A major purpose of this course is to develop skills of critical thought and writing. Critical thought means that readings are to be studied closely to evaluate the assumptions and the coherence of the arguments with great care.

The course is divided into three parts:

(i) 2 weeks – five page paper summarizing the most critical arguments in 10 of the first 18 chapters of Garrett Hardin’s *Living Within Limits* due Monday, Jan 29th (details will be given in class)

(ii) 5 weeks – electronic discussions on various readings

(iii) 8 weeks – term papers on Latin American – final draft is due at the scheduled time of the final exam.

**Part Two (5 weeks):**

Electronic mail, a discussion list, and the internet will be used during the course. Electronic networking facilitates the logistics of the second part of the course in which students will be expected to write critical comments on one another’s writings. There are no computer prerequisites for the course. It is unnecessary to have a home computer to participate effectively in the course, especially since it is often difficult to log into the CU network in the evenings. Instructions on use of the network and email will be given 1/29.

The following readings will be critiqued over the net:

1/29-2/2: Hardin “Tragedy of the Commons” “Carrying Capacity”
2/5-2/16: Quinn Ishamal, McGowen vs Gintis on “Anthropocentricism”
2/19-2/23: “Contingent Valuation and IPCC report”
2/26-3/1: “Measuring Progress” Herman Daly and others

Short written critiques of the readings are due before 6pm each Tuesday, posted on the network. In response to these posts the instructor and/or students will write comments by 6pm Wednesdays. A third round of replies is due by 6pm Thursdays. Critiques of the readings due on Tuesdays will probably be 3 to 5 paragraphs. Comments and replies on Wednesdays and Thursdays need only be one or two paragraphs. Each week’s work will be graded and returned the following Monday.

Please distinguish the frequency of writing – 3 times per week during the second part of the course – from the volume of writing. The emphasis is on quality, not quantity, and each subsequent bit of writing, no matter how short, becomes a refinement of the previous writing. Greater clarity is acquired as one comes back to one’s writing/thinking and makes revisions. Guidelines will be given on each assignment to help students focus on key issues. During the course students are expected to develop greater skill at determining the critical issues of the readings.

**Part Three – Sustainability in Practice**

There is extensive debate about whether institutions like the World Bank and the IMF (International Monetary Fund) foster or undermine sustainable development. To give cohesion to the course, students will focus their term papers on one or more countries in Latin America.

Each student is expected to turn in two drafts of their papers plus a final draft at the scheduled time of the final exam. Part of the grade in the second half of the course will be based on students’ comments on other students’ papers. Lectures will be given as background information on the institutions and the relationship between their loans and countries/ balance of payments and external indebtedness. At least half the class time during Part Three of the course will be devoted to a discussion of student papers. Some material on the World Bank and IMF will be found on reserve and students are expected to do research for further materials.