

RECONNECTION and REVITALIZATION: ADAPTING to the COMING DOWNSHIFT

EAS 568 – Wednesday 5:00-6:50 pm – Fall 2024

INSTRUCTORS

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READINGS

Texts: Van Horn, G., R. W. Kimmerer, and J. Hausdoerffer [Eds.] (2021) *Practice*. (Volume 5 of *Kinship: Belonging in a World of Relations*). Center for Humans and Nature.

Kimmerer, R. W. (2015) *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants*. Milkweed Editions.

Articles: Available on the Canvas site.

NORM OF DISCOURSE

This seminar, unlike many graduate seminars, is guided by a collaborative metaphor, “*barn raising*” (read Kahn, 1971 and 746 *Barn Raising*, 2017; both on Canvas). Our mode employs the improvisational “*yes, and*” rather than “*yes, but*.” The intention is to jointly, cooperatively, and empathetically build up an understanding of the emerging downshift and the steps to take now in order to adapt to it, even to thrive in it. It is not to decay into a critique mode of discourse.

SEMINAR STRUCTURE

Time	Content	Activity
Prior to seminar:	Readings	1. Complete readings 2. Review “ <i>do something</i> ” statements of fellow members 3. Pick one statement to build-up in class
	“ <i>Do something</i> ” statement	Prepare and upload your own “ <i>do something</i> ” statement to Canvas by 5:00 pm on the Tuesday before class
During seminar:		
5:00 – 5:40 pm	Barn-raise a few “ <i>do something</i> ” statements	Nominate other’s statements to collectively build-up
5:40 – 6:00 pm	Lecture	Mutually explore lecture in relation to course objectives
6:00 – 6:45 pm	Discuss readings	Discuss readings (insights, overlaps, linkages, comparisons) in relation to course objectives
6:45 – 6:50 pm	Administration	Announcements, upcoming assignments, opportunities

ASSIGNMENTS

Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weekly reading, writing, and term project activity.
Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attending <u>all</u> sessions. Be active and empathetic. Practice mindful listening, processing, and contributing.
“Do Something” Statement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The seminar is not a theoretical exercise seeking to explain how modern industrial societies have created the current ecological predicament nor to document the trends. Rather, it is an effort to figure out what to do next and how to best cope with the inevitable transition. Weekly write a few carefully crafted sentences based on the week’s readings and that also follows the class maxim, “<i>Blame no one, Expect no help, Do something.</i>” Suggest an action that individuals, groups, organizations, or governments could take to ease the transition. They should follow logically from readings/lectures. They can be tiny or big, highly specific or broadly general.
Term Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students, sometimes in groups, develop small behavioral adaptation projects based on seminar themes. While flexible in application, projects focus on the “<i>Do Something</i>” maxim. Projects explore pragmatic and doable actions that could be adopted now and maintained after the seminar ends. Experiment with such a change, plan a course of action to try over the weeks of the term. Project is not “just an academic exercise” but an instance of transitional thinking and behavior, both conceptual (to be explained in class) and applied to everyday life. <p>Deliverables:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Concise, one-page, single-spaced, proposal of project. Submit via Canvas by Friday, September 20. Five-page, single-spaced project report (to be described in class). Submit via Canvas by Friday, November 15. An optional early submission for comments is possible. A short presentation (length to be determined). Sign-up for a presentation on either Wednesday November 20 or December 4.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS

Note: The following constitutes only a baseline set of readings. As instructors receive feedback from the seminar they will add, move, or even delete readings.

Summer readings

- Meadows, D. (1994) Envisioning a sustainable world. *Third Biennial Meeting of the International Society for Ecological Economics*, Oct 24-28, 1994, San Jose, Costa Rica. (www.donellameadows.org/wp-content/userfiles/Envisioning.DMeadows.pdf).
- Greer, J. M. (2012) Progress vs. apocalypse. In T. Butler, D. Lerch & G. Wuerthner [Eds.] *The Energy Reader: Overdevelopment and the Delusion of Endless Growth*. (pp. 95-101) Sausalito, CA: The Foundation for Deep Ecology.

August 28

- Van Horn, G. (2021) Kinning: Introducing the Kinship series. *Practice*.
- Heinberg, R. (2022) The Limits to Growth at 50: From scenarios to unfolding reality, *Resilience.org* (2-2-22). (<https://www.resilience.org/stories/2022-02-24/the-limits-to-growth-at-50-from-scenarios-to-unfolding-reality/>)
- Murphy, T., et al. (2021) Modernity is incompatible with planetary limits: Developing a PLAN for the future. *Energy Research & Social Science*, 81, 102239. (<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.erss.2021.102239>).

September 4

- Swan, H. (2021) After. *Practice*.
- Kimmerer, R. (2015) *Mishkos Kenomagwen: The Teachings of Grass*. *Braiding Sweetgrass*

September 11

- Fleischner, T. L. (2021) Natural history as a practice of kinship. *Practice*.
- Kimmerer, R. (2015) People of Corn, People of Light. *Braiding Sweetgrass*

September 18

- Sepie, A. (2021) Settled kin: Coming home to where we now belong. *Practice*.
- Sanzaro, F. (2022) The next walk you take could change your life. *New York Times* (9-15-22).
- Kimmerer, R. (2015) Becoming Indigenous to Place. *Braiding Sweetgrass*

September 25

- Whyte, K. (2021) An ethic of kinship. *Practice*.
- Kimmerer, R. (2015) Windigo Footprints. *Braiding Sweetgrass*

October 2

- Brown, N. (2021) Mercy. *Practice*.
- Kimmerer, R. (2015) *Shkitagen: People of the Seventh Fire*. *Braiding Sweetgrass*

October 9

- Hall, M. (2021) Kinship with plants. *Practice*.
- Jacobsen, R. (2010) Mother Nature's little black book: Varietal honeys of New England, North Carolina, Florida, the Southwest, and California. *American Terroir: Savoring the Flavors of Our Woods, Waters, and Fields*. Bloomsbury USA.

October 16

- Ward, M. (2021) Getting in on the making. *Practice*.
- Brooks, D. (2019) A nation of weavers. *New York Times* (18 Feb 2019).
- Kimmerer, R. (2015) The Gift of Strawberries. *Braiding Sweetgrass*

October 23

- Ghosthorse, T. (2021) Nurturing thoughts. *Practice*.
- Kimmerer, R. (2015) Defeating Windigo. *Braiding Sweetgrass*

October 30

- Deming, A. H. (2021) The vocation of care. *Practice*.
- Kimmerer, R. (2015) People of Corn, People of Light. *Braiding Sweetgrass*

November 6

- Riddell, J. (2021) The invitation. *Practice*.
- Kimmerer, R. (2015) Epilogue: Returning the Gift. *Braiding Sweetgrass*

November 13

- Hausdoerffer, J., et al. (2021) Epilogue – Attention, curiosity, play, gratitude: Practice of kinship. *Practice*.

November 20 Presentations – Day 1

November 27 Thanksgiving Break

December 4 Presentations – Day 2