

Democracy, the Earth, and You

a one-day course on
Creative Responses for the Twenty-First Century

Session one: 9-10:45

Master Pictures of the Ecological Era

Break: 10:45-11:00

Session two 11:00-12:30

The Ecological Crisis, Facts and Prospects

Lunch: 12:30-1:15

Session three: 1:15-2:45

Core Blocks to Progressive Change

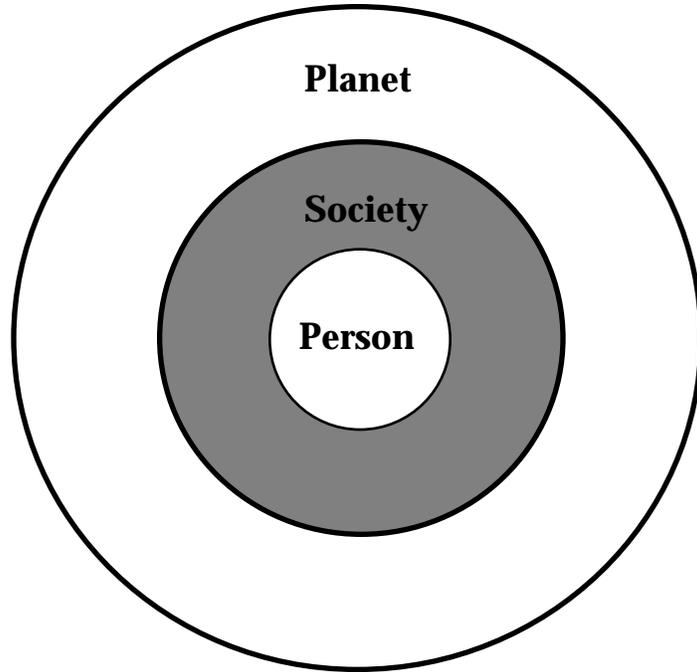
Break: 2:45-3:00

Session four: 3:00-4:30

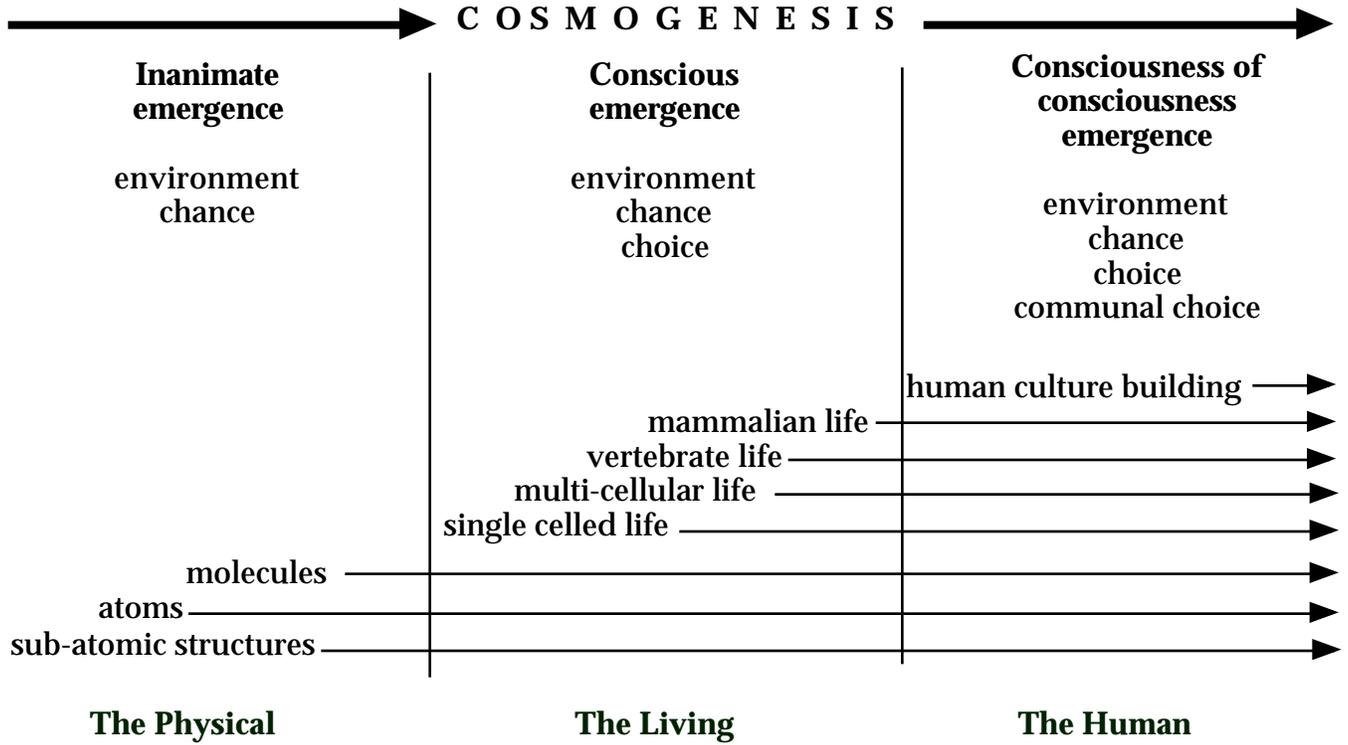
Strategies for Planetary Transformation

Each of these sessions will contain a presentation designed to stimulate our thinking and give order to our discussion. Following each presentation a group process will be conducted that allows each person to share his or her own vision, feelings, doubts, passions, or questions about these topics. We will emphasize listening to one another and opening ourselves to the diversity of views and wisdom which characterizes these controversial arenas. It will not be the purpose of this course to arrive at a consensus or to manipulate any person to take a particular position on these issues. The aim of this course is to discern the facts of our times more clearly, to honor our own personal experience, to encourage each person to build his or her own overviews, and to inspire honest and open dialogue.

Session One: Handout 2



Session One: Handout 3



Further Resources for Session One

Master Pictures of the Ecological Era

The Great Work: our way into the future by Thomas Berry is worth reading carefully and many times. Berry provides a clear picture of our overall ecological crisis as well as its economic, political, and cultural components. Berry pushes all these topics to a depth level, and he provides a competent history of how we got into the mess we are in (Bell Tower: 1999).

The Universe Story by Brian Swimme and Thomas Berry, is a must read for developing our overall story of human history within the context of natural history (HarperSanFrancisco: 1992).

The Dream of the Earth by Thomas Berry is a book of essays which are first rate for establishing within our scientific culture an interior ethical foundation rooted in the natural world (Sierra Club Books: 1988).

Rogue Primate: an exploration of human domestication by John A. Livingston has been a source for some of the basic images of this section of the course (Roberts Rinehart Publishers: 1994).

The Chalice and the Blade by Riane Eisler gives us a long historical view on male-female balance. This is a very colorful and helpful book (Harper and Row: 1988).

Healing the Wounds edited by Judith Plant is very helpful for grasping the close relationship between feminism and ecology. I highly recommend this book of essays (New Society Publishers: 1989).

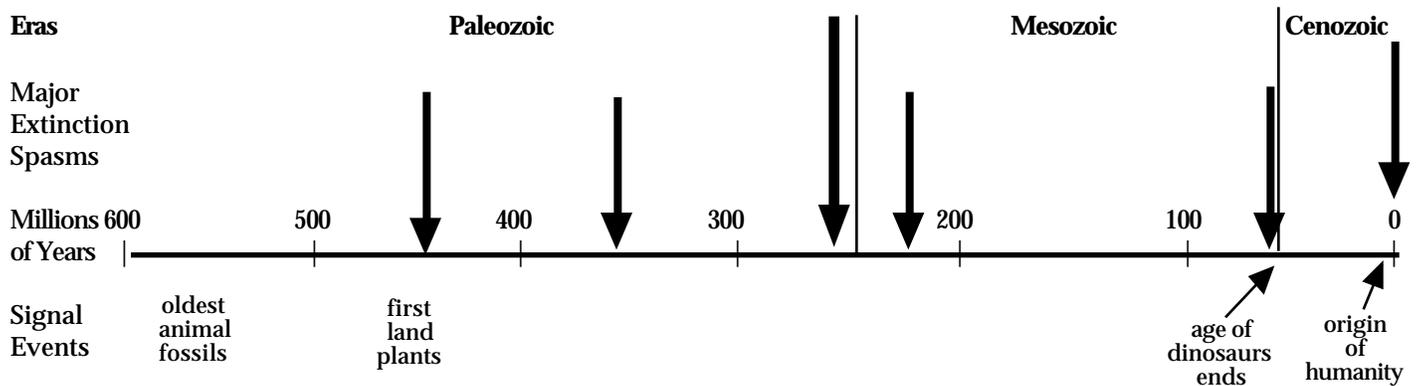
The Cornell West Reader by Cornell West can assist us with an up-to-date view on the topics of race in America. On this arena one could hardly do better than this compilation of colorful writings (Basic Civitas Books: 1999).

Session Two: Handout 1

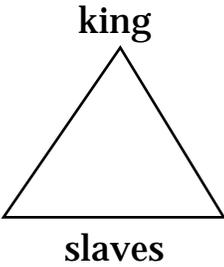
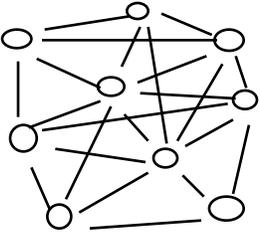
The Ecological Crisis, Facts and Prospects

1. The Sixth Extinction and the Importance of Biological Diversity
2. Global Warming and the Importance of Stabilizing the Climate
3. The Population Explosion and the Importance of Stabilizing Population
4. Planetary Exhaustion and the Need for a New Mode of Society

The Six Major Extinction Spasms



Social Mode Qualities

Precivilization	Civilization	Post civilization
<p>Tribal Intimacy</p> 	<p>Hierarchical Order</p> 	<p>Planetary Confederation</p> 
<p>Companionality</p>	<p>Aristocracy/Commoners</p>	<p>Full Democracy</p>
<p>Nature-Honoring</p>	<p>All-out Use of the Earth</p>	<p>Ecological Design</p>
<p>Natural Roles</p>	<p>Male Rule</p>	<p>Male/Female Balance</p>
<p>Isolated Diversity</p>	<p>Uniformity</p>	<p>Interactive Diversity</p>
<p>Isolated Autonomy</p>	<p>Centralized Power</p>	<p>Local Empowerment</p>
<p>Local Enmeshment</p>	<p>Mobile Expansion</p>	<p>Grounding in Life Regions</p>
<p>Boundary Maintenance</p>	<p>All-out Warfare</p>	<p>Negotiation and Restraint</p>

Further Resources for Session Two

The Ecological Crisis, Facts and Prospects

The Sixth Extinction: patterns of life and the future of humankind by Richard Leakey and Roger Lewin provides a clear picture of the history of life on this planet, how we are now living in the sixth huge extinction of life forms, and the importance of this to us (Doubleday: 1995).

The Diversity of Life by Edward O. Wilson is a classic book on the nature and importance of biodiversity (W. W. Norton: 1992).

State of the World 2000 - Each year an annual report is produced by the Worldwatch Institute giving reliable well-documented data. The 2000 edition contains a thorough and evocative essay by Lester Brown

Eco-Economy: Building an Economy for the Earth by Lester Brown, widely known as the founder and former president of Worldwatch Institute. This book pulls together a vast amount of carefully selected data and visionary possibilities for our future. (W.W. Norton & Co.: 2001) .

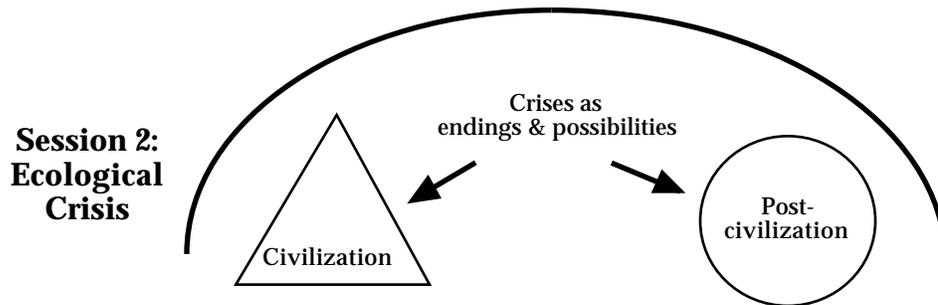
For the Common Good by Herman E. Daly and John B. Cobb Jr. is an informative book on the complexities of world trade and many other matters (Beacon Press: 1989).

Also useful for this section of the course is Bill Moyers' video **Earth on Edge**. It contains clearly told illustrations of the depth of our troubles and what can be done about them (Broadcast on PBS television: 2001).

Session Three: Handout 1

An Overview of this Course

Session 1. Overviews of the Ecological Era



Session 3: Core Blocks

1. Obsolete Economics
2. Corporations Rule Our Lives
3. The Demise of Democracy
4. The Public Relations War on Truth

Session 4: Winning Strategies

How we, the vanguard, can actually win a new destiny for the Earth and humanity

Session Three: Handout 2

The Matrix of Delusion

Topic	The Matrix	The Real World
US foreign policy	The US government promotes democracy around the world	The US government promotes corporate power and naked self interest. It has overthrown democracies, installed brutal dictators who killed millions of innocent people.
Sept. 11	Evil, mindless, terrorist attack done by people who "hate our freedom"	An evil terrorist <i>counter</i> -attack responding to decades of US Government terror on Muslim and Arab people world wide.
The mainstream media (New York Times, NBC, CNN, etc.)	The mainstream media provides a realistic picture of the world. Although it tends to emphasize death, destruction, and sex for ratings, overall it helps the public challenge government and big business abuses	The mainstream media is big business and is paid for by big business. Its primary product is audiences (you) which are sold to other big businesses (advertisers). Its secondary product is "the news," which, of course is shaped by the need to keep its primary customers (big business) happy.
Democracy	Our leaders believe citizens should know what their government is doing and have a role in shaping policy	Our leaders believe the people are ignorant and meddlesome outsiders who will mess things up if they are allowed to influence policy. The "responsible men" guide the "bewildered herd" using PR (propaganda). Furthermore, real democracy is avoided because it would threaten the very rich (the poor would vote their wealth away).
The anti-globalization protests	Stupid, violent	Raising important issues. Protests are 98% nonviolent. Security forces increasingly violent.
International "Trade" Agreements like NAFTA, FTAA, MAI, Organizations like WTO	Promote trade and wealth for all, especially poorest in third world	Have little to do with trade. Mostly used to increase corporate power over governments.
Green Party	Pointless distraction from the real choices. Comprised of disgruntled Democrats.	A mechanism for exerting outside pressure on the unresponsive two party system that is responsible for the above atrocities. Not the only mechanism but an important one. Most serious Greens know the information on this web site. We also need Republicans and Democrats that are wide awake, fighting to change the system from the inside. But that is not enough.

Further Resources for Session Three

Core Blocks to Progressive Change

When Corporations Rule the World by David Korten is excellent for deeply and clearly understanding the fallacies and illusions of modern economic theory and the tragedies of the global economy (Berrett-Koehler Publishers & Kumarian Press: 1995).

Corporations are Gonna Get Your Mama: Globalization and the Downsizing of the American Dream edited by Kevin Danaher is a brief volume of colorful essays on corporation rulership (Common Courage Press: 1996).

The Chomsky Reader by Noam Chomsky deals forthrightly with the public relations war of truth arguing insistently that the "free press" is part of the stultifying conformity that pervades all aspects of American life (Pantheon Books: 1987).

Life is a Miracle: an essay against modern superstition by Wendell Berry is an entertaining and accessible study of the limitations of scientific knowledge and our superstitions surrounding it (Counterpoint: 2000).

Also useful for this section of the course is the journal: ***Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives Monitor*** (CCPA web site: <http://www.policyalternatives.ca> - address: CCPA National Office; 410-75 Albert St.; Ottawa, ON K1P 5E7).

For more about the misinformation being given by our public media, see an interesting web site using the science fiction movie **Matrix** as its foil: <http://morpheus911.piranho.de>

Other useful web sites:

PRWatch.org www.citizen.org consumerwatchdog.org citizenwatch.org

Further Resources for Session Four

Strategies for Planetary Transformation

Globalization from Below: The Power of Solidarity by Jeremy Brecher, Tim Costello, and Brendan Smith. On the topic of social transformation, this is the book I would like to give every social activist. It is an easy-to-read 122 pages available in paper back for \$13.00. It is challenging reading, but only because of the depth of the social transformation it is calling for. It has boiled down a vast assortment of wisdom into a brief well-ordered form. It is not a retreat from global realities, but an entirely different approach to all these unavoidable issues. (South End Press: 2000)

Why Bother? by Sam Smith is a good book on the topic of civic motivation—on the question of why do anything at all when the challenges are so overwhelming (Feral House; P.O. Box 13067; Los Angeles, CA 90013: 2001).

Webs of Power: Notes from the Global Uprising by Starhawk is a book written from on-site experience of the protests against the WTO and other corporation-controlled global bodies. The last third of the book spells out a positive vision for the future written with thoroughly bioregional values. (New Society Publishers: 2002)

The Post-Corporate World by David Korten is a sequel to his earlier book. It is particularly helpful as a detailed and encouraging vision of the next economy and how we might get there (Berrett-Koehler Publishers & Kumarian Press: 1999).

Corporate Renaissance by Rolf Østerberg is a brief, readable, and awakening volume on the internal contradictions of the corporation written by a successful business man (Natarah Publishing, P.O. Box 2627 Mill Valley, CA 94942: 1993).

Birth of the Chaordic Age by Dee Hock, founder and CEO Emeritus of Visa, is a colorful and thought-provoking book providing clear democratic alternatives to top-down ordering, organizing, and leadership (Berrett-Kochler Publishers: 1999).

Putting Power in its Place edited by Judith Plant and Christopher Plant is a brief book that goes to the heart of the matter of localizing political power (New Society Publishers: 1992).

Deep Ecology for the 21st Century edited by George Sessions is a fine collection of writings on deep ecology and on the link between the ecological crisis with the depths of personal existence (Shambhala: 1995).

The Voice of the Earth by Theodore Roszak links our psychological healing with our relationship with the Earth (Simon and Schuster: 1992).

Natural Capitalism, creating the next industrial revolution by Paul Hawken, Amory Lovins, and L. Hunter Lovins is a fine resource for illustrations on inventing viable social forms for the future (Little, Brown and Company: 1999).

We Build the Road as we Travel by Roy Morrison gives inspiration and detailed information on the possibility of replacing corporations with cooperatives (New Society Publishers: 1991).

Truth or Dare: encounters with power, authority and mystery by Starhawk is an enduring classic on overcoming the patriarchal establishment (Harper and Row: 1987).