

Econ 496 – Environmental Sustainability: Earth, Wind, and Fire – Tentative Syllabus

Instructor: James Roumasset¹

Venue: MWF: 10:30-11:20, Saunders 541

Overview

Many definitions of sustainability coexist. It is an ideology, a focal point of identity, a political platform, and an academic discipline. In this course, we distinguish sense from sensibilities and review the principles of sustainable development and sustainability science. We compare and contrast these principles with more simplistic and symbolic representations (e.g. reduce, reuse, recycle; less-is-more, self-sufficiency). We consider why Hawaii is widely regarded as an ecological basket case, what solutions are suggested by environmental economics, and what particular contribution can be made by Hawaiian principles of social organization. Topics include the economic, environmental, and cultural dimensions of sustainability; water resources and watersheds; traffic congestion and other environmental problems in Hawaii; biodiversity and endangered species; pollution solutions; renewable energy; unsustainable recycling; and “smart,” “greedy,” and “win-win” growth.

Prerequisite: 120 or either 130 or 131.

Text: Tietenberg, *Environmental Economics and Policy*, 5th edition.

References: Bjorn Lomborg, *The Skeptical Environmentalist*, B. Lomborg, *Chapter 11 on Energy*. See also www.lomborg.com and www.anti-lomborg.com.

Natural Capitalism: Creating the Next Industrial Revolution, by Paul Hawkins, Amory Lovins, L. Hunter Lovins; Rocky Mountain Institute, Colorado, 2003.

McNeill, *Something New Under the Sun: an Environmental History of the Twentieth-Century World*, W.W. Norton Co., NY, 2000.

Requirements and weights

Quizzes:² 33%

Final:³ 30%

Project/paper:⁴ 24%

Homework and citizenship:⁵ 13%

¹ Office: 514 Saunders, W 1:30-3:00 and by appt. (jimr@hawaii.edu)

² First quiz (one point) is on Aug 24. Remaining quizzes will be announced one week in advance. No alternative times will be offered except in extraordinary cases. Students may be excused *a priori* for illness or non-health emergency with appropriate verification. Otherwise, missed exams are recorded as zero points. Late registrants are responsible for all course content and exams as are those who miss lectures. You are encouraged to cooperate with your classmates, but, barring exceptional circumstances, please do not ask the instructor to supply information from lectures that you have missed.

³ See *UHM Schedule of Courses*.

⁴ Any topic related to text, lectures, and/or syllabus. Local relevance is encouraged, not required. Max is 20 pgs; no min. Target: 8-10 pages plus figures, references etc. Class presentation may be substituted for paper with permission. For groups of 2 or 3, paper and presentation is required. Proposal due Jan 31. Paper due Sept 14.

⁵ Contributions to the learning community (including class participation, additional presentations, facilitating availability of course materials, bringing pertinent current articles, websites etc. to class's attention).