

The Evergreen State College  
**Sustainable Decision Making**

MPA, Winter, 2015

# Syllabus

Last Update: Dec 31, 2014

Instructor: Rhys Roth  
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Office Hours: By appt

**Dates:**

Friday, January 30 (5-9) Saturday, January 31 (9-5) Sunday, February 1 (9-5)

**Course Description:**

Many organizations are in need of new talent, thinking, and tools that enable decision-making leading to more sustainable outcomes. This 2 credit intensive course will explore sustainable decision-making, in particular as it applies to the context of public works and infrastructure spending and investment. Infrastructure represents the vital circulatory systems of society; decision-making on infrastructure investment has major implications for long-term quality of life, economic vitality, social equity, climate change, public health, and more. We will study leading edge thinking and key challenges, and develop practical, hands-on experience with decision tools designed to yield more sustainable, affordable outcomes with multiple community-wide benefits. Team projects will focus on real-world decisions by municipal, tribal, and state agencies.

**Learning Objectives:**

This course will focus on four learning objectives:

1. Understanding modern concepts and tools for applying sustainability concepts and advancing sustainability goals in a professional context
2. Building working knowledge of leading edge concepts and current sustainability and financial challenges in public infrastructure systems
3. Developing capacity to envision whole-system, integrated solutions and analyses
4. Gaining exposure to contemporary challenges of public infrastructure managers in the local, tribal, and state government contexts

## **Instructor**

Rhys co-founded and helped lead for over 15 years the non-profit group [Climate Solutions](#). He pioneered several of its innovative programs and partnerships which were instrumental in positioning clean energy at the top of the Northwest's economic development agenda. These included "Harvesting Clean Energy" which worked with the agriculture and rural development communities, and "Poised for Profit in Clean Energy" working with the technology and investor communities. In 2013 he was honored as a "Sustainability Trailblazer" by the Sustainable Path Foundation.

Late in 2013, he returned to his alma mater, The Evergreen State College, over 20 years after graduating with a Masters of Environmental Studies, to lead the College's new [Center for Sustainable Infrastructure](#) to help bring innovation, new tools, and sustainability excellence to infrastructure planning and investment in the Pacific Northwest. The Center envisions a future for the Pacific Northwest of smart, affordable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure systems, providing vital services accessible to all, which support healthy, prosperous, and beautiful communities. He authored the Center's inaugural report, "Infrastructure Crisis, Sustainable Solutions," in November 2014.

## **Advance Work**

1. Complete all required readings in advance of class (see below)
2. Submit a 600-1000 word reflective essay describing how the readings changed, challenged, enhanced, and/or reinforced your understanding of sustainable decision-making

## **Day 1 of Class: January 30**

1. Key principles for sustainable infrastructure innovation
2. Guest facilitator: Craig Partridge, retired Director of Policy and Government Relations, Washington Department of Natural Resources
3. Open forum on reflective essays – exploring your insights from the readings
4. Video(s): Green infrastructure

## **Day 2: January 31**

1. Workshop: Fran Eide, City Engineer, City of Olympia – Training in use of the Envision™ sustainable infrastructure rating tool; tees up small group projects
2. Guest Speaker: Dan Neelands, Construction Manager, Squaxin Island Tribe
3. Video: *Return of the River* (story of removal of the Elwha dams)
4. Guest Speakers: Kelli Bush, Sustainability in Prisons Project and Eric Heinitz, WA Dept of Corrections
5. Work on Small Team Projects

## **Day 3: February 1**

1. Work on Small Team Projects
2. Guest Speaker: Mayor Stephen Buxbaum, City of Olympia -- *The challenges ahead for infrastructure development and sustainability from a city perspective*
3. Guest Speaker: State Senator John McCoy, *View from a Legislator and Tribal Infrastructure Leader*

4. Group Discussion: What are the social equity implications of our infrastructure decisions and what policies do you think can enhance social inclusion?
5. Final Work and Presentations of Small Team Projects
6. Evaluation and wrap-up

**Possible OPTIONAL Tour:** Intel Corporation - Hillsboro Campus – Sustainable Infrastructure Strategies and Policies (tentatively full day in second half of February)

## Required Readings

In advance of the first class, students will complete the following readings and submit a 600-1000 word reflective essay describing how the readings changed, challenged, enhanced, and/or reinforced their understanding of sustainable decision-making:

### REPORTS:

1. [Infrastructure Crisis, Sustainable Solutions](#): Rethinking Our Infrastructure Investment Strategies, Rhys Roth, Center for Sustainable Infrastructure, The Evergreen State College, November 2014 (hard copy available)
2. [West Coast Infrastructure Exchange Final Report](#), CH2M Hill, November 2012
3. [Oregon's Innovation in Infrastructure Task Force: Report to the 78<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly of Oregon](#), December 2013 -- At a minimum, read pages 4-10
4. [Fostering Sustainable Behavior](#), Doug McKenzie-Mohr, New Society Publishers, 1999 – Read Introduction pages 1-17

### BRIEF ARTICLES:

5. [Reliability Refound: Nesting Resilient and Adaptive Solutions Into Urban Infrastructure](#), Steve Moddemeyer, APWA Reporter, August 2010
6. [Shifting to the Fifth Paradigm: A Time for Change](#), Steve Moddemeyer, Principal, CollinsWoerman, Originally published in IWA's Water21, February 2011
7. [Envisioning Little Tokyo's Future as a Cultural Ecodistrict](#), by Thomas Yee, KCET, LA in Motion: Communities
8. [What are the social justice implications of urban ecology...?](#), The Nature of Cities, multiple authors, February 3, 2014
9. [Social Equity: The Forgotten Leg of Sustainability](#), Jessica Chapman, Sustainable City Network, May 12, 2014
10. [Finding Balance in Everything: Diary of a Public Works Director](#), APWA Reporter, Michael Mucha, May 2009, pages 32-36
11. [Strategy Management for Associations: From Issues to Action](#), Journal of Association Leadership, James G. Dalton, Fall 2006

### WEBSITES and SLIDE DECKS:

12. Institute for Sustainable Infrastructure's Envision<sup>TM</sup> Rating System, [www.sustainableinfrastructure.org](http://www.sustainableinfrastructure.org) – Set up account, read 'Introduction to rating system', and read each of the 13 units under Projects: Envision Guidance Manual
13. [Green City, Clean Waters – Green Infrastructure, the Philadelphia Story](#), Mark A. Focht, PLA, FASLA, slide deck for American Society of Landscape Architects

## Credit Requirements

For credit in this class, students are required to:

1. Complete all the assigned readings in advance and submit by 5pm on the first day of class a 600-1000 word reflective essay describing how the readings changed, challenged, enhanced, and/or reinforced your understanding of sustainable decision-making.
2. Attend all three days of class and actively participate in all activities and discussions.
3. Participate actively in creation of a collaborative small team 'homework' assignment. Details on the assignment goals and requirements will be discussed in detail during class.
4. Consistent with MPA program requirements, students will prepare a self-evaluation and an evaluation of the instructor. The student evaluation shall emphasize the one major take-away from the course and how it will influence thinking. Please do not summarize the course material. This will play a major part in your success at receiving credit for this class. The Instructor evaluation should focus on what Rhys should do more of, less of and continue doing.
5. All late submittals that are not previously arranged will be noted in student's course evaluation.

## EXPECTATIONS

**Format of Assignment Submissions:** All papers will be submitted to Canvas. All papers must meet assignment parameters and cite works using the citation style you are most comfortable with as long as it is consistent. All written work will be of high quality, grammatically correct, clear and without spelling errors. If you require it, please request resource writing assistance from faculty and/or contact the Graduate Writing Assistant. Check assignment details for each submission. Sometimes your faculty will ask you to work with the Graduate Writing Assistant; if so, you are required to do to the satisfaction of your faculty member.

**Late assignments:** *Late assignments are accepted with prior permission of the faculty.*

**Participation & Attendance:** Students are required to attend each class meeting. Participation includes focusing on class content, being engaged in class and seminar, listening to others, taking notes, completing class interactive exercises, avoiding distractions, and listening to and dialoging with the guest speakers. If an absence is unavoidable, *faculty must be notified prior to a class and/or seminar absence. After one absence per quarter, make-up work may be assigned at faculty discretion, case-by-case.* Makeup work must be completed by the end of the quarter in question for course credit.

**Use of Electronic Devices:** This course is Canvas-based and mostly paperless. We understand, and expect, that you will need to use electronic devices in class. However, the class is also participatory and the learning community is dependent upon people being present to what is happening in class. This means that electronic devices should not be used for anything other than for class-related

activities. Resist the siren call of all the ways in which your devices can distract you from what is going on in the classroom. We will ask people to put away their devices, except for note taking, for guest lectures. Please extend similar courtesies to the faculty when they are lecturing.

**Credit:** Students will receive 2 graduate credits at the completion of each quarter if all course requirements have been satisfactorily completed to meet course objectives. No partial credit will be awarded. Incompletes may be offered on case-by-case basis. Refer to the MPA student handbook.

Academic dishonesty and plagiarism (i.e., using other peoples' work as your own, see [MPA Handbook](#) for more), failing to complete one or more assignments, completing more than one assignment late, or multiple absences may constitute denial of total credit. Students will be evaluated based upon their progress towards the learning goals, assessed from classroom, seminar, and assignment performance. Students at risk of losing credit will receive written notification prior to the end of the term.

**Evaluation:** Written self-evaluations and a faculty evaluation are required for credit at the end of each quarter, along with faculty evaluations of students. *Please note that while self evaluations are required for the course, we do not require them to be submitted to the Registrar. **Evaluation interviews will not be conducted during class time.** After the final session you will make arrangements to either have your evaluation interview over the phone or via skype, etc., or to come in and do it one on one. More details will be forthcoming during the last weekend.*

**Biculturalism, Multiculturalism & Diversity:** Faculty and students work toward weaving bi-cultural, multiculturalism and diversity throughout our learning in readings, lectures, seminars and group projects.

**Learning Styles:** Faculty endeavor to provide information in multiple formats: auditory, visual, kinesthetic, etc. However, style applications are limited to means appropriate for the classroom environment. Consult your seminar faculty to discuss learning style options or personal challenges.

**Accommodations:** Provided for any student who desires them through a working relationship with Access Services, the Writing Center and the Quantitative and Symbolic Reasoning Center. If you need to request academic accommodations due to a disability, please contact the office of Access Services for Students with Disabilities (867-6348 or 6364). Information about a disability or health condition is regarded as confidential. Please refer to TESC's Students With Disabilities Policy [here](#).

**Other Expectations of Students and Faculty:** We commit to promoting a cooperative, supportive atmosphere within the community; give everyone opportunity for self-reflection and expression; use high standards in reading the text and preparing our papers, lectures, and comments in seminar; handle all disputes in a spirit of goodwill; respect our differences; and, discuss any problems involving others in the learning community directly with the individuals involved.

**We abide by the [social contract](#), the [student conduct code](#) and the [non-discrimination policies and procedures at TESC](#). See the college's [Student Conduct webpage](#) for more. The Covenant negotiated in the first session is still applicable.**

All students are expected to support and contribute to a well-functioning MPA classroom learning community. Behavior that disrupts the learning community may be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the MPA program.

**Guest Policy:** Guests are permitted with prior approval of the faculty.

**Inclement Weather:** In the event of bad weather or emergencies students should check with television, web pages, and radio stations for announcements of campus closures. Students can also call the main campus line 867-6000 to get the latest news regarding a campus closure or delay. Since many students in the program travel from relatively distant locations, faculty may decide to cancel program meeting even if campus is open. If we do this we will send an all-program email by 3:00 pm. If you've not already done so, sign up to receive alerts about campus closing or other emergencies [here](#).

**Communication:** Email and Canvas are our primary means of communication. You are responsible for checking your Evergreen email and Canvas regularly.