

**Holistic Social Change: The Bioneers Conference**  
**Psychology 490**  
**Fall 2005**

**Friday 9-11:40**  
**+ Oct 14, 15, 16**  
**Stevenson 3050**

**Instructor:** Mary Gomes  
**Office:** Stevenson 3081

**Office hours:**  
Wednesday 2-4  
Friday 4:45 - 5:15

This course is organized around attending the Bioneers Conference, which will be held October 14, 15 and 16 at the Marin Center in San Rafael, CA. The Bioneers Conference features nationally renowned, cutting edge thinkers in community and environmental restoration. According to their mission statement, Bioneers “seeks to unite nature, culture and spirit in an Earth-honoring vision, and create economic models founded in social justice.”

Goals for the class:

- 1) To make available the knowledge and perspectives presented at the conference;
- 2) To present a theoretical framework, that of Jonathan Rowe and David Bollier’s work on the commons, that ties together the diverse topics covered at the conference;
- 3) To introduce current thinking on models of social change;
- 4) To encourage critical and reflective thinking about the conference presentations;
- 5) To provide guidance and experience in designing and carrying out conference presentations in a mini-conference setting.

You will attend all three days of the Bioneers Conference. The first half of each day is devoted to plenaries, in which all conference attendees come together to hear a series of five speakers. In the second half of the day, there are breakout sessions in which small groups of speakers go more deeply into particular topics. You will attend two breakout sessions per day of your choosing. In addition, there will be six seminar meetings throughout the semester – three preceding the conference, and three following it.

Course reader available from College Center Copy Shop (792-0995, 1435 E. Cotati Ave).

**Meeting 1, August 26 – orientation, logistics, introduction**

**Meeting 2, September 9 – presentation of “the commons” as theoretical framework for the conference**

Readings:

Yes! Issue 18, The Hidden Commons, Jonathan Rowe [www.futurenet.org/18commons/rowe.htm](http://www.futurenet.org/18commons/rowe.htm)

Reader: David Bollier, *Silent Theft: The Private Plunder of our Common Wealth*, ch 3.

Reader: Joel Bakan, *The Corporation*, chs 2 and 5.

### Meeting 3, October 7 – presentation of models of social change

#### Readings:

Patrick Reinsborough, “De-Colonizing the Revolutionary Imagination”

[www.journalofaestheticsandprotest.org/1/de-colonizing/](http://www.journalofaestheticsandprotest.org/1/de-colonizing/)

(or do a google search on the author’s name or the title – this article is widely reprinted on the internet)

Bioneers Conference, October 14-16

#### Readings:

Van Jones, “Our Moment of Truth,” [www.alternet.org/story/20425](http://www.alternet.org/story/20425)

Nancy Myers, “The Rise of the Precautionary Principle: A Social Movement Gathers Strength,” <http://multinationalmonitor.org/mm2004/09012004/september04corp1.html>

Janine Benyus, “Biomimicry Explained: A Conversation with Janine Benyus,” [www.biomimicry.net/faq\\_text.html](http://www.biomimicry.net/faq_text.html)

Jeanette Armstrong, “Let Us Begin with Courage” [www.ecoliteracy.org/publications/](http://www.ecoliteracy.org/publications/)

Meeting 4. October 21 – conference debriefing

#### Readings:

Read something of your own choosing by a conference presenter that you liked

Meeting 5, November 4 – student presentations

Meeting 6, November 11 – student presentations

### Assignments:

- 1) Conference summary: Outline of sessions attended, summary of major learnings and questions raised. 5-7 pages, due October 21 (meeting 4).
- 2) Proposal for final paper: 1 page, due October 28 (between meetings 4 and 5.)
- 3) Final paper and presentation: Choose a topic of interest from one of the breakout sessions and research it further, reading books or articles by the speakers or related work on the same topic. Write an 8-10 page paper on the topic (following guidelines and questions to be handed out), and present the ideas at a mini-conference held in two sessions in which the class will be open to the Sonoma State community (faculty, staff, and students). Paper due November 11 (meeting 6), presentations at meetings 5 and 6.

## **Guidelines for final paper**

### Part 1 – Summary

What were the main ideas conveyed in this session?

### Part 2 - Critique

Put yourself in the position of the speakers (or one speaker you wish to focus on). What do you think the speaker(s) wished to convey in their presentation? How successful were they? Were there parts that confused you, or that you didn't understand? How could the presentation have been more effective? What did you learn from observing the speaker(s) about what you would or wouldn't do to be an effective conference presenter?

### Part 3 – Further Learning

What were you curious to learn more about? Find at least three articles or book chapters by the presenter(s) or by other writers on the same topic that address your questions. Discuss these.

### Part 4 – Integration

How do the ideas from the presentation and your further reading relate to ideas discussed in class about the commons or models of social change?