

Sustainable World
INTS 210:002
4 Credits (1 credit EL embedded)
W 10:30-1:10, Mason Hall D005

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Required Readings

Deep Economy: The Wealth of Communities and the Durable Future by Bill McKibben (Holt Paperbacks, 2008).

The majority of readings for this class are available on the course Blackboard page.

The ecological footprint quiz you take before class on 2/15 will cost \$1.

Course Description

This is designed to be a core course for George Mason University's Environmental and Sustainability Studies major and Sustainability Studies Minor. It includes 3 credits for class time and an additional 1 credit for the sustainability-related experiential learning component. This course will focus on understanding the basic issues in the natural sciences and social sciences that underlie many of the world's current environmental problems. We will also consider ethical matters, such as equity, as they pertain to global resource consumption, pollution, and climate change.

Our time in the classroom as a learning community will combine discussion of readings and current events, mini-lectures, group projects, and active, inquiry-based learning. You will earn one credit of experiential learning through a combination of service learning and field experiences.

Mason aims to improve student success through increased participation in and celebration of undergraduate research and creative activities. Scholarship is valued as a core practice of the Mason student experience. *Students as Scholars* is Mason's undergraduate research and creative activities initiative, organized to build students' skills in undergraduate research and creative activities. Students in the ESS BA and Sustainability Studies Minor will have increasing levels

of engagement, beginning with the discovery of scholarship, moving through scholarly inquiry, and culminating with the creation of a scholarly project that promotes sustainability on campus. Sustainable World participates in the “discovery of scholarship” stage of this initiative. Assignments and course activities are designed to help you understand the scholarly field of sustainability studies and build a solid foundation of research abilities in this field.

Learning Objectives

By the completion of the course, the successful student will be able to:

- Describe the major environmental problems facing the United States and the world, the causes of these problems, and potential solutions.
- Analyze the economic, social, and moral implications of global resource use.
- Define sustainability and describe methods of assessing sustainability.

In addition, successful students will progress toward mastery of the following Students as Scholars discovery-level outcomes:

- Distinguish between personal beliefs and evidence.
- Articulate how SUSTAINABILITY SCHOLARSHIP influences society.
- Evaluate the credibility of source information.
- Understand research methods used in SUSTAINABILITY STUDIES.
- Understand how knowledge is transmitted within SUSTAINABILITY STUDIES, from SUSTAINABILITY STUDIES to other disciplines, and to the public.

Experiential Learning

You will earn one experiential learning credit in this class by completing 25 hours of sustainability-related service learning (on campus or off campus) and attending the Saturday field trip to Sidwell Friends School. **You must complete the Experiential Learning requirement to earn a passing grade for this course.**

We will travel to via Metro for the field trip, and you will be responsible for the Metro fare.

Required Work

Sources and Destinations Essay: Global Research Project (200 points)

In this essay, you will carefully research the source(s) of everything in some item you consume in your everyday life—for example, your breakfast cereal, your shoes, your shampoo. You will also research, as appropriate, what happens to this item after you finish with it. Your challenge will be to deal with both the ecological and social impacts of the item you study. You will receive detailed instructions for this assignment.

Midterm (150 points)

The in-class midterm will give you an opportunity to demonstrate your learning over the first half of the course. Learning community members will discuss the content of midterm essay

questions before the day of the exam. You may consult your notes and course readings while writing the midterm essays.

Peer Teaching I: Community Sustainability Project (120 points)

Groups of students will engage in action-based sustainability scholarship to design a project that has the potential to promote sustainability goals within our community. Each group will choose one of the course's topic areas, and pick a specific problem facing our community within that topic area. Groups will analyze the root causes of the problem, come up with a potential solution, and present a plan on how to implement it. You will receive detailed instructions for this assignment.

Peer Teaching II: Reports from the Field (80 points)

At our last class meeting, you will work individually or in groups to teach other learning community members about the sustainability initiatives being conducted in the campus unit or off campus organization where you have done your service learning. You will receive detailed instructions for this assignment.

Informal Writing (200 points—Directed Writing, 120; Peer Teaching Evaluations, 80)—There are two types of informal writing for the course, Directed Writing and Peer Teaching Evaluations.

- **Directed Writing**—Throughout the course, you will do a number of brief informal writings in response to prompts. Most of these writings will be in class. The prompts will ask you to reflect on issues relating to sustainability, to respond to the weekly readings and activities, and to reflect on how your service learning experiences relate to your learning in other parts of the course.
- **Peer Teaching Evaluations**—You will use a laptop or smart phone to evaluate and provide feedback to groups on their Peer Teaching presentations throughout the semester. The credit you receive for these evaluations will depend on the level of effort and engagement they reflect. At the end of the semester, you will use your evaluations to support your argument for which of the projects proposed by the peer teaching groups deserves to be funded.

A note about Directed Writings: I am not looking to make sure your grammar and spelling are perfect; rather, I want to see that you're engaging course materials and experiences with a great deal of energy and thought. When you're writing about course readings, it's a very good idea to quote from those readings and refer to specific parts of the text often. In general it's a good idea to be as concrete and specific as possible, whether you're writing about something you read or something you experienced. Making connections among your readings, our class lectures and discussions, and your experiences in the field is also extremely important. Maintaining a rich and detailed Sustainability Notebook is the best preparation for success on the midterm and the final portfolio.

Final Exam (150 points)—The final exam will give you an opportunity to demonstrate your learning over the whole course. Learning community members will discuss the content of final

exam essay questions before the day of the exam. You may consult your notes and course readings while writing the final exam essays.

Participation (100 points)—Our class is a learning community. As members of this community, we all depend on each other not just to show up, but to be fully engaged in each and every class activity. This means coming to class on time and prepared, speaking and listening well during discussions, raising questions, and calling attention to current events that relate to this course. Participation also involves doing everything you can to make our field trip run smoothly, and representing yourself and our class well when you are engaged in service learning.

Policies

Grading Scale

A+	1000-970	C+	799-770
A	969-930	C	769-730
A-	929-900	C-	729-700
B+	899-870	D	699-600
B	869-830	F	599-0
B-	829-800		

Paperless Classroom

Paper use is one of many important elements of campus sustainability. We will use the Blackboard online course management system to minimize paper use. Our aim is to collaboratively adopt policies that will balance academic needs with resource conservation concerns.

Late Work

Papers and other assignments are to be submitted before the beginning of class on the day due. Late work will be reduced one grade per day. No work will be accepted over one week late without a valid written medical excuse or notice of death in the family.

Honor Code

When you enrolled in this course you agreed to abide by the university's Honor Code. The Honor Code does not preclude collaborative work, such as informal discussions and studying in communities. Nor does it preclude assigned group work. The Honor Code does require that work you, as an individual, turn in ultimately be the product of your own individual synthesis or integration of ideas, and that the work a group turns in ultimately be the product of the group's collective ideas. If you are uncertain of the line between collaboration and cheating, see an instructor. As always, cite your sources. If you do not, it is plagiarism. Plagiarism means lifting someone else's ideas or words and presenting them as your own without proper attribution of the source. This includes all sources, including those found on the Internet. Use an approved citation method, specified by your instructor. Work created for previously taken classes cannot be turned in for credit in this course.

Diversity Statement

The School of Integrative Studies is an intentionally inclusive community that celebrates diversity and strives to have faculty, staff and students that reflect the diversity of our plural society. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, class, linguistic background, religion, gender identity, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, or physical ability.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see the instructors and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703.993.2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

Laptops

You are welcome to bring a laptop to class and use it for class-related purposes (e.g. taking notes). During class please refrain from using your laptop for purposes not related to class (e.g. Facebook, email, surfing the Internet). Note that repeat offenders might be asked to not use their laptops in class, as this creates a distraction and diminishes the active learning community we are creating in this class.

Email

GMU faculty and staff may only correspond with students through the students' GMU assigned email accounts. Emails sent from other accounts will not be answered.

Blackboard

To access blackboard, type courses.gmu.edu into the URL address bar of the web browser of your choice. Enter the username and password from your GMU email account. The use of Blackboard is essential in this course, so if you have technical problems, please contact the IT department (email address can be found on Blackboard's homepage) as soon as possible.

**Sustainable World
Course Schedule**

	Topics & Due Dates	Readings and Resources
1/25	Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability literacy survey • Syllabus review • Service Learning set up • Quick discussion of behavior change 	Video (in class): <i>Alex Laskey: How Behavioral Science Can Lower Your Energy Bill</i> (8 min.)
1/27	Service Learning preferences due on BlackBoard by 11:59 p.m.	
2/1	Sustainability—History and Frameworks Film: <i>The Story of Stuff</i> ; begin <i>The 11th Hour</i> Introduce Sources and Destinations Essay	Edwards Introduction and Ch. 1: “The Birth of Sustainability.” Blackboard David Orr. “Four Challenges of Sustainability.” Oberlin College Lecture, April 3, 2003. Blackboard
2/8	Campus Sustainability Introduce group project assignment. Form peer teaching groups. Film: finish watching <i>The 11th Hour</i>	Christopher Uhl. “Process and Practice: Creating the Sustainable University.” From <i>Sustainability on Campus: Stories and Strategies for Change</i> . Ed. Bartlett & Chase. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2004. Blackboard Sklarew & Wingfield. “Up the Pyramid, Around the Loop: Action Research Cultivates Sustainability Scholars to Green the Campus.” <i>CUR Quarterly</i> . 35:1 Fall, 2014. Blackboard Resources: GMU Sustainability Office website: http://green.gmu.edu/
2/15	Ecological Footprint	Before class, complete the Ecological Footprint Quiz at: www.myfootprint.org . Save your results as a PDF or in some other format and bring to class. Venetoulis and Talberth. “Refining the Ecological Footprint.” <i>Environment, Development, and Sustainability</i> , 10:4 2008.

2/17	Sources and Destinations Topic Exploration Due	Submit Topic Exploration on BlackBoard by 11:59 pm
2/22	Global Population Growth	<p><i>Deep Economy</i> Introduction & Chapter 1: “After Growth.”</p> <p>William N. Ryerson. “Population: The Multiplier of Everything Else.” <i>Post Carbon Reader: 2010</i>. Blackboard</p> <p>Rev. Dr. James A. Nash. “Making Moral Connections: Population, Environment, and Consumption.” <i>Population Press</i> Vol 3, # 3, March/April 1997. Blackboard</p>
3/1	Energy & Climate Change I Midterm Review	<p>Chad Heeter. “The Oil in Your Oatmeal.” <i>San Francisco Chronicle</i>: March 26, 2006. Blackboard</p> <p>Bill McKibben. “A New World.” <i>Eaarth</i>. New York: Times Books.</p> <p>Michael Specter. “The Climate Fixers.” <i>The New Yorker</i>: May 14, 2012. Blackboard</p>
3/8	Midterm	Bring blue book(s) to class.
3/15	Spring Break	
3/22	Energy & Climate Change II	<p>Bill McKibben. “Global Warming’s Terrifying New Math.” <i>Rolling Stone</i>: July 19, 2012. Blackboard</p> <p>Bill McKibben. “It’s Time to Stand Up for the Climate—and for Civilization.” <i>Wired</i>: January 18, 2017. Blackboard</p> <p>Bill McKibben. “The New Battle Plan for the Planet’s Climate Crisis.” <i>Rolling Stone</i>: January 24, 2017. Blackboard</p>
3/24	Sources and Destinations Outline and Annotated	Submit Outline and Bib on BlackBoard by 11:59 pm

	Bibliography Due	
3/29	Biological and Cultural Diversity Film: “Wade Davis: Dreams from Endangered Cultures” (22 min.)	Pennington and Ricketts. “Conservation Biology and Biodiversity.” <i>Encyclopedia of Life Sciences</i> , 2011. Blackboard
4/1	Sidwell Friends Middle School Tour	Depart Mason at 10 am and return by 4 pm
4/5	Design Film: <i>Janine Benyus: Biomimicry in Action</i> (20 min.)	<i>Deep Economy</i> Chapter 3: “All for One, or One for All.” David Orr. “Loving Children: A Design Problem.” <i>Design Builder</i> , 2000. Blackboard McDonough and Braungart. “The Cradle-to-Cradle Alternative.” <i>State of the World</i> . Worldwatch Institute, 2004. Blackboard
4/12	Food	<i>Deep Economy</i> Chapter 2: “The Year of Eating Locally.” Michael Pollan. “Power Steer.” <i>New York Times Magazine</i> : March 31, 2002. Blackboard Wendell Berry. “The Pleasures of Eating.” Reprinted from <i>What Are People For?</i> New York: FSG, 1990. Blackboard
4/19	Water	Sandra Postel. “Water: Adapting to a New Normal.” <i>Post-Carbon Reader</i> : 2010. Abraham Lustgarten et al: “California’s Drought is Part of a Much Bigger Water Crisis.” July, 2015: <i>ProPublica</i> .
4/23	Sources and Destinations Final Essay Due	Submit Essay on BlackBoard by 11:59 pm
4/26	Social & Economic Justice Film: <i>China Blue</i>	McKibben Chapter 5: “The Durable Future.” Vandana Shiva. “Principles of Earth Democracy.”

		<p><i>Earth Democracy: Justice, Sustainability, and Peace</i>. Cambridge: South End Press, 2006.</p> <p>Blackboard</p> <p>Eric Reese. "Moving Mountains." <i>Orion</i>: January/February 2006.</p> <p>Blackboard</p>
5/3	Peer Teaching II: Reports from the Field	
5/9	Final Exam Due	Submit final exam on BlackBoard by 11:59 pm