***Modeling Interdisciplinarity***

**Any sensible discussion about “sustainability” must, by its very nature, be inclusive, requiring interactive dialogues with a broad array people about a great variety of things over a long period of time. For students to be able to mature into citizens who are actively engaged in such open-textured, multi-disciplinary dialogues, we must show them what those dialogues look like: as educators, we are the ones who have to model for them how reasonable people from academia, public service and private enterprise can talk with one another, respectfully disagree with each other, and, ultimately, reach some consensus about what we want the world to look like and how we should go about making that happen. Therefore,** the interaction between the instructors who are leading interdisciplinary class discussions is a critical activity for enhancing communication among students from different disciplines. Effective multidisciplinary team teaching requires developing a relationship, both personally and professionally, between the instructors. **I am fortunate to have had great success co-teaching a course on water sustainability in the American West with a colleague who is from a discipline – civil engineering – that is about as far removed from mine – philosophy – as one could imagine.** Our success is a product of a lot of work and luck. The work is not the kind that most faculty traditionally do, which is consistently interacting collegially with someone well outside their academic discipline. The two of us have been in regular and varied forms of contact over the last four years, and in almost every encounter, the subject of this course has come up. Formally, we met consistently for months, and we email each other regularly about ideas we had or articles we read. The luck involved here is that ours is a partnership about something that we are both passionate about, both personally and intellectually. We have found a particularly appealing outlet in a hungry and ready audience, one that craves an interdisciplinary conversation about something as fascinating and timely as water. We happened to be in the right place at the right time. **So, simple as it sounds, any successful strategy for integrating the geosciences into a broader, interdisciplinary discussion about sustainability entails first simply getting geo-scientists interacting on a regular basis with their colleagues in other departments and colleges.**