

The Sustainable Future: Environment, Economy, Equity **Course Overview and Policies**

Welcome to Professor Mike Bryson's Fall 2014 offering of SUST 210 online. This document provides an 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 210 is a required 200-level course in the Sustainability Studies major and minor, and may be taken for elective credit by students in other programs. Pre-req: ENG 101

SUST 210 provides an introduction to sustainability by exploring definitions, controversies, trends, and case-studies in various systems and locales (from urban to rural, as well as local to global). Using the Chicago region as a learning laboratory, the course takes a multidisciplinary approach to such topics as environmental history and urban ecology, sustainable development and landscape transformations, recycling and waste management, food and water consumption, ecosystem restoration, and environmental justice. Investigation of local sites of interest related to sustainability provides hands-on learning opportunities that complement our course readings, class discussions, and lectures.

A distinctive feature of this section of 210 is the **Schaumburg's Sustainable Future Project**: a community-focused research and writing endeavor highlighting the various sustainability issues that shape the environmental, economic, and social future of the Village of Schaumburg IL, its surrounding communities, and suburban landscapes in general. Each of you will contribute a blog post as well as a short but well-researched essay that add to the extensive work on the SSF Project conducted by past RU students in SUST 210 The Sustainable Future and SUST 220 Water since 2011. And here's the best part: instead of just writing an ordinary term paper at semester's end that nobody except me ever reads, your work will be published online!

The Online Seminar Format

This class is designed as a seminar, which places a premium on critical thinking, interactive discussion, class participation, writing, and research. Our small size, the seminar approach, and the SSF Project focus mean that **each of you will play a vital role in the class as scholar and active participant**. Consequently, my expectations are high for engaged, thoughtful, and regular participation.

What makes this particular section of 210 unique, of course, is that it takes place completely online. We'll be using the virtual learning interface at Roosevelt, called RU Online, which is supported by the Blackboard software system (hereafter referred to as "Bb," for short). The key thing to understand about online courses, like this one, is that they're **interactive** -- just as my on-campus 210 students read assignments, write papers, construct arguments, do research, and come to class to engage in lively discussion, so too will online 210 students share ideas and interact in real and virtual time. Bb gives us the web-based tools to do just that. For the vast majority of our interaction, we'll use threaded discussion forums, which are asynchronous (i.e., not in real time) means of communicating, to exchange ideas and materials on a weekly basis. Reading and posting to the discussion board is like coming to class, except that you can do it any time of day throughout a given week.

Just as the on-campus version of 210 requires you to be in the classroom for 3 hours per week, the online version necessitates your devoting at least **3 hours per week** to exploring our website, reading and posting to the board, etc. -- and that does not count the time you'll need to spend reading your assignments and writing papers. Another important point here is that our seminar is *not* an independent study experience: you'll be moving through the semester with your fellow students, week by week, and interacting with them and me regularly. And of course, you can always contact me by email, by phone, or making an appointment to see me during my office hours.

Requirements and Key Assignments

This class is 14 weeks in duration (which includes Thanksgiving Break and Finals) and has a distinct weekly rhythm. Our activities will include weekly online discussions, periodic field trip opportunities, and various writing/research assignments. Required readings will include our assigned textbook, 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 **Sustainable Community Paper** (3 pages) in which you imagine and articulate your ideal sustainable community
- a **Library Resource Paper** (3 pages) that cites and annotates sources related to your chosen SSF Project topic
- a **Field Trip Reflections Paper** (4-5 pages) that critically reflects on your field trip experience(s) in light of relevant course readings
- a **Blog Post** (300 words minimum) for the Schaumburg's Sustainable Future website that discusses some sustainability-related news item or resource relevant to the Schaumburg/NW suburban community
- a **Sustainable Suburb Essay** (1,200-1,500 words) in which you research and profile a suburban community somewhere in the US and assess its status and potential with respect to various sustainability parameters; like the SSF blog post above, this will be published on the SSF website
- regular and engaged **Class Participation** on the Bb Discussion Board (usually 4 posts/week, minimum)

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

Field Trips

Our course includes a several field trip opportunities in Chicago and Schaumburg, such as a guided walking tour of waste/sustainability features of Roosevelt's Chicago Campus; a bus tour of waste, recycling, pollution, and environmental justice sites on Chicago's South Side with the Southeast Environmental Task Force; a public symposium on spatial justice and sustainability at the Institute for Cultural Affairs in Uptown; and a visit to the Restoring Earth exhibit at the Field Museum. Everyone

should attend at least one of the field trips, whether as part of a class group or on your own time. For those whose schedules prohibit attending one of the scheduled trips, flexible options will be suggested. Detailed information about each trip will be provided in advance and posted on our Bb site.

Contact Information

Email (mbryson@roosevelt.edu) is the best way to get in touch with me; the phone (312-281-3148 office, 815-557-3153 cell) is next best. My office hours are published in our 210 Bb site as well as on the Contact page on my faculty website, noted here.

Chicago Office: Gage 205-F (mailbox in 200) | Schaumburg Office: room 154
Contact Information: sites.roosevelt.edu/mbryson/contact

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. 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).

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Assignments and Grading Policies

Assignments	Points
Sustainable Community Paper (3 pages)*	30
SSF Blog Post (300-400 words) ⁺	20
Library Resource Paper (3 pages)*	50
Field Trip Reflection Paper (5-6 pages)	50
SSF Sustainable Suburb Essay Draft ⁺	10
SSF Sustainable Suburb Essay Revision ⁺	40
Class Participation (1st half)	25
Class Participation (2nd half)	25
Total	250

* One of these assignments may be revised and resubmitted

⁺ SSF = Schaumburg's Sustainable Future Website

Participation Requirements

Class participation includes faithful weekly attendance in our online discussions, substantive contributions to said discussions, and completion of writing assignments in a timely fashion. Your active involvement in class is not only appreciated, but absolutely necessary to the effectiveness of our seminar. Everyone should read each assignment completely and carefully, bring questions to the table, and be prepared to discuss the material with each other. You must make regular, substantial, focused, and insightful contributions to class discussion in order to earn a "B" or better in participation. Note that the participation grade is split into two parts -- one for the first half of the semester (through Week 6), the other for the remaining half.

Even if you limited online access during a given week, you are still responsible for the assigned material that week, including any written assignment that is due. **You may miss one weekly discussion forum, no questions asked**, without jeopardizing your participation credit. If you must miss class time due to illness, family emergency, or other similar situation, please notify me as soon as possible. Be sure to read the detailed **FAQ page on class participation**, located in Bb **Syllabus** section of our Bb site.

Writing Assignments / Revision Policy

In addition to regular class participation, this section of 210 requires several writing assignments of varying length. Detailed directions for the assignments are posted in the **Syllabus** section of our Bb site. The various papers and the Schaumburg's Sustainable Future group project ask you to *apply* your knowledge and critical thinking skills in various kinds of ways. Key things to remember:

- **Late assignments will be docked 5% the 1st week they are late, 10% the second week, etc. up to a 20% penalty.** Extensions are granted *only* for extreme circumstances, and must be approved by me *prior* to the assignment's due date.
- You have a **24-hr. grace period** on all assignments, during which they can be turned in without a late penalty. (This does not apply to the revision option below.)

- All writing assignments are turned in through the **Submit Work** section of our Bb site. In the event of a rare network problem with Bb, I will make adjustments to a given due date.
- **Either the Sustainable Community Paper or the Library Resource Paper may be revised** after the initial grade and resubmitted, if you wish, for further consideration. The revision due date will be posted on the **Weekly Schedule** page.

Backing Up Your Files

Avoid heartache and sadness from losing your brilliant prose and deep thoughts. Here's how:

- Save each significant version of a document under a separate filename (e.g., Essay1 v1, Essay1 v2, etc.).
- Back up your files frequently by:
 - emailing them to your Roosevelt email account
 - saving them periodically to a flash drive or external hard drive

A Note on Academic Honesty -- Very Important!

All of your work in SUST 210 and every other college class must be your own. A full explanation of academic honesty is available in the document, [*Academic Integrity: A Guide for Students*](#), published by the Roosevelt University Provost's Office. You should read this document carefully and print a copy for your records.

- **Plagiarism is a serious academic offense and is unacceptable in any form.** Examples in academic writing assignments include putting your name on another person's writing and presenting it as your own work (an egregious case!); failing to properly cite information from another source (i.e., not giving credit where it's due); failing to put a direct quote in quotation marks (even if it's cited properly); or not adequately paraphrasing the language of an outside source (again, even if it's cited properly). The latter two examples are the most common forms of plagiarism, and even though in many cases they are unintentional mistakes, *they're still wrong -- and unethical.*
- **My policy on plagiarism:** An assignment that contains plagiarized passages, whether intentional or not, usually is returned without a grade. The author must schedule an appointment with me to discuss the assignment and then submit a thorough revision of the paper. If the revision does not correct the problem, the assignment will receive a failing grade. The objective of my policy is not to punish, but to help you gain critical skills and confidence in properly summarizing, paraphrasing, quoting, and documenting sources within your writing. *In cases of egregious academic dishonesty*, however, I reserve the right to record a failing grade for the assignment without possibility of revision, a lowered course grade, or a failing course grade (per the *Roosevelt Student Handbook*).

How I Calculate Your Grade

There are 250 total possible points that can be earned in this class. Each assignment will be given a numerical score based on its potential point value (e.g., 42 out of 50 points, equivalent to 84%, or a B for that assignment). Final grades are calculated simply by dividing your total earned points by 250, then multiplying by 100 to convert that to a percentage. Letter grades are assigned according to the following percentage scale:

A	93-100%
A-	90-92%
B+	87-89%
B	83-86%
B-	80-82%
C+	77-79%
C	73-76%
C-	70-72%
D+	67-69%
D	63-66%
D-	60-62%
F	0-59%

How I Evaluate Writing Assignments

The following is a summary of the criteria I use to evaluate most kinds of writing assignments. Please bear in mind that no list is universal -- each assignment usually demands a few special categories of consideration, and I always make the appropriate adjustments depending on the assignment. For example: text contributions to an online discussion forum are read much more loosely in terms of grammar and spelling than are formal pieces of writing, such as a critical essay.

"A" paper: Excellent

- Fulfills and successfully pushes beyond the minimum requirements of the assignment in terms of thoroughness and level of detail
- Defines its purpose/thesis very clearly and addresses a defined audience
- Exemplifies a high level of sophistication in terms of content and style (i.e., goes beyond obvious points, shows originality of thought, tackles a difficult subject, flows logically and coherently, uses mature sentence structure and diction, etc.)
- Demonstrates evidence of careful and thoughtful revision
- Displays excellent overall organization and nearly flawless mechanics
- Makes effective and judicious use of other sources (if required), and documents them correctly
- Is readable, clear, and free from needless ambiguity

"B" paper: Good

- Fulfills the minimum requirements of the assignment, and attempts (not always successfully) to go further in terms of development
- Defines its purpose/thesis adequately and addresses a particular audience (with perhaps an occasional lapse)
- Displays coherent organization, with room for possible adjustment
- Demonstrates some degree of thoughtful revision
- Employs reasonably sound writing mechanics
- Uses and documents sources competently
- Is reasonably free from logical flaws and ambiguity (though minor lapses may occur)

"C" paper: Fair

- Fulfills the bare minimum of the assignment; makes no attempt to go beyond what's easy or obvious
- Defines an audience, but does not address it adequately or consistently
- Defines a purpose, but in an unclear or confusing manner -- thesis is ineffective and unclear
- Presents material in a somewhat unorganized fashion
- Demonstrates little thoughtful revision -- changes are made only on the surface (e.g., spelling and grammar)
- Documents sources and/or uses visuals, but not effectively
- Lacks clarity -- the thought process is obscured and the prose is difficult to read
- Contains a number of stylistic and mechanical weaknesses (e.g., sentence structure may be simplistic and/or repetitive)

"D" paper: Needs a Major Overhaul

- Makes a minimal effort to fulfill the assignment, but fails to do an adequate job
- Lacks a clear purpose/focus
- Is seriously deficient in terms of audience awareness, organization, mechanics, documentation, etc.
- Is difficult to follow -- fundamental errors or lack of thoughtful development make reading a chore

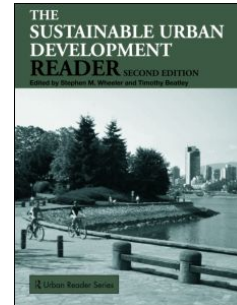
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Textbook Information and Course Bibliography

Wheeler, Stephen, and Timothy Beatley, eds., *The Urban Sustainable Development Reader*, 2nd edition.
(Routledge, 2009, paper, ISBN 978-0-415-45382-0)

Website:

<http://www.routledge.com/books/details/9780415453820/>



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 **Weekly Readings** section of our Bb site.

Selected Bibliography

This bibliography lists books, articles, and websites related to sustainability and the urban environment, with an added focus on the Chicago region. Many of these sources are available through RU's library; others can be requested by interlibrary loan or accessed online. While this is not meant to be an exhaustive list about our seminar's focus, it can be one starting point for your own research. I strongly encourage you to look for books via the [RU Library's Sustainability Lib Guide](#) as well as check [the website of Island Press](#), which has an excellent list of environmental/sustainability titles.

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Cronon, William. *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1983.

----- *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West*. New York: Norton, 1991.

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- , ed. *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*. New York: Norton, 1996.
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<<http://revealingchicago.org/>>
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- Gottlieb, Robert. *Reinventing Los Angeles: Nature and Community in the Global City*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2007.
- Greenberg, Joel. *A Natural History of the Chicago Region*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003.
- Grossman, James R., Ann Durkin Keating, and Janice L. Reiff, eds. *The Encyclopedia of Chicago*. Michael P. Conzen, cartographic editor. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004.
- Hedeen, Stanley. *The Mill Creek: An Unnatural History of an Urban Stream*. Cincinnati: Blue Heron Press, 1994.
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Weekly Schedule at a Glance

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Week	Topic	Assignment Due	Field Trip Options (date)
1 -- Sept 8	Introduction to Sustainability		
2 -- Sept 15	Ecology, Economy, & Ethics		
3 -- Sept 22	Green Architecture & Design	Sustainable Community Paper	
4 -- Sept 29	Waste & Recycling	Blog posts begin (thru Wk 13)	SETF Waste/Recycling (10/2)
5 -- Oct 6	Food		Campus Waste Tour (10/9)
6 -- Oct 13	Water		
7 -- Oct 20	Biodiversity	Library Resource Paper	Field Museum (10/24)
8 -- Oct 27	Energy & Climate Change		
9 -- Nov 3	Environmental Equity & Social Justice		
10 -- Nov 10	Parklands & Conservation	Field Trip Reflection	
11 -- Nov 17	Transportation		
12 -- Nov 24	Thanksgiving Break		
13 -- Dec 1	The Future	Sustainable Suburb Essay (draft)	
14 -- Dec 8	Finals Week	Sustainable Suburb Essay (final)	

Detailed Schedule of Readings, Activities, and Assignments

SUDR = *Sustainable Urban Development Reader* selections

Bb = Document located in course Blackboard site (Weekly Readings)

Major writing assignments are **yellow** / Field trips are **green** / Blog post assignments are **blue**

Week One (9/8): Introduction to Sustainability

- Introduction to course theme, format, and requirements
- Social media: Subscribe to the [SUST at RU](#) and [Schaumburg's Sustainable Future](#) blogs, and like the SUST Facebook page
- Readings for discussion:
 - [Cities](#) -- a video presentation by *Science* magazine, part of its [Feb. 2008 special issue on cities](#)
 - [Schaumburg's Sustainable Future](#) -- scan this SUST student website/blog project
 - "[Biodiversity, Science, and Art: Powerful Themes at this Year's SUST Student Symposium at Roosevelt](#)" (SUST at RU blog, 28 April 2014)
 - Calculate your [ecological footprint on this website](#)

Week Two (9/15): Ecological, Economic, and Ethical Foundations

- Readings for discussion:
 - Aldo Leopold, "The Land Ethic" (SUDR 23-32)
 - Anne Whiston Spirn, "City and Nature" (SUDR 139-144)
 - Paul Hawken, "Natural Capitalism" (SUDR 217-225)
 - Brundtland Commission, "Towards Sustainable Development" (SUDR 59-63)

Week Three (9/22): Green Architecture and Design

- Readings for discussion:
 - William McDonough, "Design, Ecology, Ethics, and the Making of Things" (SUDR 255-261)
 - Brenda Vale and Robert Vale, "Principles of Green Architecture" (SUDR 262-266)
 - US Green Bldg Council, "The LEED Green Building Rating System" (SUDR 273-278)
 - Chicago Wilderness, "Sustainable Development Principles for Protecting Nature in the Chicago Wilderness Region"
- **Sustainable Community Paper** due Sat 9/27, 11pm CST, in Submit Work (24-hour grace period for on-time submission)

Week Four (9/29): Waste and Recycling

- Readings for discussion:
 - Annie Leonard, [The Story of Stuff](#) (video)
 - John Tillman Lyle, "Waste as a Resource" (SUDR 165-172)
 - Carl Zimring, "Recycling Is not Garbage" [Bb] and [updates on Chicago's recycling](#) from the SUST at RU blog
 - Mick Dumke, "[Why Can't Chicago Recycle?](#)" (*Chicago Reader* 22 July 2010)
- **Field Trip Opportunity**: Bus Tour of Waste, Recycling, and Pollution Sites on Chicago's South Side with the [Southeast Environmental Task Force](#) (12:30-4:30pm on 10/2, limited availability)
- **SSF Blog Posts due**:

Week Five (10/6): Food

- Readings/activities for discussion:
 - Michael Pollan, "[How Change Is Going To Come in the Food System](#)" (*The Nation* Sept 2011) and "[Farmer in Chief](#)" (*New York Times Magazine* 9 Oct 2008)
 - Patrisia Ramirez, et al., "[Food Issues in Schaumburg](#)" (Schaumburg's Sustainable Future, 2012)
 - Scan these sustainable agriculture websites:
 - [Growing Power](#), Milwaukee and Chicago
 - [Angelic Organics](#) Farm / CSA, Caledonia IL
 - [Henry's Farm](#), Congerville IL
- **Field Trip Opportunities**: "[Is It Just Space?](#)" [symposium on spatial justice and sustainability](#) at the Institute of Cultural Affairs (5:30pm on 10/7; [registration required](#)); Walking Tour of RU's Wabash Building (1pm on 10/9)
- **SSF Blog Posts Due**:

Week Six (10/13): Water

- Reading: Barbara Kingsolver, "[Fresh Water](#)" (*National Geographic* April 2010)
 - Mary Beth Radeck, et al., [The Water in Schaumburg Project](#) (Schaumburg's Sustainable Future, 2011)

- Jerry Dennis, "[Water: Demand and Supply](#)" and "[Water: The Quality Test](#)" (Chicago Wilderness reports, 2007)
- Ann L. Riley, "What is Restoration?" (SUDR 149-154)
- Call dibs on a suburb for your Sustainable Suburb paper (due Weeks 13-14)
- **SSF Blog Posts Due:**

Week Seven (10/20): Biodiversity

- Readings for discussion:
 - Chicago Wilderness *Biodiversity Recovery Plan*: Ch. 2, "The Values of Biodiversity"
 - Jessie Crow Mermel, [Biodiversity](#) (Schaumburg's Sustainable Future, 2011)
 - Village of Schaumburg, Exec. Summary of *Biodiversity Recovery Plan* (2004) -- pp. i-vii
 - Selections from *The Atlas of Biodiversity* (2011) -- read pp. 3-11 and then pick one of the following sections to review: Prairies, Woodlands, or Wetlands
- **Field Trip Opportunity:** [Restoring Earth exhibit](#) at the Field Museum in Chicago (10/24)
- **Library Resource Paper due Sat 10/25, 11pm CST**
- **SSF Blog Posts Due:**

Week Eight (10/27): Energy & Climate Change

- Readings for discussion:
 - Bill McKibben, "The End of Nature" (SUDR 64-71)
 - United States EPA, "[Basic Information on Climate Change](#)":
 - Climate Change 101 video (at above link)
 - Climate Change [Indicators Slideshow](#)
 - CNT, "Summary Report: Chicago's Greenhouse Gas Emissions," pp. 4-12
- **SSF Blog Posts Due:**

Week Nine (11/3): Environmental Equity & Social Justice

- Readings for discussion:
 - Charles Lee, "[Evolving Visions of Environmental Justice](#)" (*EJ in Action*, 11 Feb 2014)
 - Robert Bullard, "People-of-Color Environmentalism" (SUDR 183-189)
 - Dolores Hayden, "Domesticating Urban Space" (SUDR 190-196)
 - Janice E. Perlman with Molly O'Meara Sheehan, "Fighting Poverty and Environmental Justice in Cities" (SUDR 197-208)
- **SSF Blog Posts Due:**

Week Ten (11/10): Parklands and Conservation

- Readings for discussion:
 - Peter Harnick, "The Excellent City Park System" (from *The Humane Metropolis*, 2006)
 - "People on the Land" (from *The Atlas of Biodiversity*, 2011, pp. 50-65)
 - Jan Gehl, "Outdoor Space and Outdoor Activities" (SUDR 99-102)

- Michael Bryson, "The 'Development' of Teale Woods" (18 Dec 2011)
- **Field Trip Reflection Paper due Sat 11/5, 11pm CST**
- **SSF Blog Posts Due:**

Week Eleven (11/17): Transportation

- Readings for discussion:
 - Transportation essays on metro transit, traffic calming, and biking (SUDR 115-136)
 - Urban Transportation Caucus, "Urban Transportation Report Card 2007"
 - Kevin Eagan, et al., [Transportation Resources and Challenges](#) (Schaumburg's Sustainable Future, 2012)
- **SSF Blog Posts Due:**

Week Twelve (11/24): THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week Thirteen (12/1): The Sustainable Future

- Readings for discussion:
 - Eric Zencey, "[Theses on Sustainability: A Primer](#)" (*Orion* May/June 2010)
 - Stephen M. Wheeler, "'The View' from the 21st Century" (SUDR 389-392)
- **SSF Blog Posts Due:**
- **Sustainable Suburb draft due Mon 12/1, 11pm CST (no grace period)**
- Optional revisions of Sustainability Community or Library Resource papers due Sat 12/6

Week Fourteen (12/8): Finals Week

- **Sustainable Suburb revision due Wed 12/10, 11pm CST (no grace period)**
- Course evaluations (online)

-- I reserve the right to revise this schedule as needed --

Updated 5 September 2014