

## **VAMPY 2013: Sustainability**

David Baxter and Jennifer Sheffield, Instructors

Today's generation has the power to create positive change for our planet. Sustainability is much more complex than simply adding the buzzword "green" in front of our lifestyle choices. As the population of our planet tops seven billion people, we must consider the social, economic, and environmental implications of our everyday decisions and the effects they have at personal, local, and global levels. Explore how the interplay between patterns of human consumption, natural resource management, economic systems, and cultural norms are shaping our world. Students will increase their awareness of sustainability issues through readings, discussions, documentaries, site visits, student presentations and design/build projects.

### **Readings:**

- Something's Rising: Appalachians Fighting Mountaintop Removal, Silas House and Jason Howard
- The Conundrum, David Owen
- Food Fight: The Citizen's Guide to the Next Food and Farm Bill, Daniel Imhoff
- Folks, This Ain't Normal: A Farmer's Advice for Happier Hens, Healthier People, and a Better World, Joel Salatin
- From Cradle to Grave: Remaking the Way We Make Things, Michael Braungart and William McDonough
- Selected readings from Wendell Berry

### **Documentaries:**

- *Food, Inc.*
- *The Last Mountain*
- *Gasland*
- *Flow: For Love of Water*

### **Site Visits:**

- WKU Office of Sustainability Campus Tour
- "Go Local" Sustainable Farm and Farmers' Market Tour
- "The Story of Kentucky Coal" Tour
- Southern Recycling
- Water Treatment and Sewage Treatment Plants
- Backyard/Urban Foraging Expedition

### **Research/Debate Topics (based on student interest):**

- Environmental and economic implications of fossil fuel extraction
- Viability of alternative fuel and energy sources
- Environmental and economic implications of corporate food production
- Alternative gardening techniques
- Global trends in recycling and solid waste management
- Economic sustainability: personal, institutional, and national ramifications

### **Design/Build Projects (based on student interest):**

- Net Zero architecture
- Aquaponic/Hydroponic gardening systems
- Passive solar heating system
- Water catchment system