

Environmental Studies 320
Special Topics: Campus Sustainability
Spring 2014

TTH, 3:00-4:30, Sage 4212

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Course Description: In this course, we will examine the concept of sustainability at three levels: as a social issue facing the global community; as a guiding principle for the operations, teaching, research, and outreach at institutions of higher education; and as a set of specific challenges facing our own university. An additional focus of this semester's course is Student Affairs—the ways that the university tries to foster student growth and development both inside and outside the classroom. In other words, we will discuss the sustainability challenges and goals for student development in higher education, and at UW Oshkosh in particular. The course is also project based, with a semester-long assignment in which students, in teams, will devise, research, and propose concrete programs for increasing sustainability in Student Affairs. This project will culminate in a presentation to campus sustainability stakeholders at the end of the semester.

An additional goal of this class is to further your liberal arts education. What does this mean? The liberal arts education focuses on general learning, intellectual ability, and critical thinking rather than technical or professional skills. The goal of this class, then, is not just to convey specific information about sustainability but to teach you how to interpret this information critically, and how to understand modern environmental issues in their social, historical, and political context. A liberal arts education provides the tools we need to be active citizens of our communities. In Spring 2008, UW Oshkosh adopted a set of Essential Learning Outcomes to help define the meaning of a liberal education. One of these outcomes is the recognition that a liberal education recognizes our "Responsibility, as individuals and communities." This includes "Knowledge of sustainability and its applications." This course is designed to help us think about our responsibilities to each other, to our communities, and to our environment, with our own campus as a case study.

Learning Outcomes: Upon completing this course, students will:

- Be able to understand and critically analyze major concepts in sustainability, and their particular meanings for higher education.
- Have a basic understanding of the sustainability-related challenges in Student Affairs, with a particular understanding of these challenges at UW Oshkosh.
- Be able to conceive, research, and present a concrete proposal for change in campus sustainability
- Effectively communicate complicated ideas about campus sustainability in written and oral formats

Grading Breakdown: Students will be evaluated on the following components, each of which will be discussed in more detail during class:

- Attendance and participation: 20%
- Sustainability Paper: 15%
 - 4-page analytical paper on the importance of sustainability and its special meanings for universities
- Sustainability & Student Affairs Paper: 15%
 - 4-page analytical paper on the issue of Student Affairs and sustainability
- Best Practices Presentation & Report: 10%
 - 4-5 minute presentation and 2-page report in which students assess the sustainability in student affairs efforts at other universities
- Group Presentation of Readings & Discussion: 5%
- Group Student Affairs Project Proposal, Paper & Presentation: 20%
- Individual Final Paper: 15%
 - 4-5 page paper on how the project that you worked on advances the goals of sustainability and the specific goals of UW Oshkosh

Attendance, Discussion and Participation: Your participation in discussions and other class activities is essential. This course will only be successful with full student engagement and participation. Attendance will be taken each day; your

grade will drop significantly with each absence. If you have more than five unexcused absences, you will fail the course. An “unexcused absence” is any absence for which you cannot provide a note from a doctor, another professor, or some other documented explanation of your absence. If you simply cannot make a class, please contact one of the instructors before the class meets; perhaps an arrangement can be made to ensure that you are not penalized for missing class for legitimate reasons. Your active participation is the key to your learning the material and to the success of the course—both for you as an individual and for the class as a whole.

Please check your email account regularly for updates and last minute information about upcoming class meetings. Also, email is generally the best way to get in contact with me.

Readings: In an effort to save students the cost of a University-produced reading packet, all course materials have been placed on the Polk Library’s Electronic-Reserve or on the class D2L site. These are REQUIRED readings; you are strongly urged bring them with you to class (in print or on a laptop, iPad, or e-reader) so that you make use them to aid in class discussion.

Course Policies and Conduct: All of us must do our best to be intellectually honest and tolerant of personal differences. Environmental topics are often controversial, and we all have our own beliefs. I hope that everyone will feel safe to express an idea, even if that idea is not a popular one.

There are some university guidelines for behavior that I expect all of us to abide by as well. One of these has to do with plagiarism, or taking credit for the work of others. This is a serious offense and will be treated according to university guidelines; failure of the course is a potential outcome of academic dishonesty. This doesn’t mean you shouldn’t talk with other students about what you are thinking or writing; but when you write something on a paper or exam, it must be in your own words, not copied from someone else. We will discuss what plagiarism means more fully during the course of the semester. If you have any questions about academic honesty, and what might or might not be considered plagiarism, please ask, rather than taking a risk with grave consequences.

Please let me know what I can do to accommodate any disabilities that you might have.

Grading Scale:

A	93-100	B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D+	67-69	F	≤ 59
A-	90-92	B	83-86	C	73-76	D	63-66		
		B-	80-82	C-	70-72	D-	60-62		

Course Schedule:

Wk 1: Tuesday, February 4: Introductions & Course Themes

Thursday, February 6: Sustainability: review and new ideas

Reading: Orr, *Ecological Literacy* ER

Slaper & Hall, “Triple Bottom Line,” skim, ER

Wk 2: Tuesday, February 11: Sustainability at Universities

Reading: Cortese, “Promises Made and Promises Lost,” ER

McMillin & Dyball, “A Whole of University Approach,” ER

Edwards, “Moving Beyond Green,” ER

Thursday, February 13: Education for Sustainability

Reading: Orr, *Earth in Mind*, ER

Stibbe & Luna, *Handbook of Sustainability Literacy* (skim), ER

Wk 3: Tuesday, February 18: Sustainability at UW Oshkosh: Campus Tour

Reading: UWO Campus Draft Sustainability Plan, as discussed in class

UW Oshkosh Today clippings, ER

Thursday, February 20: Sustainability and the Curriculum

Reading: Sherman, “Sustainability: What’s the Big Idea?” ER

Shriberg et al., “University of Michigan’s Sustainability Scholars Program,” ER

Brundiers, Wiek, & Redman “Real-World Learning Opportunities in Sustainability,” ER

- Wk 4:** Tuesday, February 25: Sustainability in Student Affairs
Reading: Link, “Sustainable Citizenship,” ER
Kerr and Hart-Steffes, “Sustainability, Student Affairs, and Students,” ER
“Roundtable: Student Affairs and the Future of Sustainability,” ER
Thursday, February 27: **Sustainability in Higher Education Paper Due; electronic copy only on D2L**
No Reading; Biodigester tour; details TBA
- Wk 5:** Tuesday, March 4: Campus Green Funds
Reading: AASHE, “How-to Guide: Campus Green Fund Implementation,” ER
AASHE, “How-to Guide,” Appendix A, Sample Proposal, UVM, skim, ER
Campus Ecology Case Studies, ER
Thursday, March 6: Sustainable Behavior
Reading: Manning, “The Psychology of Sustainable Behavior,” ER
- Wk 6:** Tuesday, March 11: Best Practices Research Day; class meets in Radford Computer Lab
No Reading
Thursday, March 13: **Sustainability in Student Affairs Paper Due; electronic copy only on D2L**
No Class
- Wk 7:** Tuesday, March 18: Best Practices Presentations
Due: Best Practices Presentations & Reports (reports due on D2L)
Thursday, March 20: Best Practices Reflection & Discussion
No Reading
- Spring Break**
- Wk 8:** Tuesday, April 1: In class project work time; research strategy and responsibilities due by end of day
No reading
Thursday, April 3: In class project work time
- Wk 9:** Tuesday, April 8: Team Readings: Presentation & Discussion
Thursday, April 10: Team Readings: Presentation & Discussion
- Wk 10:** Tuesday, April 15: Team Readings: Presentation & Discussion
Thursday, April 17: Team Readings: Presentation & Discussion
- Wk 11:** Tuesday, April 22: Team Readings: Presentation & Discussion
Thursday, April 24: Project Work
- Wk 12:** Tuesday, April 29: Project work
Thursday, May 1: Presentation Dry Run
- Wk 13:** Tuesday, May 6: Presentation Dry Run
Thursday, May 8: Presentation to Campus Sust. & Student Affairs officials; **Group projects due**
- Wk 14:** Tuesday, May 13: Reflections & Wrap Up
Thursday, May 15: **Final Individual Papers Due in electronic copy only to D2L**