Actors and Strategies for Change—Towards Global Sustainabilities 2014 Final Project

Purpose:
- Have an up-to-date, interdisciplinary understanding of the issues of sustainable development;
- Give an account of, and be able to evaluate, the strategies, room to maneuver and limitations of different societal actors in striving toward a sustainable society;
- Be able to discuss individual/actors perspectives compared to structural/system perspectives on cultural change;
- Have reflected on his/her own role in the causes and solutions of issues of sustainable development.

Plan, execute, present, and evaluate a change project—complete an action-based research project (15 hours of action) that addresses a particular problem in terms of resource depletion, climate change, and/or biological extinction (social justice and equality issues are also possible as long as they are framed under the above issues). The project should be based on the sweet spot assignment, including inspiration from the different sweet spot assignments and reflection on this process. This will be a group project (3-4 people per group) and the groups will be formed at the beginning of the semester. Your report must be a critical evaluation of the problem, strategy, tactics, and operational constraints you experienced in relation to the course goals and course materials. You must submit a written report of 4,000 to 5,000 words. Each group member must also include an individual reflection on the process of about 1,000 words. You must also provide visual representation of your fieldwork using video, pictures, audio, or other graphics.

There will be mini-deadlines throughout the semester where you will turn in a written portion of your final group projects. The order of the sections that you hand in will follow the structure of the course. The goal is for you to essentially write your final project throughout the semester. You must include references to course literature; this is meant to work as a first draft of your final papers. The deadlines are as follows:

- March 7: Introduction and background, including the theoretical aspects of actors, strategies, and change; analysis of actors involved and the creation of your strategy; optional book choice motivation
- March 28: Analysis of the power relations and relevant psychological aspects
- May 11: Hand in final projects
- May 19 & 26: Final project presentations

Each section should be submitted on studentportalen. One submission per group!

Requirements:
In the report, you must justify your actions based on the course materials or scientific journals, i.e. use some literature to rationalize and critique your actions during the action-based research

project. You must reference the book you choose to read as the second course book. Use whatever other references you feel are necessary.

You need to explain how you searched for and evaluated your theoretical justifications, i.e. disclose the criterion used to evaluate the sources. For example: assuming you decided to frame your choices in a psychological frame, then you need to write down what keywords you used (e.g. I did a search in Google Scholar for "political psychology", "psychology of change", "psychology of political management", and I used only 2 articles out of 20 because they talked about (A) and (B) in the context of (C). The purpose of this is to make clear what your scientific and philosophical delimitations are.

The following aspects are crucial for a successful project and project process:

- When choosing a project focus, use the course books, online material at the course portal, the many guests that come to the course, fellow students, and life in general for inspiration. Choose a project that you are passionate about, without making it too big to complete.
- An academic and scientific approach is crucial. You need to use references and work in a way that a researcher would. **Action Research** is one example of how to combine research and change processes: "Action research…aims to contribute both to the practical concerns of people in an immediate problematic situation and to further the goals of social science simultaneously. Thus, there is a dual commitment in action research to study a system and concurrently to collaborate with members of the system in changing it in what is together regarded as a desirable direction. Accomplishing these twin goals requires the active collaboration of researcher and client, and thus it stresses the importance of co-learning as a primary aspect of the research process."[1]
- Since this is a university course, do not engage in any illegal activities, use common sense, and work responsibly and respectfully.
- Document your project work with text, audio, visual or other materials that you later can use in the presentation.
- Finally, failure is okay. It is better to try something interesting and fail, rather than something boring and succeed.

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[1] http://www.web.ca/robrien/papers/arfinal.html