1. INTRODUCTION

Efforts to increase environmental utility or decrease environmental hazard are called environmental management (see Geog 302 and 404). Integrating environmental management into a larger framework of social and economic priorities is the focus of the “sustainable development” discourse. It is increasingly evident that the current human impact is unsustainable, and new strategies must be found for managing or relationship with our planet, our ecosystem, our resource base, our economy, our remarkable history and pre-history, and our community (in the largest sense). This reality presents challenges to all citizens, but there is a particular obligation for university communities to explore the challenges. This course is intended to explore the challenges by examining transition in a Small Island Developing State: Barbados.

The central attribute of the course is geographic synthesis. In your previous studies you will have learned about various facets of geographic analysis. Some of these courses may have been in the field, but many will have taken place in the confined space of the university, making it difficult to test, apply, or truly explore the concepts that are taught. In this course we draw on the various tools and perspectives (and add some new ones), and we try to apply them to understanding the interlinked forces that shape both physical landscapes and human communities.

**Two distinct but interdependent problem sets:** Since the 1987 Brundtland Commission report, "sustainable development" has become a fashionable phrase for describing the challenge of reconciling human needs with planetary limitations. The net impact of humans on the carrying capacity of the planet, or of any region, is a function of both numbers of people and impact *per capita*. There are two categorically distinct components to the challenge of sustainability. One is exemplified in the so-called "developing world" where population pressures and material hardship often define the major impacts. The other relates to the industrial world where impacts arise from consumption rates and from the political strategies required to maintain them. The constructs of “environment” in these two settings are distinct, as are the cultural options for management. The “Common Future” of the Brundtland Report refers to the interlinking of strategies. Barbados, a Small Island Developing State, provides an ideal microcosm within which to explore both the challenges of integrated sustainable development planning and the operational links and mutual obligations that connect the “global north” with developing countries. Geography, with its focus on synthesis, offers a valuable perspective for this exploration.

2. COURSE OBJECTIVES

Barbados offers a unique study environment. It is small enough that in the space of ten days we can get a coherent overview of the geological and geomorphic background, the biogeographic context, the impact of history, and the current operation of the forces of “development” and social change. We will strive to see how these processes interact and how they become visible in the contemporary landscape. We will be particularly concerned about issues of environmental change, environmental protection, globalization and sustainable development – the balance of human wellbeing and the protection of social and environmental resources that support wellbeing.

The objective of the course is to develop skills of geographic synthesis as a means to understanding conditions for and barriers to sustainable development planning. We will examine the “physical evidence” on the island, discuss issues and priorities with local experts, and conduct independent targeted research.

3. COURSE ACTIVITIES
The field trip can be divided into three sections. The first is the introductory overview (two days). The second is a series of thematic case studies, field exercises and site visits (three days). The last is the period of independent research (three days). These activities are interdependent, and the boundaries between them may shift slightly, depending on circumstances. You will be marked for exercises associated with each section as follows.

A 1000 word “situation analysis” of Barbados: 20
Field exercises: 40
Participation in the field: 10
Research paper: 30 (due TBA)

4. SAFETY AND DECORUM

Field activities are always associated with some hazard. We are obliged to minimize these. For that reason, and also to ensure smooth coordination of course activities, it is essential that we communicate about schedules and activities. For safety, students should never be alone outside of the field centre. When any students are away from the group – always two or more -- someone within the group should always be told where students will be and when they will return. It is, of course, vital that when we are working in communities we are fully respectful of residents and other visitors. We are bound to certain norms when conducting research projects. For more details, See: http://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/. Student research must conform to Research Ethics Board norms. This is important!!

5. STUDENT INTERGRITY

1. "McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information). (approved by Senate on 29 January 2003)"

2. "In accord with McGill University’s Charter of Students’ Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.” (approved by Senate on 21 January 2009 - see also the section in this document on Assignments and evaluation.)

3. For information on university and department policies for student assessment, please go to http://www.mcgill.ca/geography/studentassessment.

4. Instructor generated course materials (e.g., handouts, notes, summaries, exam questions, etc.) are protected by law and may not be copied or distributed in any form or in any medium without explicit permission of the instructor. Note that infringements of copyright can be subject to follow up by the University under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures.

5. "As the instructor of this course I endeavor to provide an inclusive learning environment. However, if you experience barriers to learning in this course, do not hesitate to discuss them with me and the Office for Students with Disabilities, 514-398-6009.”

6. Guidelines for the use of mobile computing and communications (MC2) devices in classes at McGill have been approved by the APC.

7. "End-of-course evaluations are one of the ways that McGill works towards maintaining and improving the quality of courses and the student’s learning experience. You will be notified by e-mail when the evaluations are available on Mercury, the online course evaluation system. Please note that a minimum number of responses must be received for results to be available to students."

8. "McGill has policies on sustainability, paper use and other initiatives to promote a culture of sustainability at McGill." (See the Office of Sustainability.)

9. In keeping with McGill’s preparedness planning strategies with respect to potential pandemic or other concerns: “In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University’s control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change."

10. "Additional policies governing academic issues which affect students can be found in the McGill Charter of Students' Rights"