Instructor: Dr. Chiara Piovani  
Office: Sturm Hall 232  
Office Hours: TR 12:30 PM -1:30 PM (or by appointment)  
E-mail: Chiara.Piovani@du.edu

Course Content:  
This course is designed to study the interplay between capitalism and the environment by discussing alternative economic approaches on environmental issues. The course will present the theoretical framework proposed by mainstream economics, and it will outline both its strengths and weaknesses. The course will cover the multiple dimensions of the current global environmental crisis, discussing in particular on peak oil and climate change. The course will conclude with an exploration of alternative visions of how to achieve sustainability.

Course Objectives:  
Upon completion of the course, students should be able to:  
✓ Understand the nature of the relationship between capitalism and the environment;  
✓ List and analyze the current global environmental challenges;  
✓ Critically discuss the theory and policies proposed by mainstream economics;  
✓ Describe the key features of a sustainable economic system and the alternatives economic perspectives on how to achieve it.

Textbooks:  


The course material will be complemented with additional readings, which will be posted on the course website.

Prerequisites  
This course is intended for both graduate students and undergraduate students at the University of Denver. It is expected that students in the course are familiar with principles of economics at the
introductory level. Students should also be able to interpret basic economic graphs, diagrams, and have experience with college-level writing.

**Course Website:**
Important announcements, course material, and grades will be posted on the course website. Therefore, it is important that you check the course website regularly.

**Grading:**
Final grades are based on the following requirements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and Class Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam – Take-home (due October 23, 6:00 PM)</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term Paper (due November 20, 6:00 PM)</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam – In-class (November 20, 6:00-7:50 PM)</td>
<td>30%</td>
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</tbody>
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**Total** 100%

- **✓ Attendance and Class Participation**
  Starting from the second day of class, attendance will be taken at each class using a sign-in sheet. Signing another student’s name is a violation of the academic integrity code. Only two classes may be missed without penalty to your final grade.

  The course will include substantial scope for questions and discussions. For this reason, it is very important that you read the assigned readings, and come to class prepared. Active participation is especially expected from graduate students.

- **✓ Presentation**
  Groups of two students will give a presentation on one of the issues we cover in class. This assignment will help you develop effective presentation skills, which are crucial in both academic and work life, and to improve your analytical and critical capabilities. The list of articles from which you may choose will be given out in class, and will be posted on the course website. The presentation of each group will be followed by class discussion. Details on the structure of student presentations will be provided.

- **✓ Midterm Exam**
  The midterm exam will be take-home, consisting of questions based on class lectures and reading assignments. As a requirement, your answers should be typed. The exam will be posted on the course website.

- **✓ Term Paper**
  You will be required to write a term paper on any of the topics that will be covered in this course. The length of the paper should be 10 pages for undergraduate and 15 pages for graduate students. Students should write their paper using Times New Roman, double space, 12-point font, and 1-inch margins all around. Students should get their topic approved by the instructor by submitting a 1-page proposal on October 11 (up to 10 points). Papers will be due on the day of the final exam, November 20 (up to 90 points). Further instructions and requirements will be provided in class and posted on the course website.
Final Exam
The final exam will be closed book, and it will be held in class. A study guide with a list of possible questions will be posted on the course website.

Grading Scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>93 – 100</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>65 – 68</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89 – 92</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>61 – 64</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84 – 88</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>57 – 60</td>
<td>D+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79 – 83</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>53 – 56</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74 – 78</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>50 – 52</td>
<td>D-</td>
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<tr>
<td>69 – 73</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>&lt; 50</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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All grades are given as numbers from 0 to 100 during the course, and then converted to a letter grade at the end of the course in accordance with the scale given above.

Make-up policy
Students must take exams on the scheduled dates. There will be no make-up exam except for cases of emergency. In such cases, appropriate documentation must be presented and the make-up exam time must be arranged with the instructor. A grade of zero will be assigned to any missed exam or assignment.

Due dates
Assignments must be submitted on the due date. Late assignments will not be accepted, except in the case of emergencies. If the latter applies, appropriate documentation must be submitted in order for late assignments to be accepted.

COURSE OUTLINE

The class schedule is indicated below. Please note that the following schedule is only tentative. The final set of readings per each topic will be posted on the course website in advance of their discussion. The schedule may also be subject to changes, which would be announced in class and posted on the course website.

Please note that it is required to make the assigned readings before class. This will allow for more class participation, presentation of informed questions and more interesting class discussions.

TOPIC 1: Economics and the Environment: Alternative Approaches

September 11
Hahnel. Ch.1

Harris. Ch.1

**TOPIC 2: The Development of Capitalism & The Multiple Dimensions of the Current Global Environmental Crisis**

**September 13**

Forrest. Ch. 3 (“Global Ecology and the Common Good”), Ch. 5 (“‘Let Then Eat Pollution’: Capitalism and the World Environment) and Ch. 6 (“The Scale of Our Ecological Crisis”)


**September 18**


**September 20**
Harris. Ch. 3 and 4

**September 25**
Hahnel. Ch. 6


**September 27**
Harris. Ch.5
TOPIC 4: Economic Growth in a Finite World: GDP versus Sustainable Human Development

October 2
Harris. Ch. 6
Hahnel. Ch. 2

October 4
Forrest. Ch. 2 (“The Ecological Tyranny of the Bottom Line: The Environmental and Social Consequences of Economic Reductionism) and Ch. 9 (“Capitalism’s Environmental Crisis – Is Technology the Answer?”).


October 9
Harris. Ch. 2
Hahnel. Ch. 3


October 11


Daly, H. “A Steady State Economy?” available at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jmkw2qSpHsc


October 16
Foster. Ch. 7 (“Sustainable Development of What?”).

TOPIC 5: Population, Agriculture and the Environment

October 18
Harris. Ch. 10 and 11

October 23


TOPIC 6: The Economy and Energy Resources: Energy Trends and Alternative Energy Possibilities

October 25
Harris. Ch.12 and 13


October 30


November 1


TOPIC 7: The Economics of Global Climate Change
**November 6**


Harris. Ch.18


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**November 8**


Hahnel. Ch.8

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**November 13**

Hahnel. Ch. 9 and 10


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**TOPIC 8: Moving Towards Sustainability**

**November 15**

Harris. Ch.20


- Forrest. Ch. 4 (“Ecology and Human Freedom”)


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**Other Policies & Rules**

✓ All students are expected to abide by the University of Denver Honor Code. These expectations include the application of academic integrity and honesty in your class participation and assignments. Violations of these policies include, but are not limited to:
- Plagiarism, including any representation of another’s work or ideas as one’s own in academic and educational submissions.
- Cheating, including any actual or attempted use of resources not authorized by the instructor(s) for academic submissions.
- Fabrication, including any falsification or creation of data, research or resources to support academic submissions.

✓ Students must respect the classroom environment. **IN CLASS, ALL CELL PHONES, LAPTOPS AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES SHALL BE TURNED OFF.** Students shall also refrain from engaging in activities (reading non-course materials, engaging in private conversations and so on) that disrespect the classroom environment and learning conditions for others.

**Students with Disabilities**
Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the facilitators privately to discuss your specific needs. Please contact the Disability Services Program located on the 4th floor of Ruffatto Hall; 1999 E. Evans Ave., to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. 303.871./ 2278 / 7432/ 2455. Information is also available on line at: [http://www.du.edu/disability/dsp](http://www.du.edu/disability/dsp).