Summer 2013: ENVS 6580 Sustainable Nature-Based Tourism
Department of Environment and Society
Utah State University

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(Note: please use this email and not the email through Canvass)

COURSE BACKGROUND:

Tourism has become one of the leading industries in the world, with nature-based tourism comprising one of tourism’s fastest growing market segments. Sustainable tourism is a relatively new phenomenon, which has rapidly grown as both a field of academic inquiry and as a strategy for preserving natural environments while fostering sustainable development and use.

Sustainability in a tourism context refers to the adoption of sound environmental, economic, and socio-cultural practices in tourism development and use. In this context, sustainable development is often described as being environmentally sound, economically viable, and socially responsible and acceptable. This is tied to sustainable use, in that careful and sensitive tourism-related economic development beneficial to a community is possible without degrading or depleting natural resources needed by both present and future generations. Many people see sustainable tourism as an alternative to mass tourism and the many negative environmental, social and cultural problems with which it has been connected, including loss of community culture and impacts to sensitive ecosystems.

OVERALL COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Students will learn how the emerging concept of sustainable nature-based tourism fits into natural resource management by focusing on how nature-based tourism can benefit individuals, communities, society, economies, and the environment. The course will take a practical approach to sustainable tourism by focusing on four primary themes:

1. Students will understand the definition and concepts of sustainable nature-based tourism practice from multiple perspectives.

2. Students will increase their awareness of this subject by examining case studies and frameworks from the United States and abroad.

3. Students will examine and assess the ecological and social impacts of nature-based tourism activities.

4. Students will acquire a working knowledge of how sustainable nature-based tourism planning and management is carried out.

COURSE RESOURCES
Canvas
Canvas is a Learning Management System which we will use for our course. You can log-in to Canvas at http://www.usu.edu/myusu/

Computer and Canvas Support
The “Home” link on the left hand side provides a link called “Computer and Canvas Support” to give you information on how to set up your computer in order to use Canvas and how to use the various tools in Canvas. You are required to read the information provided in both the “Computer Setup” page and the “Canvas Support” page.

Software
The “Computer Setup” page provides information on the software you need for Canvas. Documents in this course will be presented in .pdf format where possible. You will need Adobe Reader to view these files, which you can obtain for free at: http://get.adobe.com/reader/. Written assignments may be presented as a Microsoft Word document (.doc). If you do not have Microsoft Word installed on your computer, you use Open Office Writer instead, which you can obtain for free at http://www.openoffice.org/.

Presentation Videos and Slides
Weekly online presentations will be posted on Canvas under “Home” > “Course Materials”. A video of the slides with and without the instructor’s narration will be accessed by connecting online to a media server (you will not need to have a media player installed on your computer). The slides will be provided as a .pdf file which can be viewed on your computer, downloaded, and printed.

Readings
Readings will be taken from textbooks, peer-reviewed journals, and professional magazines. Most of the readings will be available in Canvas in .pdf format. Other readings will be available online, with a hyperlink provided in Canvas. The readings complement the power point lectures with case studies and more in-depth review of a subject matter.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graded Course Components</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Final Points</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Reading Questions / Discussion (n=11 weeks at 10 points per week)</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>376-405 A (93-100%)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>363 - 375 A- (90-92.9%)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>351 - 362 B+ (87-89.9%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Response to Weekly Reading Questions (n=2 questions at 10 points each)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>335 - 350 B (83-86.9%)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>322 - 334 B- (80-82.9%)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>314 - 321 C+ (77-79.9%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unit Application Assignments (n=7 weeks at 25 points per unit assignment)</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>295 - 313 C (73-76.9%)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>282 - 294 C- (70-72.9%)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>270 - 281 D+ (67-69%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sustainability Strategy Plan</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>243 - 269 D (60-66.9%)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>405</td>
<td>Below 243 F (0-59%)</td>
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WEEKLY READING QUESTIONS
Questions on weekly readings will foster on-line discussions and often have you apply a reading's main points to your own nature-tourism site (see more on your own site below). Discussion questions also demonstrate your understanding of the concepts and frameworks being addressed. Weekly reading questions will be located in Course Content, under the appropriate Unit.

RESPONSE TO WEEKLY READING QUESTIONS

You will be required to respond critically (in agreement or disagreement) to another student’s weekly discussion question twice during the duration of the course. You have 4 questions during the semester that are suitable for responding to what another student wrote (you’ll choose 2 of these questions). These will be due by the Monday (by 11:59 pm) after the initial reading discussion questions are due (which is Sunday by 11:59 pm). I will note these questions during their appropriate week but these questions occur during:
Week 1: question 2
Week 3: question 2
Week 6: questions 1 and 3

UNIT APPLICATION ASSIGNMENTS

At the beginning of the semester, students will choose a local recreation area for their unit assignments (e.g., state park, reserve, etc.). After every unit there are unit assignments where students are asked to apply a concept from that unit to their local recreation area. From evaluating the importance of nature-based tourism on local economies to assessing recreational use impacts in a state park, this course takes a practical approach to applying concepts and methods in the field at a nearby location to the student. The last two units of the semester will not have a unit application assignment, as students will be finalizing their case study project / sustainability strategy plan. Assignments should be emailed to me at: miriam.wyman@usu.edu. (Please use this email as the main contact email and not email through Canvas).

LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Assignments (unit assignments, weekly reading discussion questions, final sustainability plan, etc.) that are not emailed to me or uploaded to Canvas by their due date (unit assignments and weekly discussion questions are due on Sunday night by 11:59 pm; sustainability plan is due on Sunday, August 4 by 11:59 pm) will have points deducted.

CASE STUDY / SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY PLAN

This assignment provides an opportunity for students to apply concepts and skills learned throughout the semester to assess the overall sustainability of nature-based tourism at a local recreation area or eco-tourism related business. This assignment is intended to address specific challenges that a natural resource manager may encounter, and to help develop a greater understanding of how sustainable components can be incorporated into nature-based tourism development and management strategies. Students are required to submit a one-page summary proposing the case study by the end of
week 1 (Sunday, May 12) which must be approved by the instructor before proceeding. No two students will be allowed to work on the same conflict case study.

During the semester, the unit assignments will address various concepts and frameworks (as described above). Additionally, we will spend one week as a class on case study examples that demonstrate the application of some of these concepts. The Case Study unit will incorporate audio interviews and photos from actual assessments and interviews with nature-based tourism professionals, park management and agency personnel, and local volunteer organizations. The Case Study unit week will focus on Moab, Utah. Moab, home to Arches and Canyonlands National Parks and Dead Horse Point State Park, is an appropriate study area to look at the protection of cultural and natural resources, visitor quality experiences, and public-private partnerships. Students can then use these examples as a guide to improve their unit assignments for their own sustainability strategy plan.

The case study assignment is then the student’s opportunity to independently assess sustainable nature-based tourism at their chosen local recreation area. For their case study assignment, students will compile their revised unit assignments from throughout the semester (graded with input for improvements by the professor) into a “sustainability strategy plan” for their chosen area. The strategy plan will assess sustainability of the chosen area from the different components, with recommendations for improvement and how sustainable development could be incorporated into management strategies. The final paper should be at least 10 pages, double-spaced.

SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY PLAN COMPONENTS

Some of your sites may be more developed than others, with resources easily available and accessible (e.g., records, management personnel to interview, etc.). For other sites, this may not be the case. For some of the unit assignments, it might be difficult to obtain good, accurate information. I understand this and just ask that you apply these assignments as best you can, and work with me so that I can better understand the site and situation you are applying this course to. If nothing else, these assignments will hopefully expose you to important components of sustainable nature-based tourism and make you more effective as a natural resource professional working with nature-based tourism and to think critically about these issues.

At the end of this course you’ll have a sustainability strategy plan that you can present to your site or to future applicable employment that shows your assessment and application of important sustainable tourism development components.

COMPONENTS OF YOUR SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY PLAN SHOULD INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING: (NOTE: These will be areas we cover throughout the course as the different unit assignments or discussion questions)

I. CURRENT SITE CONDITIONS
   Introduction to your site
   -Site introduction, description, map, etc.
   -Inventory of major cultural and natural attractions promoted at your site
   -General information about the tourists who visit your site, as best as possible (age, gender, recreation / cultural interests, groups or individuals, etc.)
   -Current components that abide by sustainable tourism principles at your site
Current components that do not abide by sustainable tourism principles at your site

**Partnerships**
- Land management agencies and their role at your site (if applicable)
- Tourism partnerships that exist (e.g., private concessionaires? Volunteer groups? NGOs?)

**Social welfare analysis**
- Benefits and costs (as described in unit 2, week 3)

**Environmental and Cultural Impacts**
- List of known direct and indirect environmental and cultural impacts at your site (archaeological site, birds, animals, plants or other ecological resources) and the activities that cause them
- Note any resources that are sensitive or endangered / threatened at your site

II. PROPOSED MANAGEMENT IMPROVEMENTS TO NATURE-BASED TOURISM SUSTAINABILITY

**Environmental and Visitor Indicators**
- List of justified environmental and cultural indicators (based on environmental and cultural impacts)
- List of justified visitor quality experience indicators and standards (where applicable)

**Local Communities and Empowerment**
- Describe any communities located around your site that are involved with the local tourism industry
- What are some positive and negative socio-cultural impacts you see nature-based tourism at your site providing to local residents?
- Apply Scheyven's empowerment framework as applicable, addressing the 4 empowerment components.
- Address the potential for rural tourism development (e.g., heritage tourism, agritourism) – including the potential resources that exist

**Partnerships**
- What potential partnerships that currently do not exist would benefit your site? (e.g., volunteer groups, concessionaires, etc.). How could they benefit your site?

**Recreation Setting Component (from unit 5 assignment)**
- Desired benefits to create (for environmental resources and visitor experiences)
- Recreation setting components that currently exist (physical, social, managerial)
- Proposed zoning changes, demarketing, etc.
- Include a map of these current settings and proposed changes to address desired benefits (can be hand-drawn, or use official maps if available)

**Conclusion**
- Based on your assessment of the various components covered, do you consider your site to be sustainable nature-based tourism?
- Summarize the major issues/problems that conflict with sustainable nature-based tourism principles and the improvements you propose to the site to make it more sustainable.
SYLLABUS NARRATIVE

An excerpt from the syllabus describes what a typical unit would encompass:

• Units will focus on specific topics related to sustainable nature-based tourism. Weekly online presentations posted on Canvas (a .pdf of the slides with or without instructor narration) will introduce the week’s topic and a few questions will be posed to the entire class which will create a format for discussion among students (this covers the questions/discussion component).

• Foundational readings from textbooks, from field and case studies, from journal articles, and from other sources will complement the online presentations. Students will answer questions related to the readings and/or power point presentation (graded by the instructor).

• Concepts will also be demonstrated through short audio and photo segments from actual assessments and/or interviews with nature-based tourism professionals during the case study week. For example, an interview with BLM recreation staff in Moab, Utah will address challenges and potential solutions to visitor impacts under the Case Study unit topic “Tourism Management Actions”.

• Lastly, at the end of each unit students will be asked to apply some of that unit’s concepts to their local example. As an example of one unit assignment, a student will develop environmental indicators for their site. This information could be based on interviews with park personnel, from other studies within the same eco region, and/or from their personal exposure at the site.

COURSE SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK</th>
<th>UNIT</th>
<th>READINGS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 May 6</td>
<td>Course Overview</td>
<td>Blamey (p. 5-15, 18-22) Holden, Ch. 1 (p.1-10)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 May 13</td>
<td>Defining Tourism and Sustainable Tourism</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Perceptions of Environments and Tourist Characteristics, Environmental Ethics</td>
<td>Holden, Ch. 2 (p.25-29, 36-64)</td>
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<td>3 May 20</td>
<td>Economic Perspectives</td>
<td>Holden, Ch. 4 (p.103-127)</td>
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<td>Tourism and Public Land Management Agencies</td>
<td>Sherman &amp; Dixon</td>
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<td>Social Welfare Analysis for tourism feasibility</td>
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<td>4 May 27</td>
<td>Environmental Impacts</td>
<td>Ceballos- Lascarain, Ch 3 (‘negative tourism impacts’) Buckley, 2004 Ch. 11, 12</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 June 3</td>
<td>Tourism Development Impacts and Issues</td>
<td>Buckley 2003</td>
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<td>Indicators and Standards:</td>
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### 4. Socio-cultural Impacts

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reference</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 10</td>
<td>Visitor experience indicators&lt;br&gt;-Environmental indicators</td>
<td>Manning 1999 (ch. 6)</td>
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#### 5. Frameworks for Planning

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reference</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 17</td>
<td>Indigenous Territories&lt;br&gt;The Potential for Conflict Between Nature-based Tourism and Cultural Resources&lt;br&gt;Exploring Socio-cultural Impacts on Local Communities&lt;br&gt;Ecotourism and Community Empowerment</td>
<td>Weaver, Ch. 22&lt;br&gt;Digance&lt;br&gt;Scheyvens</td>
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#### 6. Tourism Collaboration and Partnerships

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reference</th>
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<tr>
<td>July 15</td>
<td>Collaboration and Community Development&lt;br&gt;Tourism Public-Private Partnerships&lt;br&gt;Tourism Protected Area Partnerships&lt;br&gt;Case Study: The Kapawi Indigenous-Corporate Partnership</td>
<td>Clark and Stein 2004&lt;br&gt;Wilson et al. 2009&lt;br&gt;Stronza 2002&lt;br&gt;Bushell &amp; Eagles, 2007 (p. 77-86)</td>
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#### 7. Case Study: Moab, Utah

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reference</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 22</td>
<td>Protection of cultural resources&lt;br&gt;Environmental impact monitoring&lt;br&gt;Visitor quality experience monitoring&lt;br&gt;Tourism management Actions&lt;br&gt;Agencies and local partnerships</td>
<td>Arches NP 2009 Visitor Survey Card Data Report&lt;br&gt;Slickrock Trail Mountain Bike Survey (Reiter and Blahna, 2002)</td>
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#### 8. Future Trends

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reference</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 29</td>
<td>Awards and Ecolabels, Certification, &amp; Accreditation</td>
<td>Honey and Steward, Ch. 1</td>
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**Note:** Other articles and hand-outs may complement assigned readings.
Syllabus Change: The instructor reserves the right to adjust the syllabus in any way to preserve the integrity of the course.

Readings


