

SPRING 2005

EASTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

DRAFT SYLLABUS**GEO 430: Sustainability in Appalachia****Instructor: Alice Jones (GEO)**606/ 622-1424 alice.joness@eku.edu<http://www.geography.eku.edu/JONES>**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Agenda 21, also known as the United Nations Rio Declaration on Environment and Development—is a plan of global, national, and local action in every area in which human impacts the physical environment. The document was adopted by more than 170 governments at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992.

Agenda 21 defines sustainability as “*meeting the needs of the present without sacrificing the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.*”

Internationally, many regions have turned to tourism as an alternative to extractive economies as a cornerstone of a sustainable economic future that encourages environmental conservation and the preservation of threatened cultural traditions.

Through course readings, in-class discussions, and class field trips, we will take an interdisciplinary approach to the understanding the ecological, social, and economic forces that shape Appalachia's physical and cultural patterns both in the past and present. We will then explore processes through which the region's people can make active choices to ensure their social, economic and ecological sustainability in the future, and in particular the role that tourism—in its many forms—might play in the long-term sustainable future of Appalachia, and particularly Appalachian Kentucky.

Class Project

The project for the semester will be an inventory of recreational resources in the Kentucky River watershed--which covers a substantial portion of Appalachian Kentucky--and a critical investigation of the role that tourism might realistically play in economic development of the region. We will be looking at a variety of different definitions of tourism--from extreme adventure tourism and ecotourism to large-scale traditional tourism development (e.g., Gatlinburg and Branson, Mo.), and considering the opportunities and appropriateness of each of these models to Appalachian Kentucky. The final report will be presented to the executive board of the Kentucky Riverkeeper—a community-based nonprofit that seeks to protect, conserve, and restore the Kentucky River and its tributaries through education and advocacy.

Required Readings

Fritch, Al, and Kristin Johannsen. 2004. Ecotourism in Appalachia: Marketing the Mountains. University Press of Kentucky.

All students will be required to read selected portions of: the UN document, **Agenda 21** (available on-line at <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/documents/agenda21/english/agenda21toc.htm>)

As a project-based class, readings will vary. Student research teams will be required to find, synthesize, and share texts and documents relevant to each team's project component.

GRADING

Final course grades will be assigned on a straight scale (A=90%, B=80%, C=70%, D=60%) and determined as follows:

Semester-long Research Project	50%*
In-Class Activities and Homework Assignments	10%
Attendance and Class Discussion/Participation	10%
Field Trip Participation/Report	15%

Research Reflection Paper

$$\frac{15\%}{100}$$

Note: Because of the uncertain nature of the research project, we will reassess the appropriateness of the grading system and make necessary adjustments at mid-semester.

OBJECTIVES

At the end of this class, students will be familiar with Appalachia's natural and ecological structure, how its natural resources and geography have contributed to a different human settlement and economic development history than much of the rest of the country, emerging place-centered approaches to long-term sustainable development such as bioregionalism and citizen-led collaboration that could be used to ensure the health of Appalachia's natural and human communities well into the future.

More specifically, it is my hope that at the end of the class, students will (a) *understand and remember* the defining principles of sustainability as outlined by the UN in [Agenda 21](#), and different types of tourism development (b) *apply* the international principles of Agenda 21 and the concepts of tourism development to the Appalachian region; (c) *relate* the environmental, economic, and social issues and challenges of sustainability in general—and tourism as an element of sustainability—in the Appalachian region to other regions in the U.S. and other international regions through the development and completion of a recreational resource inventory of the Kentucky River watershed (d) be able to articulate the *personal and social implications* of sustainability and tourism development at various scales and in various spheres—from the personal and individual, to areas of professional engagement, to areas of social and political activity at the local, regional, national, and international scales; (e) *value* the importance of active collective participation as a critical component of sustainability at the international, national, and local iterations; (f) *learn how to learn* about local and regional tourism trends and economic development trends and their implications for sustainability.

Semester-long Research Project (50%)

The development, execution, and presentation of the recreation resource inventory and analysis of tourism potential in the Appalachian region of the Kentucky River watershed will be the central activity of this course, and class time will be devoted to the development and execution of this project. Students should recognize, however, that a project of this scope cannot be completed within the limited time allotted to class sessions, and it is expected that students will complete their out-of-class assignments in a timely and professional manner.

The assignment of the research project grade will be discussed and developed with student participation. It is assumed that the final determination of grades will be a combination of instructor assessment and peer evaluations by their group or team members. We are tentatively scheduled to present a poster version of the report at the Earth Days Environmental fair on April 21st, and deliver final report to the Center for Appalachian Studies Thursday, April 28th.

In-Class Activities and Homework Assignments (10%)

Several in-class exercises and homework assignments will be given throughout the semester varying in value from 2 to 5 points to help students better comprehend the important concepts and skills of the course. Among these assignments will be attending three of the “Earth Days in the Cumberland” lectures and events, scheduled on varying dates throughout April. The full calendar will be provided shortly.

Attendance and Class Discussion Participation (10%)

Because your absence affects not only your progress but that of your classmates, I'm imposing a simple attendance policy: Every absence will result in 5 point reduction in your final grade (or half a letter grade) up to a maximum of three. Your fourth absence will result in an automatic “F”.

Field Trip Report (15% each)

The course will involve a major overnight field trip to sites throughout Kentucky's Appalachian region—tentatively scheduled for **March 18-20th**, (first backup date April 1-3, second back-up April 8-10). ***The field trip is mandatory. Period.*** Because the trip is required, start now to make whatever arrangements are necessary with work, family, coaches, carpooling buddies, etcetera. The trip will happen rain or shine, so dress appropriately for the weather and for possible yukky outdoor conditions. ***Failure to attend—for any reason other than an EXTREME medical emergency—will mean automatic deduction of one letter grade.***

Additional trips may be required for members of certain teams as part of their data collection. Each student will prepare a report on his/her field trip experiences throughout the semester. The specific requirements of this report will be discussed in class.

Research Reflection Paper 15%

The reflection paper—which is part expository writing, part critical analysis, part light research—will be a 6-10 page paper of **your** personal journey through this class. It is an opportunity for you to delve into some aspect of the course material that perhaps we didn't explore as deeply as you would have liked; to expound on some part of your personal research that didn't make it into the final group project in as much detail as you would have liked; or to tailor the course project more specifically to your own personal or professional interests or needs.

We'll talk more about the specific requirements later in the semester, but a good way to begin might be by keeping a journal (even just a few lines at the bottom of your notes each week) of your thoughts, opinions, questions, concerns, fears, or accomplishments throughout the semester.

Disabilities

If there is any student in this class who is in need of academic accommodations and who is registered with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities, please make an individual appointment with the instructor to discuss accommodations. Upon individual request, this syllabus can be made available in alternative forms. If any student who is not registered with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities has need of academic accommodations, please contact the Office directly either in person on the first floor of the Turley House or by telephone at 622-1500.

COURSE OUTLINE AND ASSIGNMENTS

In general, Tuesdays will be devoted to readings and class discussion, and Thursdays will be devoted to project work. The following calendar/ outlines are approximate, and may change as needed throughout the semester.

PROJECT OUTLINE

- 1/13 Project strategy discussion and assignment of preliminary research tasks
- 1/20 Preliminary background research underway
- 1/27 Preliminary background research status reports
- 2/3 Develop field research methodology based on preliminary findings
- 2/10 Finalize background research; make contacts for necessary primary data collection
- 2/17 Continue primary data collection, and field trip contacts
- 2/24 Headwaters Report and Letcher County—Alan Banks
(Meets at Center for Appalachian Studies 300 Summit Street)
- 3/3 Continue primary data collection and field trip contacts
- 3/10 **SPRING BREAK—RELAX AND PREPARE FOR CRUNCH TIME!**
- 3/17 Prepare for Field Trip- tentatively departs Friday 2/18 at 9:00 a.m., returns Sunday 2/20 9:00 p.m.
- 3/24 Finalize all data collection
- 3/31 Class Presentation Huddle: Strategy Session to Develop Final Report/Presentation (
- 4/7 Draft Final Presentation Developed (alj at AAG)
- 4/14 Draft Poster Presentation and Revised
- 4/21 Earth Day Environmental Fair: POSTER PRESENTATION**
- 4/28 Center for Appalalian Studies Presentation 4:00 p.m.**
- 5/5 (Finals Week): Final written project due; Individual Reflection Papers Due, peer reviews, instructor critique—and **PIZZA**

. . Themes for readings, discussions, and projects will be selected from those below.

APPALACHIA AS PHYSICAL/ ECOLOGICAL REGION:

physical characteristics:

landforms, water, soil, vegetation, weather & climate

ecological characteristics:

terrestrial & biological communities

watershed approach: "everybody lives downstream"

APPALACHIA AS HUMAN REGION:

demographics

religion, ethnicity, socioeconomics

patterns of sequent occupance

culture

the meaning of place, community

place names, mental maps, stereotypes, sacred space, landscape meaning

built environment:

city/community locational factors

Pre-european

European Settlement
King Coal
manufacturing
patterns of diffusion/aggregation of activities--
spersopolis
transportation corridors (river, road)
limits to communications & delivery

APPALACHIA AS ECONOMIC REGION

dominant economic activities--timeline, reasons for cycles of ebb and flow
agriculture (tobacco and other products)
forestry, & mineral extraction,
manufacturing
tourism--arts and crafts, physical beauty, history
the prosperity game: Must Appalachia lose?

APPALACHIA AS POLITICAL REGION

county isolationism (physical, transportation)
good ol' boy state politics

EMERGING SUSTAINABILITY IN APPALACHIA

What is to be "sustained" (and who decides?)

Sustainability indicators
citizen-based monitoring & assessment

Land Use Planning-- public good v. private rights

Geomatic tools for sustainability:

State, regional, local use of GIS as storage device and decisionmaking tool
DOW, FWS, transportation cabinet, MACED Pine Mtn Project, local planning, analysis
Community Planning--Infrastructure, Fiscal Policy
business pressures on political conditions

isolationism & self-reliance