

LOCALIZATION: TRANSITIONAL THINKING FOR THE NEW NORMAL

Fall 2014 (First half-term – Sept 3 thru Oct 22)

INSTRUCTORS

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PREMISE – This course takes as given that high-consuming, growth-dependent societies soon will:

- be operating on drastically less energy and material;
- need to make a rapid transition;
- be less affluent, but possibly function with higher levels of well-being.

The drop in energy and material use may be 85% or more this century, a shift without precedent. While energy is a key driver, the seminar is not about energy policy, nor does it develop doom-and-gloom scenarios. The course provides evidence for this premise but does not dwell on it.

FOCUS – The course focuses on:

- What localization is (it is already happening).
- What it can be (a welcome challenge or a dire struggle).
- What it should be (e.g., peaceful, democratic, just, resilient).

It presumes that now is the time to envision adaptations and plan for the transition. The course explores the implications of a new biophysical circumstance and discusses responses for the transition. The focus is on crafting a wholesome, just, peaceful and resilient transition while considering the local, regional, national, and even international dimensions of localization.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Developing principles, guidelines and rules-of-thumb for the urgent transition from a fossil fuel-based, resource-intensive, growth-oriented society to a resilient localized society.
- Applying insights gained to a specific instance of localization.
- Develop the competence and confidence to publicly present principles and practices of localization and collaborate with community officials and citizens.

READING MATERIALS

- De Young, R. and T. Princen (2012). *The Localization Reader: Adapting to the Coming Downshift*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Other readings available on U-M Ctools website

REQUIREMENTS

1. **Daily preparation and participation** – Thorough preparation of conceptual readings and experiential cases. Thorough preparation of readings and cases are essential to the success of the course. In-class activities are the core of the course, where active listening is as important as speaking.
2. **Attendance** at all class sessions is required. There is no substitute for in-class discussions. Since the course is an integrative exercise, presenting one's views is essential to its success.

GRADES

The final grades will be based on the following weightings:

Preparation and participation	35%
Research paper	55% (instructions and criteria in separate handout)
Presentation	10% (instructions and criteria in separate handout)

PROCEDURES

- Readings** – Most readings are in the textbook. The goal is not to accumulate lots of facts nor to memorize. Rather, it is to identify key ideas, concepts, norms, biophysical and social contexts, and principles as they relate to localization. Thus, consider the following as an overall reading strategy.
 - Approach the readings as an exploration, an active process of making sense of the piece, of finding nuggets of insight into the reasons for and processes of localization. One resource that aids this process is Fu, Leeann (2006). *Active reading revisited* (available on Ctools).
 - Most of the authors were not part of a localization seminar and might have framed their piece differently had they been. It may be useful to reinterpret their work through the premises of this course.
 - As you read, note your own reactions, especially surprises or “aha’s” or passages that contradict your previous understanding (or another reading). Share such reactions with course members, or others, however common or uncommon you think they might be.
- Research paper** – There will be a separate handout detailing the paper, potential topics, expectations and grading criteria. In brief, students will chose a single topic early in the term and then submit progressive drafts culminating in a final paper, with the second draft undergoing peer-review. The due dates are as follows (all are due at 5:00 pm on the specified):
 - First draft** (2 pages) Due: Friday, September 12
 - Second draft** (5-6 pages) Due: Friday, September 26
 - Peer-review* Due: Tuesday, September 30
 - Third draft** Due: Friday, October 10
 - Final paper** Due: Friday, October 24
- Written work** – Print all assignments; single spacing is acceptable for final papers (in fact, for source reduction purposes, preferred) but drafts to be read and marked by others should be double spaced with ample margins for comments. Printing on the back side of used paper and other creative uses and re-uses of paper are also encouraged provided the material is highly readable. With so many documents being produced and edited and reviewed, management is essential. At a minimum number all pages and staple, include name, date, mailing address (preferred means of contact), and assignment topic.

If, for any reason, including the issue of using English as a second language, writing assistance is needed, it is the student’s responsibility to see the instructors in advance of the due dates. The instructors also assumes, and highly recommend, that all students take advantage of the services of the **Sweetland Center for Writing** (1310 North Quad, 105 S. State Street, sweetlandinfo@umich.edu, 764-0429). In fact, those with poorly written papers will be referred to the Center and required to submit additional drafts.

READINGS

SEPTEMBER 3 (First class session)

Front Matter: Preface and Introduction

Introduction: Drivers of Localization

Ch. 2 Energy Cost of Energy Gained *Adam Dadeby*

Holmgren, David (2009). *Future Scenarios: How Communities Can Adapt to Peak Oil and Climate Change*. Chelsea Green Publishing, White River Junction, VT. [Book or online, see Ctools site for online link]

Meadows, Donella H. (1994). Envisioning a sustainable world. Presented at the *Third Biennial Meeting of the International Society for Ecological Economics*. October 24-28, 1994, San Jose, Costa Rica. (on Ctools)

Webpage to review: Prior to the first class (over the summer) review the *Resilience* webpage (www.resilience.org) looking for articles about localization. Select one article and enter your reaction to it in the *Forum* on the Ctools site.

SEPTEMBER 8

Ch. 1 The End of Fossil Fuels *M. King Hubbert*

Case: “2000 watt” story in “The island in the wind.” *The New Yorker*, 2008, 68-77 (on Ctools).

SEPTEMBER 10

Ch. 3 The Inevitability of Transition *Joseph A. Tainter*

Hopkins, R. (2009) Chapter 10 – The transition concept (Pp. 134-145). *The Transition Handbook: From Oil Dependency to Local Resilience*. White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green Publishing.

Case: Box (Erie Canal)

SEPTEMBER 15

Ch. 4 Less Energy, More Equity, More Time *Ivan Illich*

Case: “Shipping costs and globalization.” *New York Times*. (3 August 2008).

SEPTEMBER 17

Introduction: Localization in Practice

Ch. 5 An Arc of Scenarios *Rob Hopkins*

Smil, V. (2003) Chapter 3 - Against forecasting. (Pp. 121-180) *Energy at the Crossroads*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Case: Box (Energy islands)

SEPTEMBER 22

Ch. 6 Inhabiting Place *Robert L. Thayer*

Case: Box (Belo Horizonte)

SEPTEMBER 24

Ch. 7 Locally Owned Business *Michael Shuman*

Case: Box (Localizing Finance)

SEPTEMBER 29

Ch. 8 Daring to Experiment *Warren Johnson*

Case: Box (Planful Shrinkage) [also read expanded case by this name on Ctools webpage]

OCTOBER 1

Ch. 10 Ecovillages: A Whole New Way *Karen Litfin*

Case: Box (Work less)

OCTOBER 6

Introduction: Philosophies of Localization

Ch. 11 The Decentralist Tradition *Kirkpatrick Sale*

Case: Box (Hawaii)

OCTOBER 8

Ch. 12 Technology at a Human Scale *Ernst F. Schumacher*

Case: "An Effort to Bury a Throwaway Culture One Repair at a Time," *Amsterdam Journal*, Sally McGrane, May 8, 2012

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/09/world/europe/amsterdam-tries-to-change-culture-with-repair-cafes.html?pagewanted=all>

OCTOBER 13 – FALL STUDY BREAK

OCTOBER 15

Ch. 15 Conserving Communities *Wendell Berry*

Case: "Workers' Paradise Found Off Japan's Coast," *New York Times*, 22 April 2009.

Presentations (process explained in separate handout; evening session possible)

OCTOBER 20

Introduction: Tools for Transition

Ch. 24 Tools for the Transition *Donella Meadows, Randers & Dennis Meadows*

Case: Box (Corn to Veggies)

Presentations (continued)

OCTOBER 22

Ch. 25 Downshift/Upshift: Our Choice *Raymond De Young & Thomas Princen*

Case: Box (The Potato)

Presentations (continued)