



Full World: Houston's Economic and Ecologic Future

A boundless, “anything’s possible” spirit characterizes much of Houston’s development, business and life. How do we reconcile this ethos with the growing recognition that our natural resources are finite, that we live in a “full world?” Environmental lawyer, planner and professor Jim Blackburn shares a model for how Houston and other cities can thrive in the midst of such challenges. This course will examine the increasingly interwoven economic and ecologic well-being of our region and the key role of market systems. “Full World” outlines a future in which concepts of economic value are redefined and a “circular economy” (one consistent with cycles of nature) is the norm. Natural hazards will need to be addressed in light of climate change. Natural capital — Houston’s best-kept secret — such as our parks, preserves and waterways, will become more and more important. In a full world, the energy industry will change, our business practices will change, our recreational lives will change, we will rethink our relationship to “stuff,” and even our spiritual thinking may be transformed.

CO-SPONSORS: Houston Audubon Society; Rice University’s Baker Institute for Public Policy; Rice University Shell Center for Sustainability; Rothko Chapel; Severe Storm Prediction, Education and Evacuation from Disasters (SSPEED) Center at Rice University

COURSE DETAILS:

SECTION DATES: Eight Wednesdays between March 1 and April 19, 7-8:30 p.m.

FEE: If registering by Feb. 15: \$215

After Feb. 15: \$225 For Rice alumni: \$203

CEUs: 1.2

TOPICS WILL INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

- From the “Empty World” to the “Full World:” Houston enters the 21st century
- The green and grey infrastructure of the Texas coast: Rethinking economic value
- Floods, hurricanes, climate change and carbon
- The quiet corporate revolution: Charging into the Full World
- Houston: Carbon, the circular economy and the future of the energy industry
- Green planning and eco-recreation in the Houston region
- Eco-spirituality: Religion and philosophy for the Full World
- The horror of the American yard and consumer choices in the Full World

INSTRUCTOR

Jim Blackburn, J.D., is an environmental lawyer and planner who is a professor in the practice of environmental law in the Civil and Environmental Engineering Department of Rice University, where he is the director of the university-wide minor in energy and water sustainability and co-director of the Severe Storm Prediction, Education and Evacuation from Disasters (SSPEED) Center. Mr. Blackburn has been involved in environmental issues of Houston and the Texas Coast for decades and is the author of “The Book of Texas Bays” and the forthcoming “The Economic and Ecological Future of the Texas Coast.” He is the owner of the Blackburn & Carter Law Firm and Sustainable Planning and Design, a consulting company, and is a Rice Faculty Scholar at the Baker Institute at Rice.

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