

SCHOOL OF PUBLIC LEADERSHIP  
STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

and

SUSTAINABILITY INSTITUTE

PROGRAMME IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT  
Postgraduate Diploma in Sustainable Development

Module: Comparative Studies in Sustainable Living

*immersive learning - making our road as we walk it  
16 days trekking in western Nepal*

8-23 September 2017

Venue: Jumla District., Western Nepal  
([www.sustainabilityinstitute.net](http://www.sustainabilityinstitute.net))

---

Module Facilitators

---

Programme Presenters:	Eve Annecke, teacher, writer, social ecologist Rosie Downey, Facilitator, Sustainability Institute
Contact details:	<a href="mailto:rosie@sustainabilityinstitute.net">rosie@sustainabilityinstitute.net</a>
Internal Moderator:	
External Moderator:	

---

***Introduction***

---

The course is structured over a 16-day journey to a remote and highly traditional rural region (only accessible by foot) in order to provide a lived understanding of transitions be-

tween traditional, localised economies and glimpses into ancient ways of being that are rapidly vanishing.

Over this period participants will engage with various development theories as they transition from urban to remote cultures, in order to understand in practical terms how globalisation and the spread of consumer cultures affects both personal and global ecologies. Emphasis is placed on the comparison of participants' home contexts with the contexts encountered on the journey.

This course is for students and working professionals seeking to explore other ways of knowing and being, gain gritty, practical insights and experience within emerging economies and successful development organisations, and those looking to deepen their understandings of sustainability and wellbeing.

Participation in this module will require a good level of physical fitness and a willingness to spend time in very remote areas traveling on foot. Accommodation will be a mix of very basic local lodging and camping, in areas devoid of any tourist infrastructure.

---

### ***Academic Aims***

---

Participants will address a core question: 'In exploring solutions to the sustainability challenges we face, what lessons (if any) might my community and I, learn from remote communities and traditional knowledge systems?' In order to allow space for participants' own context and complex stories to inform the lessons gained from this course, emphasis is placed on participants co-creating their personal lines of inquiry. The journey is a collaborative venture, where facilitators play a participant role.

Through the lived experience of different ways of being and living, participants generally acquire an alternative platform from which to critically reflect on their own lives and social patterns within their communities - with particular reference to the (un)sustainability of their own practice, without romanticising the traditional.

A range of philosophies are introduced which serve as a conceptual framework to underpin the learning experience. This conceptual grounding is combined with a lived experience of an ancient socio-ecological system in a state of rapid transition, so as to provoke fresh insights and creativity for solving specific sustainability challenges participants face in their own communities and careers.

---

### ***Learning Outcomes***

---

On completion, participants will likely be able to explain, in practical terms, some of the benefits, as well as major challenges and drawbacks of globalisation and the spread of consumer capitalism. Included in this will be how the connection of traditional societies to globalised systems influences social norms and values, changes the design of built environments, and shifts the way in which societies perceive their relationship with nature.

---

### ***D. Syllabus***

---

The programme is divided into four interrelated parts: collaborative conversation, practical Work, a group Presentation, and written work.

### *Collaborative conversation*

The required reading for this module will be provided via Google Drive or SUNLearn.

All dialogue is conducted on the assumption that the required readings have been read.

### *Practical Work*

The course context plays a key role in the learning outcomes by providing direct and hands-on experiences which are vastly different from the participants' own.

### *Group Presentation*

Working in groups during time allocated throughout the course, participants will formulate and present a group presentation on the last day of the course.

### *Written Work*

Written work consists of three components:

- A literature review of a minimum of 8 of the prescribed readings of maximum 3000 words (Part A)
- A personal case study in the form of a learning journal between 3000 and 4000 words (Part B)
- A journal that will contain the footprint calculator that will be conducted during the course plus summaries of readings

### *Class Test and Class Participation:*

A mark will be allocated for the results of a class test based that will be done during the journey, and overall participation (including engagement and participation in class discussions).

---

## ***Assessment & Assignments***

---

Assessment will be based on the following:

### **WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT:**

**Assignment (Part A and B):** this should not be less than 6000 words and strictly no more than 7000. The purpose of the assignment is for the participant to synthesise in a written form new knowledge and experience derived from reading, trail work, practical work, and the group presentation.

#### **Part A:**

Conduct a literature review of 3000 words. This will be based on a combination of the prescribed readings and those collected by the participants themselves. The review should suitably illustrate the core message and salient points contained within the readings. It is essential that the assignment is more than just the summary of the readings - these belong in the journals. The assignment must demon-

strate something specific, and that it is argued clearly and logically. The following criteria will be used to assess each assignment:

- Has a significant body of literature been read and understood?
- Is there a coherent and logical argument?
- Is there an introduction and conclusion that introduces at the start and ties up at the end what the essay is all about?
- Has the writer brought herself/himself into the story?
- Is the mode of expression acceptable, with special reference to grammar, spelling and syntax?

### **Part B:**

As a personal case study, develop a **learning journal** of between 3000 and 4000 words written over the course of the module.

This should include the following components:

1. Daily personal notes, observations and reflections
2. Semi-structured notes based from class discussions and activities through the course of the journey
3. While the bulk of this should be written, other forms of expression are strongly encouraged including poems, images, drawings and any other means of communicating your experiences that gets a message across best. Try to express feelings about things rather than just describe what happened.
4. An overall concluding reflection and observation on this journaling post-trip

Due to the personal nature of journaling, participants have free choice about what to share. Journal pages can also be scanned and submitted as a single PDF via SUN-learn (or email to course coordinator if an executive student).

The Due Date for the assignment is specified in the list of Due Dates for the year handed out at the start of the course.

### **GROUP PRESENTATION: (TBC)**

At the commencement of the course we ask “what question am I hoping to answer whilst on this course?” and, “what is my intention?”

In groups of 2, give a 20 minute presentation that is an in-depth dialogue between your partner and yourself, on how your respective questions were answered throughout the course.

Illustrate this using 2-3 key experiences from the journey that have either answered your question and/or raised further questions. Emphasis should be placed on experiences and connections to themes or the literature that have given you deeper insight into your initial question or personal questions you have been holding since the start of the journey.

### **JOURNAL:**

Section 1

Six reading summaries from the course pack of roughly 150 words each. It should capture the essence of the reading, i.e. the core 'storyline' or argument plus a description of the 'evidence' used to substantiate the argument/storyline);

Section 2  
TBC

### **'CLASS' TEST & PARTICIPATION:**

Completed on course.

#### *Mark Allocation:*

- Individual Assignment Part A (*Literature Review*): 25%;
- Individual Assignment Part B (*Personal Case Study: Learning Journal*): 25%;
- Group Presentation: 25%;
- 'Journal': 15%;
- Participation: 10%.

Note that you need to achieve over 50% for both Part A and Part B. In other words, if you fail Part A, the overall mark for the module will be a fail no matter how high the other marks are.

---

## Readings

---

- Bignell, B., 1998. Beauty as a way of knowing. *Handbook of Sustainability Literacy*, pp.71-72. Available at: <http://www.sustainability-literacy.org/>.
- Berry, W., 2009. The Idea of a Local Economy. *Orion Magazine*. Available at: <https://orionmagazine.org/article/the-idea-of-a-local-economy/>.
- Burris, V., 2015. Sustainability of Small Scale Farming in a Mountain Region: Case Study of the Khaling Rai Population of the Solukhumbu , Nepal. , 2(2), pp.9-21.
- Gronemeyer, M., 1992. Helping. In W. Sachs, ed. *The Development Dictionary*. Zed Books Ltd.
- Dyson, J., 2016. Working Childhoods Youth, Agency and the Environment in India.
- Max-Neef, M., 1992. Development and human needs. *Real life Economics*, pp.197-214.
- Miner, H. 1956, "Body Ritual among the Nacirema", in *American Anthropologist*, vol. 58, no. 3, pp. 503--507.
- Montgomery, H., 2013. Different cultures , different childhoods. , pp.9-12. Available at: <http://www.open.edu/openlearn/history-the-arts/history/different-cultures-different-childhoods>.
- Sachs, W., 1990. On The Archaeology of the Development Idea. *Interculture*, 23(4), pp.1-37. Available at: [http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs14/The\\_Archaeology\\_of\\_the\\_Development\\_Idea.pdf](http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs14/The_Archaeology_of_the_Development_Idea.pdf).
- Schumacher, E.F., 1973. Buddhist Economics. *Small Is Beautiful: Economics As If People Mattered*, pp.53-62.
- Talbot, S., 2002. Love and Detachment. *In Context, newsletter # 8*, pp.19-22. Available at: <http://natureinstitute.org/pub/ic/ic8/detachment.htm>.
- Weber, A., 2013. *Enlivenment - Towards a fundamental shift in the concepts of nature, culture and politics*, Heinrich Böll Stiftung Ecology