ideas – identifying the selected community and one sustainability-related undertaking (past, current, prospective) that might be worth examining and pursuing, and outlining how that undertaking might contribute to sustainability

- class task: We will create 10 break-out groups for discussions (to be determined: should the groups be based on the kinds of communities involved or based on the kinds of issues/undertakings or established by random assignment? And should different grouping be created every few weeks?).

readings on community:

Ann Dale, Chris Ling, Lenore Newman, "Community vitality: the role of community-level resilience, adaptation and innovation in sustainable development," *Sustainability* 2 (2010), pp.215-231, on course UW Learn site.

Alternatives Journal 42:3 (2016), special issue on "Belonging," available at <http://www.alternativesjournal.ca/sites/default/files/AJ42n3BelongingDigiFreeV2sm.pdf>, on course UW Learn site.

Ann Dale, Rebecca Foon, Yuill Herbert and Rob Newell, *Community Vitality: from adaptation to transformation* (Tatamagouche: Fernweh Press, 2014), available at <https://dspace.royalroads.ca/handle/10170/925?show=full>, see especially chapter 1, chapter 4 and the coda at the end (pp.85-91), on course UW Learn site.

readings on community indicators:

Kitchener and Waterloo Community Foundation, *Waterloo Region's Vital Signs Priority Report* (2016), available at https://www.kwcf.ca/vital_signs

Ann Dale, et al., *Community Vitality: from adaptation to transformation* (see above), especially chapter 2.

project idea sources:

See "project ideas" in the Content section of the course UW Learn site.

3. January 21 Sustainability

big issue: What does sustainability mean for communities? What generic sustainability criteria apply to decisions in all communities, and how can these criteria be specified for particular communities and community undertakings?

discussion:

- individual assignment: Each participant finds a set of criteria/indicators of community wellbeing relevant to his or her community and undertaking
- break-out groups task: Each group builds a consolidated set of criteria/indicators of community wellbeing; one member reports; whole class considers how well the consolidation covers the generic sustainability criteria and key community considerations
- second break-out group task: each participant takes the main purpose of her or his sustainability initiative, and identifies two other potential lasting benefits (or risks).

readings on sustainability:

Robert B. Gibson, "Foundations: sustainability and the requirements for getting there," in Robert B. Gibson, editor, *Sustainability Assessment: Applications and Opportunities* (London: Routledge/Earthscan, 2017), pp. 1-15, on course UW Learn site.

Robert B. Gibson, "Criteria," in *Sustainability Assessment: Criteria and Processes* (London: Earthscan, 2005), chapter 5, pp.88-121, on course UW Learn site.

resource on how to specify sustainability assessment framework for particular cases and contexts:

Robert B. Gibson, “Applications: from generic criteria to assessments in particular places and cases,” in *Sustainability Assessment: Applications and Opportunities*, pp. 16-41, on course UW Learn site.

4. January 28 Engagement: building understanding and making good decisions

big issues: How do communities build the understandings and capacities for sustainability-based action? How are socio-ecological understanding, awareness and commitment fostered and developed? How do people gain capacities for effective engagement with others in collective decision making? How are decisions made in and by communities and how should they be made for contributions to sustainability? What interests do and do not have power and influence? Which sustainability requirements get effective attention and which ones do not? What can be done at the community scale (and what can't)? What qualifies as “democratic” or “meaningful public engagement”? How do the concepts of social and ecological civility, sense of place, and conviviality fit into community level sustainability? What do they look like in practice?

discussion:

- class discussion: What are the main ways of building social capital and ecological civility into a sustainable community initiative? How could we incorporate them into an evaluation framework for application to undertakings being developed in this course?
- break-out group discussion 1: Each participant outlines who does or should participate in the development and implementation of his or her undertaking. Others suggest additions and identify possible problems and solutions. Each group identifies and reports common findings in the cases discussed.
- break-out group discussion 2: Each participant with the assistance of the other participants in the group does a quick review of how his or her undertaking does or could build social capital and ecological civility. Each group identifies and reports the main insights from this exercise.
- break-out group discussion 3 (if there is time): Each participant outlines what major influences beyond the community scale may be involved in his or her undertaking. Others suggest how those influences might be addressed. Each group reports common findings in the cases discussed.

readings:

Ann Dale, et al., *Community Vitality: from adaptation to transformation* (see week 2), chapters 4 and 9, on course UW Learn site.

Jane Jacobs “Why cities need ‘holes in the wall’,” excerpt from Samuel Zipp and Nathan Storrington, editors, *Vital Little Plans: The Short Works of Jane Jacobs* (Toronto: Random House Canada, 2016), available at <https://www.thestar.com/news/insight/2016/09/23/jane-jacobs-on-preserving-a-citys-holes-in-the-wall.html>, and on course UW Learn site.

Shaun Loney with Will Braun, *An Army of Problem Solvers* (2016), chaps. 1, 2 and 14.

Ann Dale, Lenore Newman and Rob Newell, "Patterns of our footsteps: topophilia, rhythm and diversity in urban landscapes," *Spaces and Flows: An International Journal of Urban and ExtraUrban Studies* 4:2 (2014), 11pp., available at Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2479755>, on course UW Learn site.

Timothy D. Sisk et al. (2001) *Democracy at the Local Level: The International IDEA Handbook on Participation, Representation, Conflict Management and Governance* (Stockholm: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 2001), chapter 1 "Concepts, challenges and trends" (also chapter 5 "Expanding participatory democracy"), available at <http://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/publications/democracy-at-the-local-level-handbook.pdf>, on course UW Learn site.

Arun Agrawal and Maria Carmen Lemos, "A greener revolution in the making? environmental governance in the 21st century," *Environment* 49:5 (June 2007), pp.36-45, on course UW Learn site.

René Kemp, Saeed Parto and Robert B. Gibson, "Governance for sustainable development: moving from theory to practice," *International Journal for Sustainable Development* 8:1/2 (2005), pp.12-30, on course UW Learn site.

useful background sources:

Jay Makarenko, "Local government in Canada: organization and basic institutions," (2007), available at <http://www.mapleleafweb.com/features/local-government-canada-organization-amp-basic-institutions>

5. February 4 Community prospects: facing growth and decline

big issue: Some big cities are growing unsustainably; some smaller communities are declining unsustainably. What are their options and which of these issues and options can be addressed effectively at the community scale? For example, what may be the role of economic greening initiatives?

discussion topic: How to build a framework for considering sustainability issues and options so that it covers all the key generic requirements for progress towards sustainability, but also gives due attention to the particular conditions and dynamics, capacities and limitations, fears and aspirations, issues and opportunities, etc. that characterize the community involved and the sustainability-enhancing undertaking that is being developed.

- individual assignment: Each participant brings the initial version of the framework specified for his or her case and community context (the one submitted on Thursday, January 30).
- break out group discussions: Each participant outlines his or her framework. Others suggest additional considerations, or alternative ways of categorizing the main issues. Each group identifies and reports insights from the frameworks discussed (e.g., considerations that were shared in most or all cases, one peculiar to certain communities)

readings:

David Crombie, et al., *Planning for Health, Prosperity and Growth: Expert Panel Report* (2015), on course UW Learn site.

Robert B. Gibson, "Sustainability and the Greenbelt," *Plan Canada* 51:3 (2011), pp.38-41, on course UW Learn site.

Shaun Loney with Will Braun, *An Army of Problem Solvers* (2016), chap. 5.

Federation of Canadian Municipalities, "Rural Challenges, National Opportunity," (Ottawa: FCM, 2018), available at <https://fcm.ca/en/resources/rural-challenges-national-opportunity>

Laverne Booth and Heather Keam, "Case study: reimagining rural communities using asset-based community development," (Tamarack Institute, 2019), <https://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/hubfs/Resources/Case%20Studies/Reimagining%20Rural%20Communities%20Using%20ABCD%20by%20Laverne%20Booth%20&%20Heather%20Keam.pdf?hsCtaTracking=84247bce-9121-426f-86ba-ca5e2e2dde1b%7C0fd4ef12-05e5-4f8b-8d77-f31815b452cb>

Pamela Blais, *Perverse Cities: hidden subsidies, wonky policy and urban sprawl* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010), chapter 13 "Perverse subsidies, perverse cities," pp. 221-237, on course UW Learn site.

6. February 11 Tools, motivations and structures for change

big issues: How is community built, and how does that fit with building community commitment to sustainability initiatives? What motivations, tools and strategies are available to initiators of community sustainability projects (neighbourhood organizations, governments, big and small industry/commerce, public interest groups, social entrepreneurs, and others)? What are the best means of engaging potential participants, including often marginalized or excluded communities and community members/interests, in sustainability-enhancing initiatives? What structures and players/participants do best in addressing integrated sustainability-oriented challenges?

possible guest experts: Steve Singer, Beechwood Park Homes Association and, especially, its Wednesday community food market.

discussion:

- break-out group discussion: Each participant identifies (again) the main participants in the development and implementation of his or her undertaking and then describes (i) what motives drive their participation and (ii) how their engagement is organized – if there is(are) some evident formal or informal organization(s). Others suggest additional possibilities. Each group identifies and reports the main categories of participants, motivations and structures in the cases discussed.
- class discussion questions: What potential participants, tools, motivations and structures are and are not included in the cases from the break-out discussion? How could they be?

readings:

Charles Dobson, "Social movements: a summary of what works," from *The Citizen's Handbook: A Guide to Building Community in Vancouver* (Vancouver: Vancouver Community Network, 2001), available at www.vcn.bc.ca/citizens-handbook/movements.pdf and on course UW Learn site.

Shaun Loney with Will Braun, *An Army of Problem Solvers* (2016), chap. 8.

Stephanie Cairns, Pomme Arros and Sara Jane O'Neill, *Incenting the Nature of Cities: Using Financial Approaches to Support Green Infrastructure in Ontario* (Toronto: Metcalf Foundation, May 2016), 34pp., on course UW Learn site [see also Blais from week 5 readings]

Doug McKenzie-Mohr, *Fostering Sustainable Behaviour: Community-Based Social Marketing*, available at <http://www.cbsm.com/pages/guide/preface/>, see especially the introductory summary at <http://www.cbsm.com/pages/guide/fostering-sustainable-behavior/>, on course UW Learn site.

Caledon Institute, *Collaboration on Policy: a manual developed by the community-government collaboration on policy* (Ottawa: Caledon Institute, 2009); http://atwork.settlement.org/sys/atwork_library_print.asp?doc_id=1004865, on course UW Learn site.

Troy Glover, "Our need for do-it-yourself city building," *Waterloo Region Record*, 16 November 2015), available at: <http://www.therecord.com/opinion-story/6116888-opinion-our-need-for-do-it-yourself-city-building/>, on course UW Learn site.

bonus readings from our guest speakers (see the posted note to 253 re S. Singer docs):

1. the BPHA fall 2014 newsletter – especially the story on pp.5-6 about Bob Dorney's influence on the ecological preservation aspects of the neighbourhood's initial design (also relevant to the March 10 class).
2. the BPHA fall 2015 newsletter – especially the story on page 7 about the produce stand and the story on page 8 on the initial planning of the neighbourhood in the 1960s (note: paper copies of the newsletter are distributed through volunteer street reps 2-3 times a year to 400 homes in the area, to reach not only the 120 members of the BPHA but to all the neighbourhood).
- 3a and 3b. copies of 2 update notes from the neighbourhood produce stand organizers.
4. a copy of a letter Steve wrote to the City of Waterloo Council back in 2010 concerning possible amalgamation of Waterloo and Kitchener (it provides some insights into Steve's views on community and governance, but also provides a concise introduction into the city and regional scales of governance, at least in this region).

7. February 25 Food systems

big issue: What is the role of regional food systems and community food initiatives in building sustainability? What are their most direct contributions and how do (or can) they contribute to other sustainability objectives? What can be done at the community level and how can communities play roles in addressing influences beyond the community?

possible guest expert: Adam Kramer, The Working Centre and the Hacienda Sarria Community Garden

discussion topic: Food is a central issue and realm of opportunity for every community. It is also an area in which economy, ecology and society necessarily merge, as do rural and urban, hand-made and mass produced, and local and global. Also, the loose movement (if that is what it is) that favours local/regional food production, cuisine/culture and food security, has drawn support from an extraordinary diversity of contrasting interests and organizations in communities around the world.

- initial class discussion question: What major lessons for successful community-based sustainability initiatives can be drawn from the example of local and regional food initiatives.
- break out group discussions: How can the lessons from the class discussion be applied in individual cases, including ones that may not be centred on food systems? Each participant identifies some possibilities for her or his case. Common themes are reported back to the class.

readings:

Waterloo Region Food Charter (Waterloo Region Food System Roundtable, 2013), available at <http://www.wrfoodsystem.ca/food-charter>

Shaun Loney with Will Braun, *An Army of Problem Solvers* (2016), chap. 4 and 6.

Metcalf Foundation, “Food connects us all,” (Toronto: Metcalf Foundation, February 2008), available at <http://www.metcalffoundation.com/.../Food Connects Us All.pdf>, and on course UW Learn site.

Knezevic, Irena, Karen Landman, Alison Blay-Palmer and Erin Nelson, *Models and Best Practices for Building Sustainable Food Systems in Ontario and Beyond* (Guelph: Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2013), 263pp. plus appendices, on course UW Learn site.

Nyéleni Declaration, “The Six Pillars of Food Sovereignty,” (2007), on course UW Learn site.

Chantal Blouin et al., “Local food systems and public policy: a review of the literature,” (Montréal: Equiterre and The Centre for Trade Policy and Law, September 2009), on course UW Learn site.

Miller, Sally, “Places to Farm: alternative practices and policies for Ontario’s changing agricultural landscape,” (Toronto: Metcalf Foundation, July 2013), 64pp., on course UW Learn site.

C. Clare Hinrichs, “The practice and politics of food system localization,” *Journal of Rural Studies* 19 (2003), pp.33-45, on course UW Learn site

other sources:

Waterloo Region Food System Roundtable, website www.wrfoodsystem.ca

8. March 3 Energy, transportation and community design

big issue: While climate change mitigation may now be the most obvious reason for transforming energy and transportation systems, there are plenty of other sustainability-related drivers and potential benefits. Many big urban centres are already working on a long-term transition in the basics of urban form (from sprawl and cars to density and transit) that has been motivated mostly by financial issues and commuting frustrations. And many rural and remote community also face big questions about how to re-establish themselves for viability in the long run. These shifts affect most other aspects of community wellbeing. They also demand long term vision. Among the big questions involved are the following: What kinds of alternative energy, transportation and community design systems are most desirable for sustainability and community? What far-sighted understandings, approaches and tools are needed? How can particular initiatives can help us get there?

possible guest expert: Kyrke Gaudreau, Green Municipal Fund, Canadian Federation of Municipalities [by video link]

discussion:

breakout groups: Especially in growing urban areas, there has been plenty of discussion of a long-term transition in urban design and associated transportation systems to move from cars and sprawl to transit and density. Because of climate change mitigation needs, we are also now (belatedly) seeing more attention to transition from fossil fuels to low-to-no GHG alternatives.

Question 1: What other big long-term transitions do you think are needed in the next 30 years?

Question 2: How can these transitions be compatible and mutually supporting? Identify 3 (or more) illustrative examples of projects that could help the urban design/transportation transition and the energy/GHG transition and at least two others that you have identified.

readings:

Federation of Canadian Municipalities, Green Municipal Fund, “Five Year Plan, 2018-2023,” <https://fcm.ca/sites/default/files/documents/resources/strategic-plan/five-year-plan-2018-2023-gmf.pdf>, on course UW Learn site

Federation of Canadian Municipalities, Green Municipal Fund project case studies (mostly infrastructure or infrastructure-related projects), <https://fcm.ca/en/programs/green-municipal-fund> (scroll down about half way), not on course UW Learn site – must go to the FCM website

Sarah Burch, Alison Shaw, Ann Dale and John Robinson, “Triggering transformative change: a development path approach to climate change response in communities,” *Climate Policy* 14:4 (2014), pp. 467-487.

Patricia Romero-Lankao, et al., “Urban transformative potential in a changing climate,” *Nature Climate Change* 8 (August 2018), pp.754-756.

Julie Curti, Farrah Andersen and Kathryn Wright, “A Guidebook on Equitable Clean Energy Program Design for Local Governments and Partners” (Urban Sustainability Directors Network, September 2018), <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/59be75accd0f681db2d4d12/t/5bb505961905f4207c244b64/1538590137774/USDN+Equitable+Clean+Energy+Guidebook+Compressed.pdf>

9. March 10 Green spaces and ecosystems

big issue: How can an ecosystem-based approach to community sustainability issues and opportunities contribute new considerations and alternative options to community sustainability initiatives? How can communities go beyond providing greenspace to integrate ecosystem understanding and restoration? What are the core objectives and tools for ecosystem-sensitive approaches and activities?

discussion:

- break-out group discussion: Each participant identifies any component of his or her undertaking that does or may involve effects on (or from interactions with) the

community ecosystem(s), and describes how these are addressed (or not) in the undertaking. Others suggest additional possibilities. Each group identifies and reports the main categories of interactions, implications and responses in the cases discussed.

- class discussion questions: What are the most promising means of ensuring effective attention to ecosystem-related issues in community sustainability initiatives? Are there different options for public and private lands? What tools have greatest potential?

readings:

Ann Dale, et al., *Community Vitality: from adaptation to transformation* (see week 2), chapter 8.

Richard J. Hobbs, Eric Higgs, Carol M. Hall, Peter Bridgewater, F. Stuart Chapin III, et al., “Managing the whole landscape: historical, hybrid, and novel ecosystems,” *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment* 12 (2014), pp.557–564, on course UW Learn site.

Matthew Van Dongen, “Ecopark,” *Hamilton Spectator*, 6 April 2016, available at <http://www.thespec.com/news-story/6441784-vision-of-massive-hamilton-burlington-eco-park-is-coming-to-life/> and on course UW Learn site; also Cootes to Escarpment Ecopark map available at http://media.zuza.com/8/a/8ac6a9e7-f1c5-40de-b9e1-0a7aff1fb7f4/ECOPARK_MAP.pdf, on course UW Learn site.

Robert B. Gibson, “Avoiding sustainability trade-offs in environmental assessment,” *Impact Assessment and Project Appraisal* 31:1 (2013), pp.1-12 especially pp.6-8 re Laurel Creek improvement, on course UW Learn site.

10. March 17 Economy, diversity, opportunity and equity

big issue: How can we green the economy while also increasing social justice (ensure positive equity effects – including intra- and inter-generational equity)? Or should that be how can we increase social justice as a means of greening the economy?

discussion:

- class discussion: What should we consider in an evaluation of the equity effects of a sustainable community initiative? How should we build an equity effects evaluation framework for application to undertakings being developed in this course?
- break-out group discussion: Each participant with the assistance of the other participants in the group does a quick equity effects evaluation of his or her undertaking. Each group identifies and reports the main insights from this exercise.

readings:

Shaun Loney with Will Braun, *An Army of Problem Solvers* (2016), chap. 7 and 9.

Tim Jackson and Peter Victor, “Green economy at community scale (Toronto: Metcalf Foundation, November 2013), 68pp., on course UW Learn site.

Cheryl Teelucksingh and Laura Zeglen, “Building Toronto: achieving social inclusion in Toronto’s emerging green economy,” (Toronto: Metcalf Foundation, 2016), on course UW Learn site.

Adriana Beemans, “Resilient Neighbourhood Economies: A Foundation’s strategic learning from a three-year investment in local economies” (Toronto: Metcalf Foundation, 2016), on course UW Learn site.

“Cities of the future,” *Globe and Mail*, 8 May 2019,
<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/life/adv/article-cities-of-the-future/>

other sources

The Working Centre’s website re the Waterloo School for Community Development
http://www.theworkingcentre.org/wscd/wscd_main.html Resources for Learning

11. March 22 Pre-conference project peer review session

the agenda: Participants meet in groups of 5 to review each other’s project.

details: Prior to the class, each student will be assigned to one of 10 groups with roughly similar project characteristics (e.g., about food or climate change or housing). At the session, each group will meet separately and each group member will present a maximum 10-minute outline of her or his project. The outline should cover

- the community and the project;
- the core purpose(s) of the project and the nature and extent of expected sustainability-related benefits;
- how members of the community will be engaged in project discussions, decision making and/or implementation of the project;
- linkages beyond the community; and
- big lessons.

For the next 10 minutes, the other members of the group respond with questions and/or suggestions – concerning, for example, how the project is meant to work, how it will contribute to sustainability and engage the community, what practical problems or additional opportunities it may face, and possible next steps (e.g., expansion of ambition, adoption elsewhere, scaling up).

There will be a break after the third presentation and questions.

After the last presentation and questions, each participant will do a dry run of her or his 2-minute pitch to the group.

12. March 31 The conference

the agenda: Everyone gets to make a 2-minute pitch for her or his community sustainability project and receive feedback from the rest of the class

details: The class is divided into 10 5-person panels. The conference will have 10 panel sessions of 15 minutes each.

- During the panel sessions, each panelist makes a 2-minute pitch on her or his project, leaving 4 minutes for the panellists to respond to questions of clarification.
- During the presentations by one panel, the nine other groups have assignments:
 - five groups will develop ideas for each of the individual presenters on additional sustainability benefits that the described projects might be able to deliver;
 - three groups will ask questions of clarification; and
 - one group will judge which panel project is most likely to succeed.

The conference schedule and assignments will be posted on the course website.