

**SW 212 ECOLOGY AND THE  
URBAN ENVIRONMENT**

*DePaul University - School for New Learning*

Loop Campus, Winter Quarter 2009  
Tuesday Evenings: 6:00-9:00 PM

**Instructor:**

**Nadine Anne Bopp MLA**

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**Course Description:**

Urban Ecology is a survey course for the non-science major to enhance your understanding of the ecological principles and processes as they relate to urban living. **Ecology is simply the study of organisms and their surroundings.** Most urbanites are unaware of the connection between their livelihood, quality of life and their dependence on the processes and cycles of the natural world. You will begin to understand these complexities and connections between the eco-shpere and the techno-sphere that we as humans depend upon.

For those of us living in urban areas, many of the processes that explain the relationships between plants, animals and their natural habitats appear unfamiliar or inappropriate in a city. Urban ecology shows how these processes are the same ones that affect the urban communities humans inhabit.

Topics that explain these similarities on a local and global level include discussions of biological communities, population dynamics, productivity, environmental health and toxicology, food, hunger, nutrition, sustainable agriculture, pollution, waste and recycling, natural resource management and conservation, energy resources both conventional and sustainable, climate and atmospheric conditions, urbanization and sustainable cities.

Many economic and ethical decisions are made (and questioned) as to the right or wrong way to save or protect the environment. This course will give you the framework to make individual consumer, political and personal choice decisions that affect your quality of life and the quality of life of others in distant lands. Awareness is the key to a sustainable future

**TEXT: Environmental Science, A Global Concern.** Cunningham and Saigo. 2000. Wm C Brown Publishers

**Purchase a used book from ADDALL.com or some other bookseller online, or get it from your public library 10<sup>th</sup> ed to 8<sup>th</sup> edition  
No book at bookstore!**

**Course Focus:** Urban Ecology is a survey course for the non-science major to enhance your understanding of the ecological principles and processes as they relate to an urban dweller. **Ecology is simply the study of organisms and their surroundings.** Most urbanites are unaware of the connection between their livelihood, quality of life and their dependence on the processes and cycles of the natural world. You will begin to understand these complexities and connections between the ecosphere and the technosphere that we as humans depend upon. Issues discussed are environmental, physical, social, political, cultural and behavioral.

**Skills:**

- To **reach** your goals in fulfilling your chosen competencies.
- To become **aware** of your environment, its impact on you and your impact on the environment, both locally and on a global scale.
- To be able to **articulate** and understand natural processes, cycles and concepts.
- To discuss **rationally**, based on factual material, controversial environmental issues.
- To make the best **choices** with your consumer dollars, votes and habits with regard to your environment, as an informed citizen.
- To be able to **use advances** in the technosphere that are in tune with the ecosphere

**COMPETENCIES:**

**S-4            S-1-A            S-2-D or negotiated competence**

**Learning Experience:**

Readings in the text, newspapers, or journals, perusing the internet, listening to the radio and the news, class lectures, group discussions and role playing will facilitate the learning process. Incorporating personal experience and observations with new information will set the stage for a variety of perspectives and dimensions on these myriad issues. In depth exploration of a specific point of focus individually, in a team, research and oral presentation will fulfill a student's chosen competencies.

**Attendance:**

Attendance is usually indicative of the student's earnestness and interest in the topic. Given the short intensive period to complete the competencies, it is imperative that everyone be in class ready to

participate. If there is a problem, please notify the instructor and fellow classmates if necessary so the class is not delayed.

### **Demonstration of Competence:**

#### **Course Requirements:**

- **attendance** at all classes
- participation **in class discussion**
- **environmental essay/observation**, (as long as it needs to be) to demonstrate your awareness and understanding of the issues and their impact locally, regionally and globally. (3 total) Document all info with references, different topic each essay. Each essay to be a different topic
- **pamphlet/poster** on an environmental topic to raise awareness, education or a call to action (can be same topic as research)
- **conceptual plan** for environmental city, in-class group project
- **oral presentation** of research with References (10 minutes)

### **Criteria for Assessment:**

Each student will write an assessment of their achievements at the end of the quarter. I will review your work and your assessment to determine you level of learning.

Completion of the assignments and a demonstrated **understanding of ecological principles** along with the ability to communicate them in various contexts: **oral** (class discussion, presentation), **written** (annotated bibliography and weekly essay) and **visually** (environmental city) will fulfill the competences for this class.

#### **Grading:**

Each student will receive a letter grade, unless pass/fail is requested. You cannot switch from one to another depending on the outcome of the course. Pass/fail must be elected at the beginning of the term.

**Unexcused absences or late work will result in a lower letter grade.**

## **WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS**

#### **Week one: 6 Jan**

Introduction to ecology and ecological principles.

Film: The Planet Neighborhood or  
An Inconvenient Truth

#### **Week two: 13 Jan**

Chapters: 1, 2, 24

Env history, ethics and law

Film: NAFTA chapter 11

**Paper one Due**

**Week three: 20 Jan** Chapter 23  
 Env economics  
**Additional reading:**  
**Harper's Apr 2002, p 13-20**  
***The Idea of a Local Economy***  
 Film: Waste=Food

**Week four: 27 Jan** Chapter 6, 7, 8, 9  
 ,10  
 Population, pesticides  
 Sustainable agriculture, food, hunger and  
 Nutrition  
**Paper two Due.**

**Week five: 3 Feb** Chapters: 16,18,  
 Pollution, air, water, waste stream. 17, 21  
 Environmental health

**Week six: 10 Feb** Chapters:  
 Energy issues: fossil fuels and alternative 19, 20, 15  
 renewable resources. Climate  
 Film: The End of Suburbia  
**Paper three Due**

**Week seven: 17 Feb** Chapters: 22, 25  
 Urbanization. Social and  
 environmental precepts.  
 Film: Is America Ugly?

**Week eight: 24 Feb**  
 In class (group) project:  
 Conceptual design of a sustainable city  
**Pamphlet/Poster due**

**Weeks nine and ten: 3 and 10 Mar**  
**Ten minute oral presentations of research topic**  
**Submit self assessment**

### Outside Reading List of Authors:

Edward Abbey	Carl Hiaason	Barry
Commoner		
Koran, Building Laws	Jane Jacobs	Le Corbousier

Jeremy Rifkin  
Leaky  
Kevin Lynch  
Paul Kennedy

Rachel Carson  
William Whyte  
Ralph Nader

Richard  
Plato  
Dr. Andrew Weil

**Instructor Bio:**

Bopp is a landscape architect/environmental planner. She has a bachelor's degree in Ecology, an MS in Recreation and Parks Administration and an MLA in Landscape Architecture. She has lived and worked in Southern California, St Louis, Baton Rouge and New Orleans.

Bopp also teaches science, social science and architecture part-time at Columbia College, The School of the Art Institute and Harrington School of Design. Bopp recently completed a 4-year grant position for the Forest Preserve District of Cook County writing an Ecosystem Management Plan for the District's 67,700 acre natural resource. And also worked at the Chicago Park district managing 124 parks on the city's south side.

With regard to community service, Bopp was a Board Member of the Chicago Chapter of the US Green Building Council. This organization is involved in promoting sustainable design and architecture throughout the metro region.

Aside from working, Bopp spends time doing photography of industrial sites, architecture, landscapes and typical urban situations. She has been involved in community affairs such as her alderman's Parking Task Force, the Creative Re-Use Warehouse. She is also the coordinator for Chicago's Greenside Map. (See [www.greenmap.org](http://www.greenmap.org) for more info or to volunteer)