Class meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 12:30 pm – 1:45 pm in MH 206
Instructor: Raymond Asomani-Boateng
Office: 106B Morris Hall
Office Hours: Mondays & Wednesdays: 10:00 am – 3:00 pm
Office Phone: 389-5030
Email: asomar@mnsu.edu
Webpage: http://krypton.mnsu.edu/~asomar/index.html

Description & Objectives
This course will be an investigation into sustainability in North America that intends to
give a broad overview of the meaning of sustainability, sustainable places, and the future
of making memorable, livable, urban places. We will analyze “community “as a concept
and as organizing system for promoting sustainability. Current environmental, social, and
economic problems facing North American communities will be examined within the
context of sustainability. We will incorporate readings, videos, and careful, innovative
projects of how to create sustainable communities. Global sustainable issues emphasizing
on developing countries will be covered.

Course Requirements
• Thorough engagement with assigned readings prior to class.
• Active participation in class discussions.

Examinations
To give you an opportunity to synthesize the many concepts, issues, and debates covered
in the course, there will be a mid-semester examination on Oct. 16 and final examination
on Dec. 4. These exams will cover lectures, class discussions, class assignments, readings
and videos.

Required Texts: (Available at MSU Bookstore)
Timothy Beatley and Kristy Manning (1997). The Ecology of a Place: Planning for the
Environment, Economy and Community. Island Press, Washington D.C.

Classroom Policies
Entering class late is strongly discouraged. However, if you have a scheduling or work
related-problem, please talk to the Instructor. Leaving class early, except under special
circumstances, or upon completion of an exam, or under a previously approved
arrangement with the instructor is against classroom policy.
All students are expected to ask questions and actively engage in classroom discussions. Frivolous conversations between students however will not be tolerated.

**Grading:**
Course grades will be based on the following:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>Video Reviews</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class exercises</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid Semester Examination</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td>Final Examination</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td>Attendance &amp; Participation</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
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All assignments are due on the assigned date. Please note that late papers will be accepted, but a partial credit will be applied to any papers turned in after the due date. The late penalty for the assignments can be waived only with a written note from a medical professional.

MSU provides students with disabilities reasonable accommodation to participate in educational programs, activities or services. Students with disabilities requiring accommodation to participate in class activities or meet course requirements should first register with the Office of Disability Services, located in 0132 Memorial Library, telephone 389-2825, TDD 711 and then contact me as soon as possible.

**READINGS AND LECTURE THEMES**

**Week 1: Introduction**

*Aug. 26: Tuesday*
- Course introduction:
- Grading, readings, and requirements.

*Aug. 28: Thursday*
- Class exercise *(5 points)*
  - Future Visions
  - Definition of sustainable development
- Review of the concept of sustainable developments

*Readings: Ch.1: Ecology of Place*

**Week 2: Sustainable Places**

*Sept. 2: Tuesday*
- Envisioning sustainable places
- Ecological Footprint

*Sept. 4: Thursday*
- Class exercise on Ch. 1 of Ecology of Place *(5 points)*

*Readings: Ch. 2: Ecology of Place*
Week 3: Municipal Solid Waste Management  
Sept. 9: Tuesday  
• Solid waste management  
• Landfill mining  
Sept. 11: Thursday  
• Sustainable solid waste management practices  
• Mankato Integrated SWM

Week 4: Municipal Solid Waste Management cont’d  
Sept. 16: Tuesday  
• Video review: Global Dumping Grounds  
Sept. 18: Thursday  
• Discussion of video and current cases of hazardous waste dumping in Africa  
Reading: Trans-boundary dumping of hazardous waste@http://www.eoearth.org/article/Transboundary_dumping_of_hazardous_waste

Week 5: Energy  
Sept. 23: Tuesday  
• Conventional energy sources  
• Sustainable energy forms  
Sept. 25: Thursday  
• Video review: The Three Gorges

Week 6: Greening the City  
Sept. 30: Tuesday  
• Urban Green Spaces  
• Urban Agriculture in North America  
October 2: Thursday  
• Urban Agriculture in African Cities: A case study of Accra, Ghana  
Readings: Ch. 4: Ecology of Place, The Benefits of Urban trees

Week 7: Urban Sprawl & Growth Management  
Oct. 7: Tuesday  
• Urban sprawl  
• Growth management  
Oct. 9: Thursday  
• Video review: Subdivide and Conquer  
Readings: Ch.4: Ecology of Place; Ten things wrong with sprawl

Week 8: Mid-semester examinations  
Oct. 14: Tuesday  
• Movie: Discussion of Subdivide and Conquer video  
Oct. 16: Thursday  
• Mid-semester examinations
Week 9: Planning and designing sustainable Communities
Oct. 21: Tuesday
- Low impact development (LID)
- Planned Unit Development (PUD)
Oct. 23: Thursday
- Class exercise: Designing sustainable communities (10 points)

Week 10: Sensitive environments
Oct. 28: Tuesday
- Wetlands
- Flood plains
Oct. 30: Thursday
- Video/review: Vanishing wetlands

Week 11: War and Sustainability
Nov. 4: Tuesday
- Video: Spoils of war
Nov. 6: Thursday
- Discussion of video

Week 12: Urban Form and Sustainability
Nov. 11: Tuesday
- Sustainable Urban Forms
Nov. 13: Thursday
- Class exercise on Ahwanee principles (5 points)

Week 13: Brownfield’s
Nov. 18: Tuesday
- Brownfield’s & urban sustainability
Nov. 20: Thursday
  Movie: Cleveland: Confronting Decline in an American City

Week 14: Making Sense of a Place
Nov. 25: Tuesday
- Phoenix: The Urban Desert
Nov. 27: Thursday
- Discussion of Phoenix video

Week 15: Final exams, review and course evaluation
Dec. 2: Tuesday
- Review and course evaluation
Dec. 4: Thursday
- Final examinations
Class exercise: Household Sustainability Audit
(10 points)
Sustainability begins at home, so this exercise asks participants to evaluate their own lifestyle and household, and come up with recommendations for changes. The exercise is probably best completed individually by participants or housemates and then presented in a form of a short paper or class presentation.

Your assignment
Complete the personal ecological footprint analysis online at [www.rprogress.org](http://www.rprogress.org). This will give you a figure for the number of acres that will be required offset your personal resource consumption and the number of earths that would be required if everyone in the world lived their consumption level. Share and discuss these findings. Are there ways that these individual footprints might be reduced?

Prepare an audit (a careful and systematic survey of your own household to determine what improvements could be made to reduce resource usage and otherwise improve sustainability. Background readings on home energy and resource conservation measures may be helpful. Your local utility company’s website may have extensive information on these, as well as websites of non-profit organizations such as the American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy ([www.aceee.org](http://www.aceee.org)).

Instructions
Systematically examine your home (both the building and the lot) to determine how your use of energy and resources might be reduced, and sustainability otherwise improved. Review data such as utility bills (for electricity, gas, and water consumption) and if possible compare these with past bills or averages for your community to see how your consumption varies and what factors might be affecting it. Tabulate all uses of energy and water in your home, and list what conservation measures have been applied or might be applied to each. Examine also the landscaping of your lot, calculate the amount of paved surfaces, and investigate possibilities for changes in either. You may want to consider the following questions in your analysis:

- Where and how extensively have energy and water conservation measures been used?
- What other conservation measures are possible?
- Are there ways to improve the recycling of various materials?
- Is solar hot water or electricity a possibility? Where might such devices go?
- Is use of gray water a possibility? If so, how might that be done?
- How might landscaping be improved in terms of water consumption, use of native or drought-tolerant species, and/creation of habitat?
- Is urban agriculture a possibility on your lot? How might space for that be created?
- How much of the site is covered by impermeable surfaces? Where does the runoff go? How might runoff be reduced, made cleaner, or made less severe after storms?
• Does this site contribute to an urban heat island effect? How might that be reduced?
• Might the planting of trees or changes to the building reduce air-conditioning needs in the summer?
• Does the existing development on this parcel best contribute to the city and region’s overall needs? Might additional housing units be created on this site? If so, how? Is the site zoned in the best way to meet urban sustainability goals? Should zoning be changed?
• Should measures be adopted to ensure the long-term affordability of this housing?
• Is there anything about your lifestyle that would change to promote sustainability?

Write a short analysis of key steps to improve the sustainability of your home. Be comprehensive in your analysis, but focus on what you feel are the most promising strategies. Include any graphics or photos you feel are necessary.