

Greening San Francisco Syllabus

Geoff Ruth
Office: Room 206
home phone: 415-643-8624 (feel free to call me for help)
class web site: <http://greeningsanfrancisco.wikispaces.com/>

Name: _____

Date: _____

Course Expectations

Greening San Francisco is a 6-week class that analyzes specific environmental policies within the city of San Francisco. Ultimately, students work in small groups to create a publicly visible web site that reviews and appraises City policies around different environmental concerns, in relationship to state and federal environment policies. In producing this website, students are expected to:

- * Develop a thorough and accurate understanding of their particular issue, including its environmental significance, and potential ways to eliminate or mitigate negative impacts.
- * Use primary sources to research and analyze the effectiveness of the environmental programs of the City, California, and federal government.
- * Arrange, conduct, record, and edit and at least one in-person interview with an expert in the particular sustainability domain they are studying.
- * Work productively and collaboratively with classmates in writing and building their section of the class web site.
- * Help build a section of a website that is polished, accurate, thorough, and analytically insightful.

This class is unlike most other science classes, in that it's entirely a project-based class, in which you'll work with one or two other students to add content to a publicly-viewable website. The focus of this website is on sustainable practices and policies within the city of San Francisco. Last year (spring 2009), the class analyzed six environmental issues, including what San Francisco government is doing to address these issues and what else the city could be doing around the issues. Part of each group's website section included an interview with a local expert on the environmental issue they studied.

This year, we'll add on to the website that students last year began to create. After first becoming familiar with their work, you'll investigate state and federal actions to address the issue that you've chosen to focus on. In other words, you'll compare San Francisco's plans and actions to similar plans and programs on a state and federal level.

You'll add website sections that focus on the following topics within your focus area:

- What is the state of California doing to address the issue?
- What is the federal government doing to address the issue? How have these efforts changed from the Bush to Obama administration?
- What overlap or redundancy is there between the programs and actions of these three levels of government around the issue?
- What do experts within the government have to say about the City's program in relationship to state and federal programs? To answer this, you'll need to arrange, research, and record at least one in-person interview with someone in the state or federal government. I'll help you in identifying people to contact.
- Based on your analysis of the actions and policies of these three layers of government, which set(s) of government policies do you think is most effective in addressing the issue? Is it productive to have multiple levels of government working simultaneously on the same issue?

This website will be publically available, and indeed, I will try to publicize it amongst the community of local educators, environmental activists, and other concerned youth. Just as you are doing, students in "Greening San Francisco" in future years will expand and add on to the work that you start this year.

Class materials

Below are the items you will need for Greening SF:

- your laptop (charged or with power adapter)
- headphones
- a cell phone would be great: at times, you'll want to talk with local government officials to set up interviews or find out specific details; it will be easier to talk on a cell phone than the in-class phone

Assessment

To make this project a bit more manageable, I will have sections of your website due in increments throughout the next six weeks. I'll assess you on your progress in getting these done, as well as the quality of your final web site.

I know that some students are stressed out in working with groups. To help address this and keep everyone accountable, I'll be looking at the tracked history of changes on your website, as well as discussion on the website amongst yourselves about how to approach/edit different website sections.