

BUS 170 Business and Sustainability Winter 2011

Professor Brian Nienhaus
KOBC 126 Office hours M-F 10:30 to 12:30
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Brief Course Description

Pre-travel:

We will read Rhoades and learn about subsistence communities. We will also read selections from Yunus, web documents on sustainability, and possibly an eReserve piece by Michael Pollan to learn more about food systems and supply chains. Be ready to learn some surprising things about corn.

Yucatán:

The Yucatán gives us the opportunity to observe central issues of sustainable development that are unfolding world-wide. We will meet with business people and government officials while in Mérida, and with campesinos and their families during our stay in the Mayan village of Tinum. We will also visit two Mayan archeological sites, the port of Progreso, and spend our last afternoon and evening in Playa del Carmen.

Post-travel:

We will give Yunus a further reading to understand his concept of social business. Is the idea feasible? Compared with a private business, what can it accomplish? How does it compare with an NGO or a charitable organization? Based on what you observed in Yucatán and read in Yunus, how important do you think the social business model will be for rural communities in Central and South America? For us? What are microcredits, and why was the Grameen Bank recently in the news?

Course Goals

- To learn contemporary business perspectives on sustainability, including the triple bottom line.
- To see the challenges to sustainability we all may face if traditional communities follow western development models.
- To explore alternative models of sustainable development.

Required texts

Rhoades, Dorothy & Jean Charlot (1993) *The Corn Grows Ripe*. New York: Puffin Books.

Yunus, Muhammad (2007) *Creating a World without Poverty*. New York: PublicAffairs.

Other readings

To be announced.