

**COURSE TITLE: MAKING THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE**

**WA CLOCK HRS: 60**

**NO. OF CREDITS: 6 QUARTER CREDITS**  
[semester equivalent = 4.00 credits]

**OREGON PDUs: 60**

**PENNSYLVANIA ACT 48: 60**

**INSTRUCTOR: Charity Staudenraus**  
charity.heritage@gmail.com

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Climate change, school shootings, political gridlock, a fragile global economy, persistent racism, unending conflicts in the middle east! We're at a critical, transitional time in our communities, our country and the world. Each of us needs to decide what our commitment is to making the world a better place. This is not only a moral calling, but it's good teaching to involve ourselves and our students in being aware, caring and making a difference. The recent state-wide teacher walk-outs and the national student mobilizations in response to the tragedies in Parkland, Florida speak of a renewed faith in the power of taking a stand for what we believe is good and just.

Participants in this course for teachers grades 5-12 will explore a variety of critical issues (help for animals, saving the environment, dealing with racism) using our text (It's Your World: If You Don't Like It Change It), and a variety of websites including Facing the Future, Awakening the Dreamer, Changing the Dream, Facing History and Ourselves and many more. Participants will be exposed to a large variety of resources to develop projects of choice that get their students into action for what has heart and meaning.

Text is about \$10 in Kindle or paperback on Amazon. This course has been developed by Mike Seymour, Heritage Institute President, and will be facilitated by Charity Staudenraus.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES:** Upon completion of this course, participants will have:

- Learned that the major problems in our world today (environmental, social justice, spiritual health and wellness) are all inter-related.
- Explored areas of action such as animal welfare, saving the environment, fighting racism
- Connected to their deeper feelings about the critical nature of our times.
- Prepared lesson plans, activities and resources that will help get their students into action in making the world a better place.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

Completion of all specified assignments is required for issuance of hours or credit. The Heritage Institute does not award partial credit.

The use of artificial intelligence is not permitted. Assignment responses found to be generated by AI will not be accepted.

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**HOURS EARNED:**

Completing the basic assignments (Section A. Information Acquisition) for this course automatically earns participants their choice of CEUs (Continuing Education Units), Washington State Clock Hours, Oregon PDUs, or Pennsylvania ACT 48 Hours. The Heritage Institute offers CEUs and is an approved provider of Washington State Clock Hours, Oregon PDUs, and Pennsylvania ACT 48 Hours.

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**UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT INFORMATION**

**REQUIREMENTS FOR UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT**

Continuing Education Quarter credits are awarded by Antioch University Seattle (AUS). AUS requires 75% or better for credit at the 400 level and 85% or better to issue credit at the 500 level. These criteria refer both to the amount and quality of work submitted.

1. Completion of Information Acquisition assignments 30%
  2. Completion of Learning Application assignments 40%
  3. Completion of Integration Paper assignment 30%
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### **CREDIT/NO CREDIT (No Letter Grades or Numeric Equivalents on Transcripts)**

Antioch University Seattle (AUS) Continuing Education Quarter credit is offered on a Credit/No Credit basis; neither letter grades nor numeric equivalents are on a transcript. 400 level credit is equal to a "C" or better, 500 level credit is equal to a "B" or better. This information is on the back of the transcript.

AUS Continuing Education quarter credits may or may not be accepted into degree programs. Prior to registering, determine with your district personnel, department head, or state education office the acceptability of these credits for your purpose.

### **ADDITIONAL COURSE INFORMATION**

#### **REQUIRED TEXT**

- ***It's Your World--If You Don't Like It, Change It: Activism for Teenagers***  
ISBN# 9780689874482  
by Halpin, Mikki  
Simon Pulse

[Buy from Amazon](#)

#### **MATERIALS FEE**

None.

### **ASSIGNMENTS REQUIRED FOR HOURS OR UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT**

#### **A. INFORMATION ACQUISITION**

Assignments done in a course forum will show responses from all educators who have or are taking the course independently. Feel free to read and respond to others' comments.

Group participants can only view and respond to their group members in the Forum.

#### **Assignment #1: COURSE FORM: Introduction: How You are Making a Difference**

Read the article below (Activism is Good Teaching) which cites the experience of several New Mexico, elementary teachers who contested the way student evaluations were being done in the district. The article by university educators who partnered with the school asks us to consider that standing for caring and justice is part of our responsibility as professional educators. Said differently, if we want to teach our students to be engaged in making the world a better place, we need to be engaged ourselves. In short, we must walk our talk. Whether or not we speak truth to power, which can be a fearful thing, we can't expect to have much conviction with kids unless we are engaged.

Activism is Good Teaching

<https://www.rethinkingschools.org/articles/activism-is-good-teaching>

In 500-750 words:

- Introduce yourself by indicating your grade level, school.
- Explain what parts of the article about Michelle and Amanda you most resonated with and why.
- If you were in their place, how might you have responded?
- Briefly describe several classroom or school projects you implemented with students to cultivate their sense of citizenship and engagement in making the world a better place. Describe any noteworthy responses from one or more students who were involved in the activity or project.

#### **Assignment #2: COURSE FORUM: What do You Care About?**

The first step is to find out what you and your students care about. When I'm shocked, angry or sad about something that has happened to me, friends, community or in the world, that's a good indicator for getting into action. This assignment will introduce you to broad

areas of concern and show steps for student engagement.

1. Review the steps to take to help students become engaged by reading the first section titled How to Become a Student Activist. <https://www.accreditedschoolsonline.org/resources/student-activism-on-campus/>
2. Access the [Facing the Future](#) site hosted by Western Washington University. Review the curriculum sections on "Connecting With Nature", "Interconnectedness", and "Equity and Justice", in addition, choose at least one additional "Big Idea" to Review.
3. In 300-500 words describe the five things you personally are most concerned about and discuss how you would go about supporting your students' passions.

### **Assignment #3: IT'S YOUR WORLD: If You Don't Like It, Change It.**

Written with teens in mind, our text *It's Your World: If You Don't Like It, Change It*, offers in content and format an effective source for teachers. Whole sections are devoted to animal rights, racism, saving the environment, ending war, fighting the spread of HIV/AIDS, stopping school violence and bullying, protecting civil rights and civil liberty and promoting tolerance.

1. Read the introduction and the chapter on Helping Animals
2. In 500+ words, write about:
  - a. What are you doing or have done in the category of what the author calls At-Home activism, where you have adopted behaviors (ie using a cloth shopping bag) or practices that benefit others or the planet.
  - b. If you have owned pets, horses or farm animals, describe how you were responsible in your care for these creatures in line with what the author writes about.
  - c. What are your school/district policies about animal dissection in science classes (frogs, fetal pigs), and what are your thoughts about that?
  - d. Review all the actions and organizations in sections titled the Community Activist, The 5-Minute Activist and Resources and discuss what if any options might be useful to you professionally or personally.

### **Assignment #4: COURSE FORUM: Fighting Racism**

Racial, ethnic and religious bias has been a socially corrosive fact of life since history began. But as we move into a time realizing our environmental, economic and spiritual connectedness of some 7.7 billion people, many think that racism in all its forms is unsustainable at many levels and must become a relic of our "fight-or-flight" past, instinctual nature.

1. Facing History and Ourselves is an excellent resource for educators regarding how to deal with racism and bias. ( <https://www.facinghistory.org/>). Read about the organization, click on the Topics tab and select one or more of the nine areas of interest to you. In each broad area of interest some of the resources (titles listed under the pictures) listed are DVD's, books, lessons, and below each is an article. Scroll through as many resources you need to find two that interest you. Click both on the picture and the article beneath it.
2. Read the Fighting Racism chapter in our text.
3. On the Teaching Tolerance website, read about "hidden bias" which is being studied by psychologists at several universities. <https://www.tolerance.org/professional-development/test-yourself-for-hidden-bias>
  - a. Review the 'Classroom Resources' and 'Build a Learning Plan' sections of the tolerance.org site.
4. The Rethinking Schools organization and website is an excellent teacher resource for social justice teaching. Check out their blog (<https://rethinkingschoolsblog.com/>) and you'll find many articles as you continue to scroll down. Pick one article and review.
5. Search for and read definitions or articles on "institutional racism."

Then, in 500+ words:

1. List and briefly describe any resources (curriculum, books, websites) you discovered that might be useful to you from the Facing History and Ourselves, Rethinking Schools and the Fighting Racism chapter in our text.
2. Briefly summarize the article you read on Rethinking Schools.
3. Describe briefly any incident you have witnessed in school where bias ( race, ethnicity, religious, sexuality, gender) was at play (leave out real names). What did you or other school personnel do?
4. Describe in what way our schools and methods of teaching are institutionally racist.

### **Assignment #5: COURSE FORUM: Saving the Environment**

We live in a watershed moment in human history when virtually all natural habitats and ecosystems are threatened by population explosion, increasing rates of consumption and their most critical threat—climate change. Worldwide concerns about system collapse have at the same time catalyzed a new global movement for change arising from an evolution of consciousness recognizing we are all

interconnected and that the Earth community is one sacred whole.

1. Read the chapter in our text titled Saving the Environment.
2. Explore 2-3 resources listed in the bibliography that relate to the environment.
3. Do a search for websites, organizations and teaching materials that relate to a particular area of interest you may have with regard to saving the environment.
  - o [Great video on recycling plastic bags.](#)
  - o [The difference that one person can make.](#)

In 300-500, describe a) your main specific environmental concerns and reasons for feeling that way b) Include a list of resources you would find helpful in your teaching.

#### **Assignment #6: Other Sections in our Text**

Read one additional section in our text, and in 250+ words explain why you're interested in this area and what resources you might use. Our text was written in 2004 and as we well know websites can change instantly. If you have a specific area that is of interest to you and your students please take the time to find up to date resources. This assignment is done in the course forum so you can share resources with other teachers.

#### **Assignment #7: COURSE FORUM: Awakening the Dreamer, Changing the Dream**

Awakening the Dreamer, Changing the Dream is a presentation in live workshops and online course that has been highly effective toward creating "an environmentally sustainable, socially just and spiritually fulfilling human presence on planet earth, as the guiding principle of our time." Developed by the Pachamama Alliance in San Francisco, this experience has been given now to millions of people globally through over 5000+ trainers and the online course. In this assignment you will view and participate in the first three sections of this 2+ hour course.

1. Go to the Awakening the Dreamer site (<https://www.pachamama.org/engage/awakening-the-dreamer>) and read the text about the program as you scroll down to the bottom of the page and register for the online course, which is free. For this assignment you will view after the introduction the first three major sections: Where Are We, How Did We Get Here and The New Story.
2. After the section on Social Justice and spiritual fulfillment in the Where are We section, record your feelings and thoughts (2+ paragraphs) so far in a separate document. Do not write in the online space in this course. Complete in your newly created, separate document the exercise in the How Did We Get Here section on unexamined assumptions. In the New Story section complete the assignment on feelings of disconnection and connection.

Either copy and paste your responses in the open field, upload your doc, or share your Google Doc. You will complete the final two sections of this online course in the next two assignments.

#### **Assignment #8: COURSE FORUM: Awakening the Dreamer, What is Possible Now**

1. Return to the Awakening the Dreamer site and complete the section What Is Possible Now. (<https://www.pachamama.org/engage/awakening-the-dreamer>).
2. In a word document or Google Doc write about what inspires you and gives you hope. (Do not write in the course online space)
3. View the next video Everything is Connected. Describe in what context you might use this.
4. Do the future visioning exercise and record your feelings and thoughts (2+ paragraphs) on this same document.
5. Either copy/paste your writing in the assignment space, upload your doc, or share your Google Doc.

#### **Assignment #9: COURSE FORUM: Where do We Go from Here**

1. View section #4 of the Awakening the Dreamer course Where do we go from here?
2. In 250+ words write about what stand you are taking (or willing to take) in your personal and professional life to help realize an environmentally sustainable, socially just and spiritually fulfilling human presence on planet Earth. And then in general describe some of the next steps you would take in alignment with that stand.

#### **Assignment #10: COURSE FORUM: Putting it All Together: Everything is Connected**

Heritage Institute President Mike Seymour developed a video based on the work of many teachers the Institute has worked with over the years and supported on some cases with mini-grants for their projects. This video expresses the philosophy of our organization as spoken through the words of teachers and students who have been influenced by our work.

1. View the video below Everything is Connected.
2. In 250+ words, describe what part of the video spoke most to you. In what way are you already living and practicing in this model?

<https://player.vimeo.com/video/269772352?portrait=0>

## **ADDITIONAL ASSIGNMENTS REQUIRED FOR UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT**

### **B. LEARNING APPLICATION**

In this section, you will apply your learning to your professional situation. This course assumes that most participants are classroom teachers who have access to students. If you do not have a classroom available to you, please contact the instructor for course modifications. Assignments done in a course forum will show responses from all educators who have or are taking the course independently. Feel free to read and respond to others' comments. Group participants can only view and respond to their group members in the Forum.

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#### **Assignment #11: Your Teaching Resources**

This is where you plan in one document all the resources you think you'll need for any projects/lessons you bring to students, including web sites, videos, documentary and feature length movies, online or in-print articles, books, exercises and activities.

1. Review again the resources listed at the end of the chapters in our text. Note that some resources may have moved.
2. Review again the websites you reviewed in our prior assignments
3. Go through the resources listed in the bibliography (link above).

Copy/paste in the space below, upload your document or share your Google Doc.

#### **Assignment #12: Your Plan of Action**

##### **Assignment #12-A:**

- Adapt or create a lesson or project reflecting on what you've learned in this course.
- Implement your lesson/project with students in your classroom.
- Write a 250-500 word commentary on what worked well and what could be improved.
- Include any student feedback or noteworthy student products.
- Submit your lesson to your instructor via the [lesson](#) tab below and submit your written reflection in the space below (or upload doc)
- Share what you've learned with other teachers taking our courses by checking the lesson library box when you submit your lesson.
- Use The Heritage Institute [lesson template](#) or one from your district.

**OR**

##### **Assignment #12-B:**

Use this option if you do not have a classroom available.

- Adapt/create a lesson to reflect what you've learned in this course. (Do not implement it.)
- Write a 500+ word article concerning any noteworthy success you've had as a teacher with one or more students.
- Please refer to the guidelines for our [blog What Works: Teaching at its Best](#) prior to writing your article.
- When you submit your article to your instructor, please also email a copy to [Renee@hol.edu](mailto:Renee@hol.edu) THI blog curator and media specialist.
- Indicate whether or not you are OK with having your article considered for publishing on our website.
- Submit your article to your instructor via Response field and the modified lesson via Submit Lesson.
- As you submit your lesson, consider sharing it with other teachers taking our courses by checking the lesson library box.

#### **Assignment #13: (500 Level ONLY)**

Choose TWO of the following assignment options:

1. Make a case for our environmental, social justice problems and sense of disconnection as fundamentally a spiritual problem, and, if so, please explain in 250+ words.

**AND/OR**

2. Consider an important issue in your school district which impacts both teachers and students and which you feel needs to be addressed. Write a sample letter to your school board which explains the issue and your suggestions.

**AND/OR**

3. Describe in diagrams, mind-maps as well as 300-500 words of writing in what way environmental decline, social inequalities, human health and spiritual wellness are all interrelated.

**AND/OR**

4. Another assignment of your own choice with your instructor's prior approval.

### **C. INTEGRATION PAPER**

Assignment #14: (Required for 400 and 500 Level)

#### **SELF REFLECTION & INTEGRATION PAPER**

**(Please do not write this paper until you've completed all of your other assignments)**

Write a 400-500 word Integration Paper answering these 5 questions:

1. What did you learn vs. what you expected to learn from this course?
  2. What aspects of the course were most helpful and why?
  3. What further knowledge and skills in this general area do you feel you need?
  4. How, when and where will you use what you have learned?
  5. How and with what other school or community members might you share what you learned?
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#### **INSTRUCTOR COMMENTS ON YOUR WORK:**

Instructors will comment on each assignment. If you do not hear from the instructor within a few days of posting your assignment, please get in touch with them immediately.

#### **QUALIFICATIONS FOR TEACHING THIS COURSE:**

**CHARITY STAUDENRAUS, M.A.T.**, received her BA from Willamette University, her MAT from Willamette University. Charity has experience teaching math, science, social studies, business, and language courses at the middle and high school level. She is currently serving on the 2014-2017 Oregon Science Content and Assessment Panel as well as the Oregon Instructional Materials Criteria Development Committee. In addition Charity is consulting on a Rutgers University and WPI project funded through multiple Department of Education and National Science Foundation Grants.

#### **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

#### **MAKING THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE**

##### **General Web Sites for Environmental and Justice Issues Issues:**

###### **Facing the Future:**

<http://www.facingthefuture.org/>

This site has lots of information about global issues, mostly now on population, as other dimensions are not yet available. Check out their site on Creative Action with several projects around the world you and your class can get involved with. More projects are presented under the Sticky Teaching area (accessed from the home page).

###### **EcoNet/PeaceNet/WomensNet/AntiRacismNet**

<http://www.igc.org/igc/gateway/>

This is a sort of on-line, alternative news and opinion provider on many big issues, including the environment, women's issues of marginalization or abuse, racism and more. As there are many articles on these pages, it's necessary to filter through and decide which parts of the site could be helpful. Coverage is usually current.

## **Rethinking Schools**

<http://www.rethinkingschools.org/>

This is one of the all-time great education organizations devoted to issues of social justice, with many great articles on-line in back issues. I am particularly impressed with Bill Bigelow's list of videos which cover such subjects.

## **Global Oneness Project**

[\(https://www.globalonenessproject.org/\)](https://www.globalonenessproject.org/)

is an excellent source of beautifully done video stories that relate to many of the issues in this course.

## **Direct Action Web Sites**

### **The Hunger site:**

<http://www.thehungersite.com/cgi-bin/WebObjects/CTDSites>

Clicking daily on the various pages of this site gets sponsors to donate to these causes.

### **International Campaign for Tibet:**

<http://www.savetibet.org/>

Current news, major issues and campaigns and suggestions on who to write to.

### **EarthAction:**

<http://www.earthaction.org/index.html>

Another great list of environmental, human rights, and health issues and campaigns with informative write-ups and actions to take.

### **BioGems:**

<http://www.SaveBioGems.org/>

Exclusively oriented to bio-regions which are in danger and need are help to protect. The site gives good coverage of the areas and issues and ways to write e-mails to key decision-makers.

### **Congress.Org-America Reacts:**

<http://www.congress.org/>

This is another terrific site because you can type in your ZIP code and get connected to your state officials in federal office and also (on the left menu bar) scan a host of national and regional issues, the legislation that may be pending and who to write to with your opinions.

## **Youth Organizations**

**TakingITGlobal.org is an online community that connects youth to find inspiration, access information, get involved, and take action in their local and global communities. It's the world's most popular online community for young people interested in making a difference, with hundreds of thousands of unique visitors each month.**<http://www.takingitglobal.org/>

### **TheRealNews network**

<http://therealnews.com/t/>

The Real News Network is a television news and documentary network focused on providing independent and uncompromising journalism.

### **Link TV**

<http://www.linktv.org>

Link TV broadcasts programs that engage, educate and activate viewers to become involved in the world. These programs provide a unique perspective on international news, current events, and diverse cultures, presenting issues not often covered in the U.S. media. The organization connects American viewers with people at the heart of breaking events, organizations in the forefront of social change and the cultures of an increasingly global community.

### **ZCommunications**

<http://www.zmag.org/>

A great, over-arching network of alternative media resources including a magazine, blogs, videos and networking all powered by grass-roots writers and activists covering all aspects of society, but mostly political, social, environmental subjects and whatever relates to these.

## **Publications & Books**

**Yes! Magazine: This is the page for YES magazine discussion guides. Each selection informs about topics from previous magazine editions. It is a good source for students.**

[http://www.yesmagazine.org/article\\_list.asp?Type=1&ID=8](http://www.yesmagazine.org/article_list.asp?Type=1&ID=8)

**Hawken, Paul.** 2008. *Blessed Unrest: How the Largest Social Movement in History Is Restoring Grace, Justice, and Beauty to the World.* Penguin Books, NY. 352 pages. Cost: \$7 used on amazon.com.

President Bill Clinton called Paul Hawken's last book, *Natural Capitalism: Creating the Next Industrial Revolution* (Little, Brown. September 1999) one of the five most important books in the world today. *Blessed Unrest* belongs in the same category.

**Korten, David.** C. 2003. *The Great Turning: From Empire to Earth Community.* Berrett-Koehler. San Francisco. 402 pages Cost: \$6 used, amazon.com.

David Korten's classic bestseller, *When Corporations Rule the World*, was one of the first books to articulate the destructive and oppressive nature of the global corporate economy. Now, ten years later, Korten shows that the problem runs deeper than corporate domination-with far greater consequences. *The Great Turning* shows the significance of this time in history, along with the agricultural revolution of over 10,000 years ago and the industrial revolution of 300 years ago.

**Ray, Paul and Anderson, Sharon.** 2001. *The Cultural Creatives: How 50 Million People Are Changing the World.* Three Rivers Press. New York. 384 pages. Cost: \$5 used, amazon. <http://www.culturalcreatives.org/>

According to sociologist and researcher Paul Ray, Cultural Creatives (who number at least 50 million in the USA and many more globally), are changing society,. This text provides an inside look at the demographics and attitudes behind one of the most significant social movements in human history.

### Earth & People-Friendly Fund-Raisers or Service Projects

**Café Humana** (coffee fund-raiser)

<http://www.cafehumana.com/>

**Custom Printed Shopping Bags** (for fund-raising)

<http://homelandfundraising.com/Grocery%20Totes.htm>

**Recycling for Charities** (funds from recycled electronics to charity of choice)

<http://www.recyclingforcharities.com/>

**Recycled Phones** (raise funds by recycling cell phones)

[http://www.phoneraiser.com/?GCID=S15155x001-sgcell&KEYWORD=phone%20fundraisers&gclid=CLq1\\_vHpgJMCFQfNiQodRVRtwg](http://www.phoneraiser.com/?GCID=S15155x001-sgcell&KEYWORD=phone%20fundraisers&gclid=CLq1_vHpgJMCFQfNiQodRVRtwg)

**Catalog Choice-Eliminate Unwanted Catalogs** (reduce catalogs sent home. Could be done as a classroom project)

<http://www.catalogchoice.org/#welcome>

**Nourish the Children:** donations of nutritious foods for malnourished children

<http://www.nourishthechildren.com/>

**Kiva: Microcredit lending, person to person**

[www.kiva.org](http://www.kiva.org)

### Sustainability & Simplicity

**Durning, Alan; Ryan, John.** 1997. *Stuff: The Secret Lives of Everyday Things (new Report , No 4).* Seattle. NW Environment Watch. 88 pages

Documenting a day in the life of the average North American consumer, *Stuff: The Secret Lives of Everyday Things* deconstructs the American Dream by unraveling the hidden costs behind the objects around us. From our morning cup of Columbian coffee to our South Korean-made sneakers, the book traces the environmental impact of the consumer decisions most of us make without thinking.

**Elgin, Duane.** 1993. *Voluntary Simplicity: Toward a Way of Life that is Outwardly Simple and Inwardly Rich.* William Morrow & co. New York.

This is the original classic text on the importance of choosing simpler, more meaningful life.

***The Story of Stuff***

<https://storyofstuff.org/>

Annie Leonard is a light-hearted and informative online review in story form of the destructive life-cycle of our product system. Happily, there are also many strategies presented that are working toward a better world and which provide opportunities for student and classroom participation, which we address in the next assignment.