ESPM 198: Going Green or Greenwashing?

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Instructor of Record: Ignacio Chapela

Proposal/Purpose for the Decal:
Sustainability goals and environmentally conscious decision making has entered almost every field from engineering, policy, and even design. However, environmental education is not the same and greenwashing is easily done intentionally and unintentionally without proper understanding of what being eco-conscious in your field means. We started as a group of student researchers and have had over 30 students research what sustainability entails. This decal is the course version where we hope to give students the tools to integrate holistic sustainability into their career. Instead of just focusing on existing examples, we also focus on the theoretical foundations needed to think green in multiple settings. We draw from decolonization, social theory, and untraditional forms of knowledge to “holistically” understand the difference between going green and greenwashing.

UNITS: 2 Units

Reading List:
Core readings- excerpts for lessons and activities will come from here. We will be spending multiple weeks on most readings as many of them are books. Please come to class prepared to discuss these readings. We will specify which chapters to read in class.
1. Transforming Consumption by Dara O Rourke (Week 1 & 2)
2. Sustainability: Is Consciousness the Key? : Sadhguru (Week 2)
3. 7 Cheap Things by Raj Patel (Week 3, 4, 5)
4. Max Neef: Barefoot Economics (Week 6)
5. For The Wild: Settler Colonialism (Week 6)
6. Small is Beautiful (Week 7, 8)
7. Inflamed by Rupa Mayra and Raj Patel (Week 9,10)
8. Braiding Sweetgrass (Week 11, 12)
Statement of frequency of class meetings
Class will be held once a week on *Tuesday* from *8-9:30 pm* in Dwinelle 243.

Clear description of assignments and requirements for passing the class:
Students will be expected to have prepared the assigned readings ahead of time as they will be discussed in class. Group activity and discussion are a major component of this course and preparation will be necessary to provide thoughtful responses to the whole class and small groups.

Performing case studies will be another component of this class. Outside research, time will be required in order to put together a comprehensive analysis of the student’s chosen topic. These projects can be done individually or in small groups. Case Studies are designed to apply concepts and frameworks taught in class and provide a real world connection for students.

*this course will adhere and abide by the UC BERKELEY CODE OF ACADEMIC HONESTY

Weekly schedule of topics/assignments covered each day of class: (subject to small revisions)

**Module 1: Purpose & Introduction**
>Objectives:
  - What is Greenwashing?
  - Why take this decal?

**Module 2: Why is there a Confusion?**
>Objectives:
  - History of Environmental Education and Movement
  - Blatant Greenwashing
  - Subtle & Indirect Forms of Greenwashing

**Module 3: Tools for a New Way of Thinking**
>Objectives:
  - Framework - A Tool to Address The Full Scope when making green decisions
● Understand the creation, shortfalls, and benefits of the Framework

**Module 4: Application & Final Project**

>Objectives:

● To be able to choose a current case of greenwashing, and intelligently research through the framework a justification for why it is greenwashing.

● To be able to choose a current case of true green action, and intelligently research through the framework a justification for why it is **not** greenwashing.

**WEEK BY WEEK TENTATIVE OUTLINE:**

**Module 1**

1. Week 1: introduction, course overview
   a. What is Greenwashing lecture
   b. How does it span multiple fields?
   c. Course objectives & why should you take this?

**Module 2**

2. Week 2: History & Context to the Environmental Movement
   a. Colonial Histories, Knowledge & Power Relationship
   b. Differences in environmental education and how it can lead to greenwashing.
   c. **Activity:** examine 2 different examples of how environmental education is taught, and group discussion of how it can or cannot lead to greenwashing.

3. Week 3: Direct & Indirect Forms of Greenwashing
   a. Obvious Greenwashing
   b. Subtle Greenwashing
   c. **Activity:** Short Response on type of greenwashing if present, and what indicators spotted it.

**Module 3:**

4. Week 4: Scope of Sustainability Action - How to avoid Greenwashing
   a. Hidden factors that have been left out of the conversation, and therefore leads to greenwashing
b. Why do we need to consider the lens of overconsumption, labor laws, natural rights, etc. inorder to prevent greenwashing?

c. **Activity:** Review a eco solution- how many of the 5 lens does it address in its eco campaign?

5. Week 5: Research Based Framework
   a. How was this framework created?
   b. What does the framework do?
   c. How do we use it to guide our research?
   
   **d. Activity:** practice using it to evaluate a eco-action

6. Week 6: Applying the Framework
   a. How do we use it multiple fields and situations?
   
   **b. Activity:** Choose 2 eco actions, evaluate based on the 5 lenses, whether they are greenwashing or not.

7. Week 7: Continue in class activity from previous week, get instructor and peer help.
   a. **Activity** day

8. Week 8: Limitations and Takeaways;
   a. What does the framework leave out?
   b. What would you add/change?

Module 4:
Final Project: In groups of 2, pick 2 different eco solutions you are passionate about in your field, develop two presentations on why each solutions is or is not greenwashing based on your research guided by the holistic sustainability framework.

9. Week 9: Final Project Check In 1:
10. Week 10: Final Project Check in 2:
11. Week 11: Presentations 1
12. Week 12: Presentation 2

**Key learning outcomes:**
1. Learn why greenwashing exists and in what forms it exists.
2. Identify what kind of information is presented and the impact it has
3. Broaden knowledge on the many factors that influence how an environmental solution is gauged
4. Utilize a framework and pose better questions to critique greenwashing practices
5. How to write and make a case for why an action is or is not greenwashing using research
6. Learn how students of all backgrounds and disciplines can use their specialties to progress the environmental movement, in a way that doesn’t engage in greenwashing

**Method(s) of instruction:**
In-Person lecture and collaborative style instruction. This class will encourage group discussions and activities to tackle research on larger concepts related to greenwashing.

A typical class day will look like 30 minutes of lecture, 15 minutes of group discussion, and 45 minutes of collaborative work - either looking through the relevant case study/excerpt or writing brief responses to the day’s lecture.

There will be more time allotted for group work as the final case study project approaches.

**Method(s) of evaluation of student performance:**
Attendance and group participation will all be taken into consideration when evaluating students.
- Attendance: 30%
- Group Work: 35%
  - 25% of 35% is for the weekly assignments
  - 10% of the 35% is for corrections and peer reviews
- Final Case Study: 35%

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