WRITING ASSIGNMENT 3
CHALLENGES & SOLUTIONS

« The pessimist complains about the wind; the optimist expects it to change; the realist adjusts the sails »

– William Arthur Ward

Desired learning outcomes for this task are for you to:
from a multidisciplinary perspective compare and critically analyze the basic assumptions, explanatory models and proposed solutions of different economic theories in relation to the present sustainability challenge.

Imagine this: You are finishing your course at The Global Economy and are contacted by *Solutions,* a hybrid academic and popular journal on sustainability issues. The *Solutions* publication describes itself this way:

> **"*Solutions* is a nonprofit print and online publication devoted to showcasing bold and innovative ideas for solving the world's integrated ecological, social, and economic problems."** (http://www.thesolutionsjournal.com/)

Solutions asks you to write an article where you propose and discuss **different economic solutions to present-day sustainability challenges.**
To write this article you will first have to:

- Consider what you see as the major sustainability challenges today

- Based on that, consider which solutions within the field of economics you deem most interesting, efficient or successful in coping with these challenges.

- **Choose one or two solutions to focus on**. They can be solutions that have been mentioned in readings or lectures (examples include carbon trading, green tax schemes, transition towns, monetary and bank reform, increased local democracy, decreased consumerism, new paradigms within economic thought and many others). You can also create your **own solutions** based on the knowledge you have acquired during the course.

- You will have to evaluate your solutions according to their potential, accessibility, costs and benefits (see below for more detailed instructions on evaluating your solutions).

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- You will have to refer to course literature when writing your article, even if you focus on challenges and solutions not mentioned in the course. **Make at least 6 references to different works in the course readers or the course books**. You may of course reference the same book or article several times, but this will only count as one reference.

Attached you will find information about *Solutions* and the kind of articles they accept, taken from their website (somewhat edited by the course coordinators). There are three different types of articles that may be submitted (choose one of them): **Feature article** (most common), **On the Ground** and **Solutions in History**.

Evaluating your solutions

These are questions to consider when evaluating your solution(s). You don't have to consider all of them in depth, but try to touch upon these important aspects:

1) How much potential does it have? (How fast can it be implemented? Is it accessible for both the rich and poor? What problem(s) does the solution solve? What doesn't it solve?)
2) Who controls it? (Does the implementation depend on a state, institution, a business or can it be implemented by individuals?)
3) Who gains from this solution – directly or indirectly?
4) What are the costs and who is paying for them?

Instructions

- Read the questions and instructions thoroughly.
- The paper should consist of between 4 and 5 pages (not including references)
- Font Size: 12. Spacing: 1.5. Font: Times New Roman. Margins: 25mm
- Write your name on top of every page (in the header).
- Name the file in the following way: firstname.lastname3 (example: john.galt3.doc)
- Upload the file on the *File Area* titled *Writing Assignment 3* on Studentportalen
- **Deadline: 11th December 2012, 23.59**

References

- Use a language and a format that is accessible.
- Use at least 6 references to **different** works in the course reader or course books. You may of course refer to lectures and other literature in addition to this.
- Make sure to make it very clear to the reader when you express your own ideas and opinions, and when you refer to sources and other people's opinions or research.
- Make sure to **refer properly to sources**. Use either footnotes, i.e. the Oxford system[1] or include the references in the text, i.e. the Harvard System; example: (Hornborg, 2001, p. 39).
- Support your arguments and basic facts with references.
- Try to keep your arguments short, concise and coherent.

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1   Example: Hornborg (2001), "The Thermodynamics of Imperialism: Towards an Ecological Theory of Unequal Exchange", in *The Power of the Machine*, p. 39.

- **Clarity**; the language must be clear, understandable and at a sufficiently high university standard. The questions must be entirely answered.
- **Argumentation**; if argumentation is part of the assignment, the arguments must be relevant, important and adequate.
- **Academic**; research methods and sources must be anchored in scientific and analytical sources.
- **References**; references must be properly used and done according to the instructions above throughout the paper.

About *SOLUTIONS*

Solutions is a nonprofit print and online publication devoted to showcasing bold and innovative ideas for solving the world's integrated ecological, social, and economic problems. Our mission is to provide a forum for developing and discussing seriously creative ideas to solve society's most pressing problems in an integrated way.

What makes us unique?

5) *Solutions* is a hybrid peer-reviewed journal and popular magazine (think *Nature* meets the *New Yorker*). It is on the web, on newsstands, and in libraries. It's intended to allow serious, creative dialogue and discussion at the highest level across a range of perspectives, while still being understandable and engaging to the lay public. It moves beyond the current culture of argument that casts even the most complex problems as polarizing debates.
6) It focuses on real, integrative solutions. Our rule of thumb for articles is no more than one-third of the paper should describe the problem, while at least two-thirds should be devoted to solutions

SOLUTIONS Author Guidelines

What qualifies as a solution?

We are looking for solutions that are seriously creative: they should be novel, perhaps even surprising, but also well thought-out and credible.

We prefer solutions that take a whole-systems approach. What do we mean by that? A system can be a community, a corporation, a government, or even the entire global environment. If you want to solve a problem, you need to look at these systems in their entirety and at several, nested scales, from local to global. Rather than focusing on a single link, look at the whole chain. When you start looking at the world this way, it becomes clear: **everything is connected**.

What are examples?

A solution can be local, such as the development of a sustainable eco-village or eco-city. Or it can be grand and global, the development of an atmospheric trust to cap and trade greenhouse gases. It doesn't have to solve all problems, but it should recognize what problems it can solve,

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and what others it might cause. Solutions should address the institutional and cultural changes that may be required.

We welcome concrete goals, but we won't shy away from efforts to think outside the system or transcend a paradigm.

1. Feature articles

7) **Focus on solutions.** We recommend that no more than one-third of the manuscript be devoted to describing the problem.

2. On the Ground

- **Description:** Reportage on a successful solution being implemented at a specific location (can be at almost any scale: country, city, community, etc.). Articles can be written in the first person and in a more casual manner. Submissions for the On the Ground section should capture a sense of place by providing detailed description of the location. Piece must also describe and objectively evaluate the solution(s) being implemented. Provide background and history where necessary to clearly outline both the problems and the solutions intended to address them. Remember, however, to keep the piece place-based and to tell the story with the help of vivid description.

Writing should be clear and engaging. *Solutions*' articles should be accessible to members of the educated public who are not experts in the field.

3. Solutions in History

- **Description:** Articles submitted for inclusion in the History section of *Solutions* can take several forms, including:

1. Examinations of how a past society or civilization has attempted to cope with a significant ecological problem and how its efforts to solve this problem can inform our current situation. For example, salinity problems in hydraulic societies or the impact of drought on agricultural civilizations.

2. Studies of more limited and specific ecological problems in the past and efforts to solve them. For example, the over-hunting of whales in the mid-20th Century or the Dust Bowl of the 1930s.

3. Explorations of scientific and intellectual "solutions" from the past, particularly those that were not followed at the time but which might be worth reconsidering today.

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