How to Live?  
Art, Ethics, and the Everyday

main course instructor: Michael Peterson

10 credits

MAIN COURSE

Art 448
How to Live? Art, Ethics, and Politics

LINKED COURSE

Community & Environmental Sociology 140
Introduction to Community and Environmental Sociology

LINKED COURSE

Geography 139
Living in the Global Environment: An Introduction to People-Environment Geography

How does daily life inform our creativity? How can creative practice sustain and transform how we live? How can the arts tie our individual well-being to the beauty and happiness of others? This FIG places “the art/life question” at the center of a broader inquiry into “how to live.”

Art 448: “How to Live? Art, Ethics, and Politics” will draw on content from the geography and sociology classes to explore the daily activities of living; our choices as citizens, friends, consumers, and loved ones; and the value in considering ethics and aesthetics as social rather than individual challenges. We’ll question “college life” both as a case study and as a specific pressing set of “problems” that students solve. We’ll explore the relation of individuals to social justice. And we’ll pursue student-initiated themes such as how an aesthetics of the everyday can inform personal health, public policy, business practices, or political action.

Students from all backgrounds and interests are welcome. Arts experience is welcome but not required, because the course starts from the idea that daily aesthetics are a challenge and opportunity for all people. We will use writing and other creative practices to explore mindful choices in our daily lives (around living spaces, food, consumption, socializing, and civic participation). Each student will develop and pursue daily art/life practice, and together students will experiment with place-making, cooking, researching, cultural production, and social connection.

Community and Environmental Sociology 140: “Introduction to Community and Environmental Sociology” — Sociological examination of the linkages between the social and biophysical dimensions of the environment. Key topics include community organizing, local food systems, energy transitions, environmental justice, resource dependence, and sustainable development.

Geography 139: “Living in the Global Environment: An Introduction to People-Environment Geography” — Provides an exploration of the global and local nature of environmental problems facing us, including issues of climate change, food, energy, economic globalization, deforestation and land use change, biodiversity loss, resource scarcity and access, environmental justice, and population. Through group and individual work, this course considers how we should analyze and act on environmental problems as we confront the apparently daunting scale of such issues. The theme of this course is that what appear to be single global environmental problems are actually composed of many smaller context-specific and place-dependent problems or conflicts. Through an interdisciplinary and geographic perspective, these can be understood and addressed at the scale of our lived lives.

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Enrolled in a FIG and you change your mind?

FIG courses are designed to be taken together. When you enroll in a FIG, you are signed up for these courses as a whole group, not as separate courses.

If you change your mind, dropping one FIG course means ending your enrollment in all of the courses in the FIG.

So, here's what you should know if you want to drop the FIG:

• You can drop all the courses on your own through your Student Center at my.wisc.edu. Any non-FIG course will not be affected.
• After classes begin (Wednesday, September 6, 2017), if you need to drop a single course within the FIG, please contact Kari Fernholz (see below) to review your situation. If necessary, she will provide the required authorization to drop the course.
• Wednesday, September 13, 2017 is the last day to drop courses without it appearing on your college transcript.
• Friday, September 15, 2017 is the last day to add a course without first getting departmental approval.