THE TECHNOLOGICAL SHROUD: SUSTAINABILITY, ETHICS, TECHNOLOGY,
AND THE ENVIRONMENT– *ARCH 6290/Spring 2019*

*So, amidst all the heated fervor what exactly does sustainability refer to? (Adrian Parr —
Hijacking Sustainability)*

*Only the faulty assumption that any change is unnatural makes us conclude that the
greenhouse effect will be bad for the planet. Thus, the idea of "sustainability" and general
homeostasis is a profoundly unnatural goal. The universe does not, except in certain
temporary periods and places, sustain or maintain: it changes, improves, complexifies,
sometimes destroys…it is a system to subvert and disrupt sustainability and
maintainability. (Frederick Turner – "The Invented Landscape")*

In recent years, a wealth of discourse and research has emerged underscoring the need for disciplines involved in the built environment to utilize technologies and define practices that better integrate global resource consumption without further taxing an already overburdened environment. However, to date the definition of sustainability has been overly reliant on policies involving energy efficiency rather than instigating any substantial changes in our overly consumptive western lifestyle. In essence, the response has been largely reactionary, long on short-term tactical efforts, but short on long range strategic planning.

Though the emergence of "green" practices and techniques has had positive effects, the dialogue has yet to focus on the real issue, one that led us to the brink of a global environmental crisis. To develop a sustainable relationship with the environment, our faith in modern technology's ability to overcome all obstacles with more technology needs questioning and is at the root of many of our excesses today. Until this occurs, sustainable practices will remain largely surface endeavors and will not truly transform the necessary societal conventions or perceptions that must change for this crisis to be adverted. Technology must be re envisioned as a revelatory process for gaining authentic insight, akin to the ancient Greek concept of techne. Only by re examining Technology, our dependence upon its manifestations, and its influence on our perception of the environment, can the attitude shift necessary for our modern global society to begin moving from envisioning the environment solely in terms of its being utilizable resources for technological advancement to its having inherent value to our existence can manifest.

Thus, before sustainability can truly reframe our worldview, the prevailing perception that any solution to the current crisis will necessarily be technologically based must be interrogated and considered more than a series of technological issues. In reality, sustainability's central issues are ethical and revolve around how the Human/Nature relationship is envisioned. In the first instance, the focus of this seminar will be how philosophical reflection must play a central role in the development of a truly sustainable relationship to the environment. In the second, the role architects, landscape architects and planners can play in this redefinition will guide the discussion. Only then can we formulate environmentally responsible strategies integrating technology, ethics, and ecology capable of engaging the magnitude, fluidity, and complexity of the environmental issues facing the global community today.

In short, this seminar will be concerned with the issues involving the philosophical nature of "sustainability" and its relationship to technology. Its aim is to dispel many of the underlying myths and propaganda surrounding "green" and redefine its role in an age where technology has radically transformed our relationship to the environment. The positive consequence of this conceptual move will be to expose designers, architects, and urban theorists to the broader philosophical issues of "sustainability" and the magnitude of the global problems relating to it. The dialogues that emerge will be seen as a means towards creating more broadly informed design agendas where "green" attitudes guide the entire design strategy from initial concepts to determining the appropriate life cycle of our constructs.

COURSE SECTIONS AND TOPICS:

01 SUSTAINABILITY/PHILOSOPHICAL METHODS/DESIGN
*What is philosophy and its investigative methods?/How can philosophy inform the agenda of designers?/Philosophy and the pertinent
issues of sustainability/What is sustainability: Method or Value? The concept of Radical Gardening and design: An Introduction*

02 SUSTAINABILITY/GLOBAL ISSUES & PROBLEMS
*Why should Sustainability be considered important?/ Global problems of the environmental crisis/Garbage/Overpopulation/Mass
consumption/Consumerism/Global warming/Density/Pollution/What is the Anthropocene?*

03 SUSTAINABILITY/TECHNOLOGY
Technology: definitions and relationships/The concept of Techne and its relation to Technology/Towards globally sustainable practices: Re envisioning our relationship to technology

04 SUSTAINABILITY/ETHICS/ ECOLOGY
What is Ethics?/The role of Ethics in understanding the environment/the ethical potential of sustainable practices/Towards a sustainable ethical stance/Definitions of Nature and the Environment/Prevailing Attitudes: The Human/Nature relationship/Envisioning a new balance: ecofemininism and other "integrative" natural philosophies.

05 RE FRAMING SUSTAINABILITY: TRANSDISCIPLINARY DESIGN AGENCY
Redefining the Nature, Human, & Technology relationship/Radical Gardening: cultivating a sustainable design perspective/A sustainable global perspective for the design disciplines/transdisciplinary design and the 21st century architect

Hybrid Course:

This course is a hybrid course consisting of both in-person and online class formats.   It will be expected that attendance and participation by students will occur in both venues. Canvas will be primarily used to offer support materials, assignments, discussions, videos, announcements, and other types of collaborative opportunities. Online comments and assignments must be formatted and labeled properly as well as be uploaded to Canvas by the date and time stipulated in each assignment or announcement. The face to face portion of the course will occur in Room 320A of the CAP building each Monday from 2PM to 3:15PM. During this time, there will be open discussions between instructor and student involving the material provided on Canvas the previous week.

Grading:

Question and summary answer sheets (1-2 page/short papers/due each week) and in-class discussion participation– 40%

Manifesto on Sustainability and the 21st century architect- 10%

Final Presentation/Paper – 50%

Participation Evaluation:

On Canvas, readings and films will be assigned to be read for the completion of each of the modules for the course. The organization of the material contains five sections broken into two to three modules. Modules will be released sequentially throughout the semester. Students will not be able to access a module ahead of its scheduled week however, once the module has been released then students will have access to it until the end of the semester. The participation requirement for the course will be evaluated in two ways: for each module, students will submit a one page summary of the course material presented within the module. This will be done in a question posed/answer provided format taken from the course materials presented within the module. In other words, each student will pose three questions from the material covered in the module and then provide a paragraph or two that answers the questions by summarizing and directly referencing module material. These sheets will be submitted for evaluation via canvas each Monday by noon (MST). For each F2F course meeting, students are to bring a printout of these questions (a min. of 3/max of 5) and 2 to 3 times during the semester each student will "kick off" class discussions utilizing their questions and summary answers.

Final Presentation/Paper:

The main project for the course will be a written paper and power point presentation with visuals speculating on how the profession of architecture and the agency of the architect might/needs to transform to adequately adapt to changes in the coming decades. A detailed description with due dates and expectations involving the final project will be released midway through the semester and discussed in one of the Monday F2F meetings.

Required Texts/Visual Material:

Texts, Videos, etc, and their acqusition for the course will be outlined throughout the semester by the instructor as needed and accessed through Canvas.

Policies, Rules, And Regulations:

Students with Disabilities
Students with disabilities who want academic accommodations must register with Disability Resources and Services (DRS), 177 Arts Building, 303-556-3450, TTY 303-556-4766, FAX 303-556-2074. DRS requires students to provide current and adequate documentation of their disabilities. Once a student has registered with DRS, DRS will review the documentation and assess the student's request for academic accommodations in light of the documentation. DRS will then provide the student with a letter indicating which academic accommodations have been approved. Once you provide me with a copy of DRS's letter, I will be happy to provide those accommodations DRS has approved.

Absences, Tardiness, Quizzes and Examinations, and Homework
Except for documented health or disability reasons, I will not accept excuses for absences, tardiness, missed examinations, or homework not submitted. Documentation of disability or health related issues must be provided to me and to Disability Resources and Services, 177 Arts Building, 303-556-3450, TTY 303-556-4766, FAX 303-556-2074, no later than 72 hours past the missed classtime.

Classes begin and end on time. (1) absence will be allowed before an academic penalty of (one half) (one) grade reduction is imposed. If you are late to class and/or leave class early (2) times, an academic penalty of (one half) (one) grade reduction will be imposed. Homework, papers, projects, or any other required assignments that are turned in late will receive (one half) (one) grade reduction for every day they are late. Any student who does not participate in pin-ups/reviews, misses quizzes and/or examinations or fails to turn in homework and/or papers will receive either a zero (0) or an F for the work missed.

Returning Papers, Quizzes, and Examinations
Papers, quizzes, and examinations will be distributed via canvas.

Plagiarism
Students are expected to know, understand, and comply with the ethical standards of the university, including rules against plagiarism. Plagiarism is the use of another person's ideas or words without acknowledgement. The incorporation of another person's work into yours requires appropriate identifications and acknowledgement. The following are considered to be forms of plagiarism when the source is not noted: word-for-word copying of another person's ideas or words; the "mosaic" (interspersing your own words here and there while, in essence, copying another's work); the paraphrase (the rewriting of another's work, while still using their basic ideas or theories); fabrication (inventing sources); submission of another's work as your own; and neglecting quotation marks when including direct quotes. All assigned work, including drawings and models must be the individual product of each student. Collaborative work must be credited to all participants.

Classroom Decorum
The following ground rules apply to all students and are designed to ensure a classroom environment conducive to learning:
1.   Pagers, beepers, cellular telephones, and handheld internet devices must be deactivated before class begins and remain deactivated throughout the entire class period.
2.   Please do not bring children to class.
3.   Students who engage in disruptive classroom behavior will be reported to the Office of Student Life for appropriate disciplinary action under the UCDenver Code of Student Conduct and, when appropriate, to the Auraria Campus Police for investigation of possible criminal action. The Code of Student Conduct can be found on the UCDenver website, under Office of Student Life and Student Activities. Disruptive behavior includes, but is not limited to, arriving late to class without explanation or apology; leaving class early without explanation or apology; reading a newspaper or magazine; reading a book with no connection to the content of the course; engaging in prolonged private conversations; sleeping in class; eating, drinking, and/or gum chewing; passing notes; being under the influence of drugs or alcohol; harassment or verbal or physical threats to another student or to the instructor; failing to deactivate pagers, beepers, cellular phones, and/or handheld internet devices; bringing children to class.