

UHON 351F-001, 351U-001

Buckminster Fuller and beyond: The utopian imagination and the future of sustainability

May 10-June 3, MTWR (9:00 AM-12:15PM)

Virtual synchronous



Buckminster Fuller's call to make "the world work for 100% of humanity, in the shortest possible time, through spontaneous cooperation, without ecological offense or the disadvantage of anyone" is the spring board for this course. Fuller is often evoked as the father of sustainability studies and we are excited to offer this course on our campus; where Fuller lived and taught from 1959-1970. We will contextualize Fuller in the utopian movements of the 20th century and consider the relevance of his ideas for the present. What were the environmental, technological, social, political and economic challenges that gave rise to sustainability studies? What do we share in common with those mid-20th century crises and

the sense of vulnerability that accompanied them? What can we learn from Fuller that is useful for us now?

One of the most compelling aspects of Fuller's work is the belief in the human ability to grasp one's position in the universe; to think holistically; to anticipate; and to integrate technology and aesthetics in creating a fulfilling life for all. However, we will temper Fuller's optimism regarding design and technology with a consideration of the social, political, and economic changes necessary to realize progressive change. There is much to learn from utopian thinking of a previous century. It can help us meet our own crises and, at the very least, offer a way out of paralyzing doomsday scenarios.

The course will combine seminars with workshops. Guest lecturers include an architect, a poet, scientists, and experts on sustainability, Fuller, and design. Sessions will occur in several virtual spaces besides the seminar hall. We will visit the Morris Library Fuller Archives, the Fuller Dome Home, and the Shawnee Forest.

**Jyotsna Kapur (Professor, Cinema and Media Studies & Director, University Honors Program)
and Deborah Tudor (Emerita Professor, Cinema and Media Studies & retired Dean, Mass
Communications Media Arts)**