

Northwest Earth Institute Sustainability Education Programs

OVERVIEW

The Northwest Earth Institute (NWEI) is a national leader in the development of innovative course books that offer a proven pedagogical model for teaching sustainability through a process of shared discovery, personal reflection and positive action. Our curriculum is not prescriptive. Designed to foster small group discussion among students, faculty or staff, the course books include a variety of perspectives from thought leaders on sustainability, with discussion questions that encourage critical thinking and active learning. Each course book contains a series of articles, book excerpts and discussion questions. Since NWEI's founding, over 140,000 participants in all 50 states and Canada have used NWEI course books.



OUR COURSES

NWEI offers eleven discussion guides on a variety of sustainability topics, including:

- *A World of Health: Connecting People, Place and Planet*
- *Choices for Sustainable Living*
- *Discovering a Sense of Place*
- *Global Warming: Changing CO₂course*
- *Healthy Children — Healthy Planet*
- *Hungry for Change: Food, Ethics and Sustainability*
- *Just Below the Surface: Perspectives on the Gulf Coast Oil Spill*
- *Menu for the Future*
- *Reconnecting with Earth*
- *Sustainable Systems at Work*
- *Voluntary Simplicity*

NWEI IN HIGHER EDUCATION

More than 180 colleges and universities throughout North America have successfully used NWEI course books in a wide variety of settings: from first-year to senior-year classes, with community-based learning initiatives, in residence halls and learning communities, as professional development for faculty and staff, and in other campus-wide programs. NWEI discussion based course books are adaptable for a wide range of academic disciplines. From liberal arts to science, the courses can be incorporated into existing curriculum to enable students to “uncover” core concepts in sustainability as they achieve broader learning objectives.

Numerous studies suggest that growth in life-long learning is facilitated by instruction that includes opportunities for reflection, active learning, and positive interaction with diverse peers. Given this knowledge, NWEI has worked with campuses throughout North America to provide high quality content and a unique discussion focused process that supports small groups of students, faculty and/or staff in teaching or learning sustainability.

To learn more about how various colleges and universities have used NWEI courses, visit: www.bit.ly/sustainablecampus.

SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION IDEAS

Supplement to an Existing Course/Discipline:

Professors have used our materials to supplement their courses in Social Sciences, Food Systems, Sustainable Agriculture, Biological Sciences, Education, Psychology, English, Engineering, and many other disciplines.

Faculty at Lesley University in Cambridge, MA partnered with Tacoma Community College in Tacoma, WA to use *Global Warming: Changing Course* for an Applied Ecology course. The course reflects a hybrid model of teaching which



continued

"I use the *Choices for Sustainable Living* course book to introduce the concept and application of sustainability. It provides the backbone for sustainable thinking through bite-sized readings from leading thinkers and practitioners. The content and format directly hits the key challenges we face in a world of rapidly declining environmental, social and economic capital. More importantly, the text provides reasons for hope, optimism and action."

Mike Shriberg, Ph.D., Education Director at the University of Michigan's Graham Environmental Sustainability Institute

"Usually in a college course, I take notes, read the books, do the assignments and when it is done, I go home and put the notebook on the shelf and continue on with my life. This course is different. I may put the notebook on the shelf, but I will be thinking, acting and changing every day because of this class."

Trina, *Global Warming: Changing CO₂course* course participant, Tacoma Community College

"By offering the *Sustainable Systems at Work* discussion course at University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR), we are diffusing sustainability into conversations and activities across campus. We expect to raise awareness among faculty, staff, and students about sustainability and how it can be integrated into one's home and work life. Since using the course book for faculty and staff discussion courses, I have now adopted the book for my classes. The readings in the book come from the thought leaders in our field and it is a concise guide to sustainability in the workplace. Thanks for such a terrific resource."

Nancy E. Landrum, Ph.D. Associate Professor, Management Department, University of Arkansas at Little Rock

combined face-to-face and online discussion methods of learning and is for adult learners.

A Professor of Engineering at Washington State University used *Choices for Sustainable Living* and *World of Health* within an integrated course comprised of students in engineering, architecture, agriculture and construction management.

University of Portland used *Menu for the Future* as curriculum for a food justice internship in collaboration with the Center for Entrepreneurship in Sustainability.

Green or Sustainability Teams: College and universities have used our courses to build community and awareness among Green Teams or Sustainability Teams or Councils.

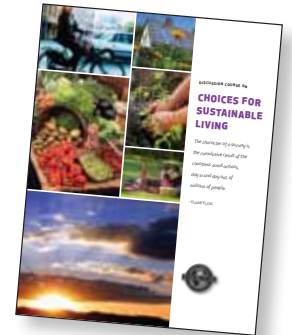
Green Team Project Manager at the University of Florida in Gainesville used *Choices for Sustainable Living* in a reading group of University Green Team captains to further knowledge on sustainable practices for the university and community.

Service Learning and Studying Abroad: Courses have been offered to small groups of students studying abroad to aid students in getting to know one another while expanding experiential learning opportunities.

A faculty member at the Center for Ecological Living and Learning in Maine has used *Choices for Sustainable Living* along with several other NWEI course books as an ongoing part of an international study program in Iceland.

Residential Life/Community Building/Freshmen Orientation: Courses can be offered in residential halls or living and learning communities as a means of building community while fostering an understanding of our relationship with and responsibility to place.

Illinois Wesleyan University in Bloomington, IL used *Discovering a Sense of Place*, *Choices for Sustainable Living*, *Voluntary Simplicity* and *Global Warming: Changing CO₂course* for sustainability training for incoming Residential Advisers through the Office of Residential Life.



NWEI's courses have been featured in the *Journal of Sustainability Education*

Read Larry and Alan Frolich's review of NWEI's *A World of Health* course book at: <http://bit.ly/jse-nwei-review>.

Read about Mike Shriberg's experience using NWEI course books with his students at University of Michigan here: <http://bit.ly/jse-nwei-article>

COST

The only cost for using NWEI course book resources is the price of the book. Most of NWEI discussion based books are \$21, plus shipping. *Reconnecting with Earth* is \$15 (PDF only) and *Sustainable Systems at Work* is \$35 (hard copy or PDF). *Just Below the Surface* is a one session course and is \$5 (hard copy or PDF).

Faculty and staff can order a review copy of any of NWEI books for \$15 including shipping.

ORDERING

Book orders can be easily placed online at www.nwei.org/order-form. To set up a Purchase order, please contact any member of NWEI's Outreach Team at 503-227-2807.

CONTACT

contact@nwei.org,
503-227-2807



"The students in my 'Green Living' classes have raved about the relevance of the readings and discussions in their own lives. Many have claimed that *Choices for Sustainable Living* has not only helped them think deeply about the environment for the first time in their lives, but that it has empowered them to make realistic changes in their day-to-day living."

Kory Goldberg, Faculty at Champlain Regional College

"The discussions lead to a meaningful examination of the choices we make every day that affect our environment and its complex network of people, plants, animals and natural resources. The discussions also encourage participants to articulate their own philosophy about the purpose of humankind as it exists on planet earth."

Linda Gerber, Ed.D, President, Sylvania Campus, Portland Community College

NORTHWEST EARTH INSTITUTE ECOCHALLENGE: AN ADDITIONAL SUSTAINABILITY EDUCATION AND ACTION RESOURCE FOR YOUR CAMPUS

The EcoChallenge gives students, faculty and staff the opportunity to change their life for good. For two weeks every October, we challenge people to change one habit for ourselves and Earth. Participants choose their challenge (water, energy, food, transportation or trash), we connect them with other EcoChallengers, and collectively we prove that small actions create real change.

The Northwest Earth Institute's EcoChallenge is a two week event promoting sustainable living, and the power of taking small steps toward a healthy, vibrant, sustainable future. By taking on an EcoChallenge, students, faculty and staff can find out how to reduce their impact, create lasting new habits, increase the dialogue about sustainability on campus, and have fun working toward goals. The EcoChallenge takes place October 1-15 every year. For example, in 2011 George Mason University engaged over 50 students in the EcoChallenge, and Penn State had over 30 faculty and staff participate.

Find out more at www.ecochallenge.org.

