
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PRACTICUM in Fall 2019 (CM5063)

Course Code	CM5063	Professor(s)	Tanya Elder
Prerequisites	None	Office Number	G-304
Class Schedule	T: 18:30-19:50 in Q-704	Office Hours	Tuesday 13:30 – 15:00 or by appointment
Credits	4	Email	telder@aup.edu
Semester	Fall 2019	Office Tel. Ext.	824

Course Description

Sustainable Development Practicum: Strategy, Action and Communication is an intensive, trans-curricular graduate field course offered in Auroville, in the state of Tamil Nadu, India, during the winter intersession (December 14, 2019 – January 10, 2020).

The Practicum is comprised of three dimensions:

- Academic study and work in the field of Sustainable Development
- Practical field experience in working with an NGO or CBO
- Practice and production of Communications for Development, research

The practicum provides students with the opportunity to explore the environmental, ecological, social, economic and cultural dimensions of sustainability within a complex development context. Through multiple field visits and interaction with various NGOs, GSOs and development organizations and field units students will gain hands-on experience of Sustainable Development and Development Communications. The students will engage in multiple dimensions of sustainability by helping one of the partner organizations in the field assess, determine and meet their communication and communication policy needs.

Multiple themes, interrelated focuses. Students are encouraged, but not required, to select one or two main themes to engage with through academic work and concrete action in the field. We will concentrate on key theoretical and practical issues related to sustainable development and their local and global implications, with the participation of local and central government officials, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and grassroots organizations, representatives of civil society and other local actors engaged in problem-solving, decision-making, policy development and concrete action. Some of the themes that we will explore are:

- Environmental and ecological sustainable development & Eco-systems management
- Solid waste management and recycling
- Food production systems, permaculture and organic farming
- Health & Sanitation policy and practice
- Socially responsible business, Social entrepreneurship, Fair Trade, and Microcredit

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- Education & Literacy
 - Gender equality & Women's empowerment
 - Sexual orientation, sexual identity & discrimination
 - Systems of discrimination based on caste and handicap
 - Cultural heritage preservation

Daily visits, talks and seminar series provided by the faculty and professionals from the field will allow the students to gain insight into some of the most pressing issues facing the world today. In order to develop an integral understanding of sustainability the course will organize modules on ecological, social and economic sustainability.

Communications/Multimedia projects. Students may work on their own or form teams of two or three. After assessing the NGO's or CBO's communications needs, students will collaborate with the NGO/CBO and select what they think is the most adequate media for their topic and the targeted audience. Communications projects can range from: writing copy for the NGO/CBO's annual report; grant-writing; updating and restructuring webpages; writing an illustrated magazine article; developing or re-designing a website; writing and producing radio broadcasts; producing documentary and promotional videos for an NGO/CBO; developing a social media communications strategy for an NGO; working with new technologies, such as cellphones and other ICTs, etc... Under faculty supervision, practicum participants will begin gathering information, conducting interviews, writing concept notes and designing communication solutions.

Every stage of the media project should be documented. Technical assistance with 'media mentors' will be provided. The goal is to produce smart, lively, effective multimedia communications material dedicated to sustainable and sound development or produce research and content that will meet the needs of our partners organizations.

The primary assignment is to develop a complete **Sustainable Development PORTFOLIO**. Your portfolio should be a carefully assembled, professional quality report of all of your activities involving "sustainable development" and "communications for development" during the trip. **Target:** the portfolio should be a collection of your work that you could present to a future employer and that best represents the depth and quality of the kind of fieldwork that you can conduct and produce.

The portfolio must contain the following assignments:

1. A formal **field interview** focusing on development communications and sustainability, including edited extracts or sections from a transcript and a brief report or commentary on the interview. – **10%**
2. **Field journal** with **field notes**, covering at least **five (5)** dated entries. These should be written with an ethnographic/anthropological eye. **20%**
3. A minimum of **two blog entries** to our AUP Sustainable Development Practicum blog. **20%**

(We will draw up a daily schedule, listing each day for which you will be responsible. Field journal participant-observer reports, interviews and journal entries can be blog posted. (See blog entry directions below <http://wordpress.com/> <http://aupindia.com/>)

4. **Development Communications/Multimedia project** (to be presented January 10th). **30%** Including your **200-word Concept note** (written as though part of a grant application) explaining your communication project and its contribution to the NGO you are working with.
5. **Graduate students: Two reading responses** to the assigned essays, articles, and texts.

Graduate students: A **final research essay** of **3000** words on Sustainable Development and/or the role of Communication in Development based on observations in the field and personal reflection. **20 %**

6. **Undergraduate students:** A **final research essay** of **2000** words on Sustainable Development and/or the role of Communication in Development based on observations in the field and personal reflection. **20 %**

Your completed Practicum **portfolio**, which will include the above **assignment and documents**, the **essay** and digital and/or print evidence of your **Media Project**, is due **Monday the 2nd of March by 17:00. Please combine all documents into one PDF file, save the PDF file under your name upload it onto Blackboard and** send a copy the portfolio by email to Professor Tanya Elder telder@aup.edu

The following guidelines will be used to evaluate and grade your work and performance.

Field Journal and Field notes

During the practicum you want to develop your observational skills. When engaging with a new culture or in a new setting developing participatory observation skills will enhance your ability to appreciate difference and learn from others. For this assignment we want to encourage you to be objective and suspend judgement when you write about other cultures. You should learn to use 'thick description' and provide detail descriptions of the events taking place in front of you. Two articles have been included on Blackboard that you can use as a reference to help you write up your field notes. Remember to engage all of your senses, to include both the important and the mundane and to practice your observational skills. This includes writing yourself into the text and allowing for personal reflections (memo writing and commentaries). A short introduction to participatory observation will be organized in the field.

Blog entries

The AUPIndia blog is the primary media interface that communicates to the AUP community and the larger public the work that we are engaged in during our stay in India. In this regard,

blog entries should convey sharp, lively, observant, sensitive, thoughtful, rigorous university-level reflection on your experience.

When you are developing your blog entry you should:

- Specifically state and describe what you're writing about. Establish a frame and context. Engage your readers with your subject and topic while providing a clear context for your reflection.
- Create a critical analytical context for it: what's *your* question? What are you investigating? What do you want to learn? What do you want your audience to learn?
- Reflect on what you've learned or what the implications are for bigger, global issues.
- Provide compelling examples and illustrations - photos, video, drawings, etc.

Explanation and Examples

1. State and describe your **focus**: a visit to an organization or unit; analysis with regard to what you're learning; the successes, challenges and setbacks of the Auroville sustainability experiment or the particular organization with which you're working; self-analysis (knowledge, learning, challenged values or assumptions).
 2. **Create a critical analytical context** for what you're discussing. This can be done using our readings (participant observation--reflecting on the challenges of your method--participatory communication; sustainability, etc.) and past courses: public sphere, civil society, economic globalization, Advocacy and policy processes, gender, race, digital advocacy, legal approaches (perhaps related to human rights) marketing, branding, public relations, journalism, etc. This can also be provided from some preliminary research in Google and Google Scholar (type topic and pdf) or our AUP databases such as EBSCO academic complete; JSTOR; Communication & Mass Media Complete, etc.
- For example, you could learn about globalization of agribusiness (Monsanto!) and how it affects India, and, further, how Auroville experiments like Solitude or the eco-fashion business are providing alternatives.
 - You could learn a bit about social class in India and apply it to the waste-pickers. You could learn about race and gender, or human rights (or apply past courses and knowledge from them), and also apply it.
 - You could reflect on Deepti's history and description of Auroville goals and contemporary challenges and apply the public sphere concept to it: they are challenged by issues of bracketing self-interest and deliberating about the good of the community without inconsiderately imposing an individual or a majority's values on a minority without listening to and respecting their positions. "You can't change the world." But with others, together, you may, and history is replete with examples of people doing this. It requires, as she said, moving beyond the ego and negotiating more carefully the relationship of self to others (affirmation, not total retreat).
 - You could use Rhibu's entire presentation to contextualize the process of production, consumption, waste, etc. that we're caught up in (somewhat invisibly) across the globe.
 - You could use observations/descriptions of toilets, waste, sanitation (open sewers,

compost toilets, etc.) to reflect on cultural differences, the boon and bane of modernization (flush toilets, effluents, non-zero vs. zero waste).

- You can reflect on how those processes are culturally bound and are challenging us. Participant observation and social science is also often about trying to eliminate or discover our cultural assumptions, what we take for granted when we analyze phenomena. Again, that will help you on the connection of self-analysis to academic analysis.

Ask yourself: what am I learning and how does it develop and change my view of our common human condition and our increasingly complex state of global interdependence?

3. Explore the socio-political phenomena of global and personal importance, such as: civil society, globalization, public spheres, democracy, social justice, eco-consciousness, sustainability, etc. You may be inspired to investigate issues of gender, women's empowerment, discrimination, race and social class and caste with regard to the practicum's principal areas of focus. Find your intellectual passion and pursue it! This will often overlap with number 2 above.

Aim to develop the skill of public intellectual writing on this blog. That is a difficult kind of writing that translates academic analysis, concepts (jargon), into a public idiom (for example, what is civil society or a public sphere?). Audio and visual aids are a great supplement or even basis for the reflection and analysis.

Blog entries will help you as you assemble your portfolio and evaluate what kind of learning has been accomplished in this Sustainable Development Practicum.

Each blog post will be worth 10 points. (9/10=A-; 8/10 B; etc.). They should be approx. 300-400 words, though you will not be penalized for going over.

You may, of course, outside of your assigned date make other alternative and creative posts that deviate from these requirements. However, the overall quality of the blog will be diminished if it's too lopsided with "edu-tourism"/"TripAdvisor"-like comments ("I ate this yummy curry," "Don't order the cheesecake" or "I saw a scorpion!") Photos, videos and visuals are *highly* encouraged. It should be a combination of exciting, smart, creative, fun and serious. Development Communications requires digital diplomacy, reflective enthusiasm and informed advocacy. Remember, we are all cultural ambassadors for AUP.

Final Essay

The essay must engage with the concept of Sustainable Development and/or the role of Communication in Development based on observations in the field (including the lectures from the organizations visited), readings, and personal reflection. It should include a discussion of the sustainable development goals as they relate to your experience in India. This essay can include personal discoveries and insights gain during the practicum as well as elements from

your fieldnotes, blogs or interviews. Graduate students should approach the essay as a field research project with a strong 'field question' or thesis.

Students: General Criteria for All Work

All writing should be spell- and grammar-checked and ready for public consideration. Writing assignments that do not demonstrate this basic requirement are considered failing. (See university policy on proficiency in English below.)

A = Exceptional; Work and participation exceed the course requirement, going well beyond the assigned work and learning goals of the practicum. The student demonstrates creative mastery of the course concepts and themes and a highly developed, mature capacity to work effectively with others on collaborative projects. Work evinces great planning, extensive development, insight, originality, rigorous research and implementation, unique ideas and excellent written and oral expression.

A- = Excellent; The student demonstrates a thorough understanding of the course material and the practicum's learning goals. Team-working capacity is excellent. Work fulfils all the assigned requirements and then some. Work demonstrates: careful planning and organization; sharp implementation; and a solid grasp of course concepts and material. Written and oral work is clear, cogent and correctly constructed.

B+ = Very good; Work submitted satisfies all the basic requirements for the course and reflects a solid understanding of all the course fundamentals. Team-working capacity is very good. Written work covers all the necessary requirements in terms of content and form and shows good command of argumentation, organization, style and grammar.

B = Good; Work satisfies all the basic minimum requirements for the course. Work reflects a practical understanding of all the course fundamentals. Written work covers all the necessary requirements in terms of content and form and shows reasonable command of argumentation, organization, style and grammar. Team-working capacity is positively developing.

B- = Unsatisfactory; Work is missing or does not satisfy the basic minimum requirements for the practicum. Work submitted and practicum participation do not reflect a serious engagement with the practicum's learning goals. Team-working capacity is limited. Work submitted does not reflect a minimal understanding of course fundamentals. Written work is incomplete and does not contain the minimal necessary requirements in terms of content and form. The work does not demonstrate an adequate command of argumentation, organization, style and grammar.

Below B- = Failing

Course Learning Outcomes

develop a concrete understanding of Sustainable Development and Development Communications within the unique cultural context of Auroville, Pondicherry and the state of Tamil Nadu.

gain an understanding of local Tamil Indian culture and the specific, local challenges of working in the field of development therein.

learn the basic methods and theories of intercultural communication and development communication and be able to apply them to the larger context of development and to other media/development communications projects.

learn about the challenges of sustainable food production, alternative types of energy production and consumption and waste management cycles

learn to understand how education, empowerment and development are interrelated in social sustainability.

learn how businesses can be run in a socially responsible manner and how other economic systems can coexist within the market economy or exist as an alternative to it.

learn to apply methods of participant observation and field note-taking and analysis.

learn to recognize and analyze interrelated processes of sustainable development: social, economic, ecological, cultural, political.

apply prior knowledge and coursework in civil society, public sphere, gender, race, postcolonial, and cultural theory, as well as history and economics to the phenomena mentioned above.

General Education

Course Outline

Textbooks

This course doesn't have any textbook.

Attendance Policy

Students studying at The American University of Paris are expected to attend ALL scheduled classes, and in case of absence, should contact their professors to explain the situation. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of any specific attendance policy that a faculty member might have set in the course syllabus. The French Department, for example, has its own attendance policy, and students are responsible for compliance. Academic Affairs will excuse an absence for students' participation in study trips related to their courses.

Attendance at all exams is mandatory.

IN ALL CASES OF MISSED COURSE MEETINGS, THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMMUNICATION WITH THE PROFESSOR, AND FOR ARRANGING TO MAKE UP MISSED WORK, RESTS SOLELY WITH THE STUDENT.

Whether an absence is excused or not is ALWAYS up to the discretion of the professor or the department. Unexcused absences can result in a low or failing participation grade. In the case of excessive absences, it is up to the professor or the department to decide if the student will receive an "F" for the course. An instructor may recommend that a student withdraw, if absences have made it impossible to continue in the course at a satisfactory level.

Students must be mindful of this policy when making their travel arrangements, and especially during the Drop/Add and Exam Periods.

Grading Policy

Other
