

## GES 520– Issues in Global Environmental Sustainability – Syllabus

Lecture: Online

Credits: 3

### Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Renée Harmon

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Office: Johnson Hall, SoGES Room 108

Office hours: By Appointment via Zoom

### Course Description:

This course introduces the concept of sustainability, its various definitions, and current influences on society. Students explore the ways sustainability affects various disciplines and gain an understanding of the connections of sustainability within their chosen discipline. Students achieve a holistic understanding of environmental, social, and economic sustainability through individual research work as well as interdisciplinary collaboration, an essential part to the successful integration of sustainability.

**Course Objectives:** Students who successfully complete the course will be able to:

- Demonstrate comprehension of the major dimensions and definitions of sustainability
- Identify the guiding principles of sustainability and how to use those principles to enhance sustainability practices
- integrate and synthesize the primary dimensions of sustainability and resilience (economy/prosperity, biophysical world/environment, and social/cultural/community) and apply them to modern challenges in sustainability
- Demonstrate an understanding of how sustainability applies to a wide array of disciplines
- (5) Exhibit the ability to work in a multidisciplinary group to analyze problems and create sustainable solutions
- (6) Produce a report that connects the student's academic program with the dimensions of sustainability

### Course Topics:

- Defining Sustainability
- Triple Bottom Line and Dimensions of Sustainability
- History of Sustainability
- Indigenous Populations and Culture
- Energy & Natural Resources
- Water & Pollution
- Food Security & Agriculture
- Built Environment

- Climate Change
- Human Population Dynamics
- Environmental Justice and Equity (Eco-justice)
- Refugees and Displaced Persons
- Sustainability in Education
- Community Educational Outreach

### Required texts:

Broker, I. (1983). *Night flying woman: An Ojibway narrative*. Borealis Books.

Theis, T., Tomkin, J. (eds). (2015). *Sustainability: A Comprehensive Foundation*. OpenStax CNX.

### Readings:

Along with the books described above, various readings will be assigned throughout the semester from a variety of sources and provided to students to download in Canvas.

### Videos:

Students will watch videos throughout the semester that address various sustainability-related topics. The videos are posted in Canvas.

### Grade Outline Table

Activity	Percentage of grade	Points Possible
Weekly Discussions (15)	15%	10 pts. X 15 = 150
Weekly Quizzes (15)	15%	10 pts. X 15 = 150
Sustainability Literacy Assessment - pre & post-test (participation points)	5%	25 pts. X 2 = 50
Group Educational Outreach Project	20%	200
Critical Analysis Reading Assignment	15%	150
Case Study Presentation	10%	100
Case Study Mock Journal Article	20%	200
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1000</b>

### Assignment Descriptions

Sustainability Literacy Assessment \*Participation Points (5% of course grade)

Students complete a sustainability literacy assessment at the beginning and end of the course. The assessment is for participation points only, as the purpose for this assessment is to gauge learning over the course of the semester.

#### Weekly Discussions (15% of course grade)

Students participate in weekly discussions. Discussions include activities that align and contribute to course assignments. Discussions provide students an opportunity to share ideas and thoughts about sustainability-related topics, ask questions to the class, and synthesize their learning from each module lesson.

#### Weekly Quizzes (15% of course grade)

Students complete weekly quizzes that include questions related to assigned readings, videos, and other learning objects. Quizzes include five (5) questions each worth up to two (2) points.

#### Group Educational Outreach Project (20% of course grade)

Students work in teams and develop an educational outreach project focusing on a specific sustainability issue. Teams will decide how to reach their chosen community (e.g., campus, city, region, state, etc.) in ways that spark interest or use novel approaches. Infographics, social media, app development, short video/documentary, community programs, teacher training, or other communication tools and formats are all acceptable. Teams will create and present their outreach projects to the class.

#### Critical Analysis Reading Assignment (15% of course grade)

Students read *Night Flying Woman: An Ojibway Narrative* (1983) by Ignatia Broker and write a critical analysis paper. The book is available through the Minnesota Historical Society and other book retailers.

#### Case Study Research Project

Students conduct a case study research project exemplifying successful integration of economic, environmental, and social sustainability. After selecting a sustainability-related topic and/or problem, students will use the case study research approach to investigate their selected sustainability topic and/or problem. Using critical and creative thinking to analyze the sustainability topic and/or problem, students will collect and analyze data through either qualitative and/or quantitative methods, identify significant examples of possible sustainable solutions, and provide recommendations for future research. Students will disseminate their findings through a presentation and mock journal article.

#### *Case Study Pecha Kucha Presentation* (10% of course grade)

#### *Case Study Mock Journal Article* (20% of course grade)

## Pedagogical Approach

This course provides students with the information and skills needed to understand the comprehensiveness of sustainability, the myriad of environmental and social conditions that sustainability can address, and how to create sustainable solutions. This online course includes instructor-created videos, published learning videos, text and other selected readings, individual research and case study creation, discussions, and a team project. The topics covered in this course provide students an overview of how the concept of sustainability is applied across disciplines and issues. Therefore, this course focuses on students' ability to use critical and creative thinking, systems thinking, and problem-solving skills.

As an instructor, I follow a *mastery* teaching and learning approach. I welcome students to revise assignments to improve grades and encourage students to reach out to me if further instruction on any topic covered/assignment in this course is needed.

**Grading** – The instructor will post grades within one week after the original due date, excluding late work. Letter grades are assigned on the basis of percentage of points earned as follows:

- A+ 97-100%
- A 93-96.9%
- A- 89-92.9%
- B+ 87-88.9%
- B 83-86.9%
- B- 79-82.9%
- C+ 77-78.9%
- C 72-76.9%
- C- 69-71.9%
- D 60--68.9%
- F <60%

**Late Work Grading Policy** – Late work is accepted within the semester start and end dates. No late work will be accepted after the official end of the semester. Contact the instructor to discuss.

**Grading Issues** – Questions about grading for individual and/or group assignments should be raised with the instructor.

**Online Classroom Participation** – Students are expected to login to class each week and check class email regularly. Each student is expected to participate in weekly discussions to engage with classmates.

**COVID Information & Resources** – For information about COVID-19 please refer to the Colorado State University website: <https://covid.colostate.edu>

**Academic Integrity** – As students of CSU you are held to a high standard of integrity. A Student Honor Code was developed by the university that all students need to adhere to:

***“I have not given, received, or used any unauthorized assistance.”***

CSU students are held accountable for academic misconduct.

Violations include:

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- Cheating
- Plagiarism
- Falsification
- Unauthorized possession or disposition of academic materials
- Facilitation of academic misconduct for others

Academic Dishonesty can take different forms. You must be fully aware of what plagiarism is and recognize that it is a form of cheating. Copying material from a published or unpublished source without giving credit is plagiarism. Directly copying is obviously wrong but using the appropriation of ideas without credit is equally wrong.

All students involved in cheating will face the same results regardless of who cheated off whom. Knowingly giving your answers to another student is just as wrong as accepting those answers.

Any act of academic dishonesty will result in one or more actions determined by the instructor. To view possible consequences go to:

<http://tilt.colostate.edu/integrity/resourcesStudents/whatAreConsequences.cfm>

**\*\*\*All assignment documents will be checked for originality.**