

Choices for Sustainable Living

"I find that I think about things more – things I buy, things I eat, things I throw out. I see a much larger picture now, and I realize more than ever that I am a very important part of that picture."

- architect, Portland, Oregon

CHOICES FOR SUSTAINABLE LIVING IS A SEVEN-SESSION DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR THE WORKPLACE, COMMUNITY CENTER OR HOME.

PARTICIPANTS IN THIS DISCUSSION COURSE WILL:

Explore the meaning of sustainability

Consider the ties between lifestyle choices and their impact on Earth

Learn about steps that can be taken to move toward ecologically sustainable organizations, lifestyles, and communities.



INSPIRING PEOPLE TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR EARTH

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CHOICES FOR SUSTAINABLE LIVING: DISCUSSION COURSE DESCRIPTION

SESSION THEME	DESCRIPTION	READINGS
A Call to Sustainability	The goal of a sustainable society is popular, but difficult to define. How does the way our society functions affect the Earth, and how can we be “a blessing to the planet”?	<p>“Definitions of Sustainability”</p> <p>Excerpts from “Easter’s End” by Jared Diamond</p> <p>“Making Other Arrangements” by James Howard Kunstler</p> <p>“Why Bother?” by Michael Pollan</p> <p><i>You Can’t Be Neutral on a Moving Train</i> by Howard Zinn</p>
Ecological Principles	Some argue that the Earth is the best teacher of sustainable practices. How can nature’s organizing principles be applied in design, production of goods, and everyday living?	<p>“Footprints to Sustainability” by Professor William E. Rees</p> <p>“The Technology Factory” by Paul R. and Anne H. Ehrlich</p> <p>“The Personal Impact of No Impact” by Colin Beavan</p> <p>“Mother Nature’s School of Design” by Janine Benyus</p> <p>Case Study: “Bear River’s ‘Living Machine’” by Dave Redwood and Sean Kelly</p> <p>Action Plan</p>
Buying	Daily messages tell us to buy, buy, buy. How can we escape from these cultural pressures, and instead only purchase what we truly need, from the most sustainable sources available?	<p>“A Spending Wake-Up Call” By Stacey Burling and Carolyn Davis</p> <p>“Saving the Earth on the Cheap” by Paul Rauber</p> <p>“Buy Now, Pay Later” by Jess Worth</p> <p>“Plastic Bags are Killing Us” by Katharine Mieszkowski</p> <p>“What Does Not Buying Really Look Like?” by Anna White</p> <p>“Get What You Need Without Money” by Andrew Korfhage</p> <p>Action Plan</p>
Food	According to one author, our food travels an average of 1,300 miles before reaching our plates. How can we lessen our impact on the Earth through choices about the way we eat?	<p>“What’s Eating America” by Michael Pollan</p> <p>“The Carbon Hoofprint” by Austin Gelder and Lauren Wilcox</p> <p>“Stalking the Vegetannual” by Barbara Kingsolver</p> <p>“Organic Farming May Be the Best Route to Global Food Security” by the Rodale Institute</p> <p>“The Dirty Dozen List”</p> <p>“Five Reasons Not to Drink Bottled Water” by Chris Baskind</p> <p>Action Plan</p>
Communities	The more resources we use in the course of daily living, the larger our “ecological footprint” is. By looking at our actions within the framework of communities, we can learn to shrink that footprint and gain a simpler, more balanced lifestyle.	<p>“The City After Oil” by Richard Register</p> <p>“If You Build It, Will They Change?” by Bill McKibben</p> <p>“Building Green Community on a Budget” by Liz Walker</p> <p>“Cook One Meal, Eat For a Week” by Joelle Novey</p> <p>“<i>The Common Life</i>” by Scott Russell Sanders</p> <p>“Forging Friendlier Neighborhoods”</p> <p>Action Plan</p>
Business and Economy	Is a growing economy equivalent to a healthy economy? What are other ways of measuring success, and how can we encourage businesses to adopt sustainable practices and perspectives?	<p>“Detroit Speech” by Robert Kennedy</p> <p><i>Eco-Economy</i> by Lester R. Brown</p> <p>“It’s Folly to Save Jobs by Risking a Resource” by Donella Meadows</p> <p>“Feeding the Beast” by John Ehrenfeld</p> <p>“The Extravagant Gesture” by William McDonough and Michael Braungart</p> <p>“Bridging the Green Divide” by David Kupfer</p> <p>“Breaking Down Buildings, Building Up a Neighborhood” by Holly Dressel</p> <p>Action Plan</p>
Visions of Sustainability	Choices we make today are shaping the world of tomorrow. How can we create the most sustainable society for our future?	<p>“Tools for the Transition to Sustainability” by Donella Meadows, Jørgen Randers, and Dennis Meadows</p> <p>“Las Gaviotas” by Richard E. White and Gloria Eugenia Gonzáles Mariño</p> <p>“Understanding the Social Transformation Process” by Christopher Uhl</p> <p>“The Great Turning” by Joanna Macy</p>