

Overview of SUST 240 Waste

Welcome to Professor Mike Bryson's Spring 2015 online section of SUST 240 Waste, which is one of the core courses in the SUST undergraduate program at RU. This document provides a snapshot overview of its theme, goals, format, activities, and requirements. For more detailed information, including useful tools for web-based research, consult the [Syllabus](#) section of our course Blackboard (Bb) site. SUST 240 is a required 200-level course in the Sustainability Studies major and may be taken for elective credit by students in other programs. Pre-req: ENG 101.

Cleanliness is next to godliness, so the saying goes; but more importantly, it also is vital to the daily management of urban and suburban systems, lest we be plagued with epidemic disease and other unpleasanties. How society manages sewage, garbage, and recycling involves far more than dropping bins off on our curbs and watching the waste magically disappear. SUST 240 examines sustainability dilemmas involving waste management of various kinds (municipal, hazardous, toxic, and wastewater) assesses consumption trends past and present, and explores the connection of waste production and siting to environmental justice. Students learn about and analyze issues of waste policy and management and critically evaluate the economic, political, and chemical/environmental impacts of waste stream practices.

Key learning objectives include:

- Understanding the environmental, economic, and social impacts of waste management practices, from landfilling to incineration to recycling
- Identifying the linkages between waste and other natural resources (water, food, soil, air) and ecological/cultural systems (urban infrastructure, transportation, land use, power generation)
- Understanding waste in terms of systems thinking and the need for cyclical processes (emphasizing reduction, reuse, and recycling) to replace linear processes (extraction → production → distribution → consumption → disposal)
- Describing the principles of environmental justice and how they relate to resource extraction, waste disposal, pollution, and hazardous waste
- Connecting local waste and recycling issues with global concerns and examples

A distinctive feature of this section of 240 will be your contributions to the **SUST at RU Blog** and the **Schaumburg's Sustainable Future Project**. The former is the main conduit for news, commentary, and analysis from Roosevelt's Sustainability Studies program; the latter is a community-focused website that engages the various sustainability issues that shape the environmental, economic, and social future of suburban ecosystems in general and the NW suburban region of Chicagoland in particular.

Each of you will contribute a **blog post** as well as a research-based **environmental justice essay** that add to the extensive work on the SUST blog and the SSF Project conducted by past Roosevelt students in SUST 210 The Sustainable Future, 220 Water, and 240 classes since 2011. Instead of just writing an ordinary term paper at semester's end that nobody except me ever reads, your work will be published online (and might even become assigned reading for future classes)!

Requirements and Key Assignments

This class is 14 weeks in duration (which includes Spring Break and Finals Week) and has a distinct weekly rhythm. Our activities will include various reading/viewing assignments, weekly online discussions, and various writing and research assignments. Required readings will include our assigned textbooks, assorted websites related to each week's topic, and/or selected documents (usually pdfs) available on the **Weekly Readings** section of our Bb site.

Key course requirements include:

- e-subscription to the [SUST at RU blog](#) and the [Schaumburg's Sustainable Future blog](#); and "liking" the [SUST Facebook page](#) (if you're a FB user)
- a **Personal Waste Inventory** (4-6 pages) in which you systematically track your production of waste for one week and critically analyze your consumption/waste patterns
- a **Blog Post** (300-400 words) for the SUST at RU blog or the Schaumburg's Sustainable Future website/blog that discusses some waste or recycling-related issues, news item, resource, or controversy relevant to the (1) city of Chicago, or (2) the Schaumburg/NW suburban community or (3) cities/suburban communities more generally
- a **Library Resource Paper** (3-4 pages) that cites and annotates 6 quality sources related to a waste topic, problem, or location relevant to environmental justice in a particular community, large or small
- a **Waste and Environmental Justice Essay** that critically investigate the impacts of waste and/or pollution in a community of your choosing; this assignment will be first submitted as a **draft** (5 pages min.) and then a **final revision** (6-8 pages)
- regular and engaged **Participation** in weekly online discussion

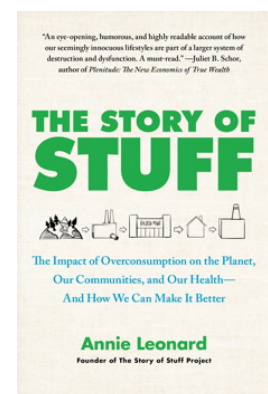
More information on specific assignments, class participation, and course grading policies is available in the **Syllabus** section of our Bb site.

Required Texts

Annie Leonard, *The Story of Stuff* (Free Press, 2011, paper, ISBN 978-1-4516-1029-1). Available at the RU Bookstore, Wabash Building. Website: <http://books.simonandschuster.com/Story-of-Stuff/Annie-Leonard/9781451610291>

Carl A. Zimring and William L. Rathje, eds. *The Encyclopedia of Consumption and Waste: The Social Science of Garbage*. (Sage, 2012). This free e-book is available through the Roosevelt University library website, and a hard copy is available for reference at the Chicago Campus library

Other readings (websites and pdf documents) will be provided in the **Readings** section of our Bb site.



Weekly Schedule: A Snapshot View

Week	Discussion Topic	Assignment Due	Field Trip / Class Activity
1 -- Jan 26	Sustainability, Waste, & Consumption		
2 -- Feb 3	Our Stuff, Our Garbage		Retrieve item from garbage
3 -- Feb 10	Extraction		RU Campus Tour (M 2/9)*
4 -- Feb 17	Production	Blog posts begin (thru Wk 13)	
5 -- Feb 24	Disposal	Personal Waste Inventory	
6 -- Mar 3	Recycling		WB dorm waste audit (M 3/2)*
7 -- Mar 10	Spring Break		
8 -- Mar 17	Pollution & Waste Sinks	Library Resource Paper	
9 -- Mar 24	Environmental Justice		EJ field trip (TBD)*
10 -- Mar 31	Hazardous Waste		
11 -- Apr 7	Distribution	Waste & Justice Essay draft	
12 -- Apr 14	Consumption		
13 -- Apr 21	Sustainable Waste Policy		SUST Symposium (W 4/22)*
14 -- Apr 28	Finals Week	Waste & Justice Essay final	* Optional activities

Waste Audit other Optional Activities

Our course includes a couple of optional hands-on learning and/or field trip opportunities, including (1) a **guided tour of the waste/recycling systems at Roosevelt's Chicago Campus**, which will illuminate the various ways RU reduces solid waste, recycles materials, and composts food waste; (2) a **waste audit activity** undertaken in conjunction with my SUST 210 Sustainable Future class and the Physical Resources Department for the WB dormitory as a means of gathering empirical data on and assessing the university's waste reduction and recycling efforts; and (3) a possible **waste/recycling/landfill/environmental justice field trip** to a Chicago neighborhood, pending arrangements.

Contact Information

Email (mbryson@roosevelt.edu) is the best way to get in touch with me; cellphone is next best. My office hours are published on our 240 Bb site as well as on the Contact page on my faculty website.

Mike Bryson, PhD

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<http://sites.roosevelt.edu/mbryson> (faculty website)

I am available for a campus-based or phone appointment, should you have questions or feel like you need some individualized help beyond what I can provide in the classroom. Keeping up is vitally important in this class, for our schedule is both tight and complex. Please do not disappear! I check my email and voicemail regularly, and I do my best to return messages within a day during the work week. Remember that there's no substitute for regular participation and timely submission of your assignments.

Accommodation of Persons with Disabilities

"The University will provide reasonable accommodations to students or applicants with documented disabilities in compliance with all local, state and federal laws and University policies and procedures.

"Students with documented disabilities who wish to receive accommodations and/or services should notify the University as soon as possible. Students should contact the Office of Disability Services, at (312) 341-3810 for the Chicago Campus or (847) 619-8846 for the Schaumburg Campus, and provide documentation of their disabilities and their requests for accommodations/services to this office. Reasonable accommodations will be determined on a case-by-case basis."

(RU Student Handbook, p. 113).

Accommodation of Students for Religious Holidays

"Roosevelt University respects the rights of students to observe major religious holidays and will make accommodations, upon request, for such observances. Students who wish to observe religious holidays must inform their instructors in writing within the first two weeks of each semester of their intent to observe the holiday so that alternative arrangements convenient to both students and faculty can be made at the earliest opportunity. Students who make such arrangements by the deadline will not be required to attend classes or take examinations on the designated days, and faculty must provide reasonable opportunities for such students to make up missed work and examinations. However, all work missed for such absences, including papers and examinations, must be made up. Students who do not arrange for excused absences by the deadline are not entitled to such accommodations."

(RU Student Handbook, p. 112).

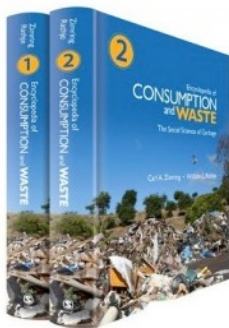
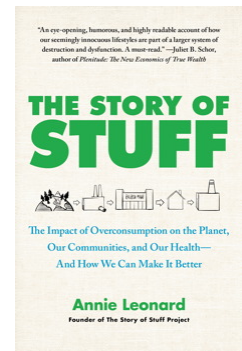
Updated 25 January 2015

Textbook Information

Annie Leonard, *The Story of Stuff: The Impact of overconsumption on the Planet, Our Communities, and Our Health -- and How We Can Make It Better* (Free Press, 2011, paper, ISBN 978-1-4516-1029-1). Available at the RU Bookstore, Wabash Building.

Website:

<http://books.simonandschuster.com/The-Story-of-Stuff/Annie-Leonard/9781451610291>



Carl A. Zimring and William L. Rathje, eds. *The Encyclopedia of Consumption and Waste: The Social Science of Garbage.* (Sage, 2012).

This free e-book is available through the Roosevelt University library website as well as in our **Readings** section of the 240 Bb site. A hard copy is available for reference at the RU library.

Other Required Readings

In addition to the above texts, I provide numerous other readings as direct links to a document or website or as downloadable selections within the **Readings** section of our Bb site.

Updated 25 January 2015

Weekly Schedule at a Glance

Week	Discussion Topic	Writing Assignment Due	Activity or Field Trip
1 -- Jan 27	Sustainability, Waste, & Consumption		
2 -- Feb 3	Our Stuff, Our Garbage		Retrieve item from garbage
3 -- Feb 10	Extraction		RU campus tour (M 2/9)*
4 -- Feb 17	Production	Blog posts begin (thru Wk 13)	
5 -- Feb 24	Disposal	Personal Waste Inventory	
6 -- Mar 3	Recycling on Campus		WB dorm waste audit (M 3/2)*
7 -- Mar 10	Spring Break		
8 -- Mar 17	Pollution & Waste Sinks	Library Resource Paper	
9 -- Mar 24	Environmental Justice		EJ field trip (TBD)*
10 -- Mar 31	Hazardous Waste		
11 -- Apr 7	Distribution	Waste & Justice Essay draft	
12 -- Apr 14	Consumption		
13 -- Apr 21	Sustainable Waste Innovations		SUST Symposium (W 4/22)*
14 -- Apr 28	Finals Week	Waste & Justice Essay final	* Optional activities

Detailed Schedule of Readings, Activities, and Assignments

ECW = *The Encyclopedia of Consumption and Waste*

All readings not in Leonard are post in Bb, under "Readings"

Color Key: Blog post schedule / Major writing assignments / Optional field trips

Week One (1/27): Introduction to Waste and Sustainability

- Orientation to course and overview of the relations among waste, recycling, and sustainability
- Personal introductions on Blackboard (Bb)
- Online discussion items:
 - Video: Leonard, *The Story of Stuff*
 - Roosevelt University [Strategic Sustainability Plan](#) (2014)
 - [SUST at RU blog](#), [RU Green Campus](#), and [Schaumburg's Sustainable Future](#) websites: scan sections related to waste, recycling, and environmental justice

Week Two (2/3): Our Stuff, Our Garbage

- Trash "show and tell": post photo of an item retrieved from the garbage
- Readings for discussion:
 - Leonard, *The Story of Stuff* (Intro sections before ch. 1)
 - ECW selections: "Culture, Values, and Garbage"; "Garbology"
 - Video: [Talkin' Trash](#) with garbologist Bill Rathje
 - EPA, "Municipal Solid Waste Generation, Recycling, and Disposal" (2012)
- Volunteer for Week 4 blog posts; schedule posted by end of this week

Week Three (2/10): Extraction of Natural Resources

- **Optional Campus Activity on Mon 2/9: Chicago Campus Sustainability Tour** with SUST 210 and RU Physical Resources. Starts in WB Lobby at 1pm.
- Readings and resources for discussion:
 - Leonard, *The Story of Stuff* (ch. 1, "Extraction")
 - EPA, [GHG Emissions Calculator](#) (estimate your individual carbon footprint)
 - ECW selections: "Carbon Dioxide"; "Emissions"

Week Four (2/17): Production of Stuff (and Its Consequences)

- Readings for online discussion:
 - Leonard, *The Story of Stuff* (ch. 2, "Production," pp. 44-84)
 - EWC selections: "Pre-consumer Waste"; "Producer Responsibility"
- **Blog Posts begin this week:** Tiffany Mucci, Lindsey Sharp

Week Five (2/24): Disposal

- Readings for discussion:
 - Leonard, *The Story of Stuff* (ch. 5, "Disposal," pp. 182-228)
 - ECW selections: "Landfills, Modern"; "Incinerators"; "Incinerator Waste"
 - EPA, "Landfills" and "Energy Recovery from Waste"
- **Personal Waste Inventory due Fri 2/27**
- **Blog Posts:** Akilah Mitchell, Melanie Blume

Week Six (3/3): Recycling on Campus

- **Optional Campus Activity: WB Dorm Waste Audit** with SUST 210 and RU Physical Resources. Meet in WB Lobby at 1pm on Mon 3/2 ready to work! Wear old clothes, pants/long sleeves, closed toed shoes. Bring rubber gloves, pencil, and notebook.
- Readings for discussion:
 - Leonard, *The Story of Stuff* (ch. 5, "Disposal," pp. 228-236)
 - ECW selections: "Composting"; "Recycling"
 - Bryson, "[New Year's Resolution for Schaumburg Campus: Composting and Better Recycling](#)" (SSF Blog, 31 Dec 2013) and "[Getting Trashed on the Loading Dock: SUST Students Conduct Waste Audit of RU's Chicago Campus](#)" (SUST Blog, 25 Oct 2014)
 - RU Green Campus, [Recycling](#)
 - NWF Campus Ecology Waste/Recycling case studies from Iowa State, Univ. of Washington, and UIC
- **Blog Posts:** Michelle Trispel, Mark Bozyk

Week Seven (3/10): Spring Break! Catch up on your sleep and class reading; or, [do this instead](#).

Week Eight (3/17): Pollution & Waste Sinks

- Readings for discussion:
 - ECW selections: "Ocean Disposal"; "Pollution, Air"; "Pollution, Land"; "Pollution, Water"; "Sewage"
 - Sandra Steingraber, ch. 8 "Air" (from *Living Downstream*, 1998)
 - Carl Zimring and Michael Bryson, "Infamous Past, Invisible Present: Searching for Bubbly Creek in the 21st Century" (2013)
- **Blog Posts:** Sarah Tag, Bradley Diekevers, MaryBeth Radeck

Week Nine (3/24): Waste & Environmental Justice

- Readings for discussion:
 - Leonard, *The Story of Stuff* (ch. 2, "Production," pp. 84-105)
 - ECW selections: "Environmental Justice," "Race and Garbage," and "NIMBY"
 - Principles of Environmental Justice
 - Harvey L. White, "Race, Class, and Environmental Hazards" (1998)
- **Library Resource Paper due Fri 3/27**
- **Blog Posts:** Vanessa Elliott, Andrew Abmalay, Adriana Fernandez

Week Ten (3/31): Hazardous Waste

- Readings for discussion:
 - EWC selections: "High Level Waste Disposal"; "Love Canal"; "Toxic Waste"
 - "[Love Canal: A Legacy of Doubt](#)" (*NY Times* retro report video) and Revkin, "[Love Canal: Its Mixed Legacy](#)" (*NY Times* 25 Nov 2013)
 - Wald, "[Calls To Use Yucca Mountain as a Nuclear Waste Site, Now Deemed Safe](#)" (*NY Times*, 16 Oct 2014)
 - EPA, [Superfund Sites Where You live](#) (explore a Superfund site of interest to you)
- **Blog Posts:** Ashleigh Nightengale, Tyler Fulford, Nida Mufti

Week Eleven (4/7): Distribution

- Readings for discussion:
 - Leonard, *The Story of Stuff* (ch. 3, "Distribution")
 - BBC video: [Amazon's Retail Revolution](#) (April 2014)
 - Stone, "[The Secret of Bezos: How Amazon Became the Everything Store](#)" (*Bloomberg Businessweek* 10 Oct 2013)
- **Environmental Justice Essay draft due Fri 4/10**
- **Blog Posts:** William Galanis, Alston Moore, Robert Green

Week Twelve (4/14): Consumption

- Readings for discussion:
 - Leonard, *The Story of Stuff* (ch. 4, "Consumption")
 - EWC selections: "Consumerism"; "Marketing, Consumer Behavior, & Garbage"; "Overconsumption"
- **Blog Posts:** Danielle Maurer, Tiffany Jennings, Jim Lockfeer

Week Thirteen (4/21): Sustainable Innovations for Waste Management & Reduction

- **Recommended Campus Activity on Wed 4/22: SUST Student Symposium, 3-5:30pm (WB 616)**
- Readings for discussion:
 - Leonard, *The Story of Stuff* (Epilogue and Appendices 1-3)
 - Students' choice! Find a short article or video for discussion
- **Blog Posts:** Aminat Kosoko, Danielle LaBella, Tom Lewallen

Week Fourteen (4/28): Finals Week

- **Environmental Justice Essay revision due Tues 4/28**
- Course evaluations (online)

-- This schedule may be revised as needed --

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