

## **ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES 455: SUSTAINABILITY**

Winter 2016 Monday and Wednesday, 4:00 - 5:50pm, Columbia 142

Instructors: Briana Meier

Office Hours: Tuesdays by appointment

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### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course is an opportunity to explore various concepts of sustainability and their now complex and sometimes problematic uses. We will examine some of the many social, cultural, economic, and ecological assumptions and priorities that are often quietly but powerfully promoted in the push for sustainability. This is a "tough love" course for sustainability: we will consider numerous sustainability theories and practices with a critical eye, and with an affirmative look toward the creation of both concepts and practices.

This class will be an exercise in considering how various concepts of sustainability lead us to consider questions such as these: What is to be sustained? For whom? In what places? For what times? An examination of sustainability is an examination of who we desire to be - as communities, cultures and societies - of what values we prioritize, of how we understand our biophysical interactions with the planet, and of what ethical obligations we have, and to whom.

### **CLASS PREPARATION**

ENVS 455 is a 4-credit class that meets two times a week; this is a reading-intensive course. Per UO policy, students enrolled in this course must be prepared to devote four hours to reading and preparation for each class session in order to get a good grade. Students who are not able to devote at least this much time to preparing for each class session should not enroll.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

1. Class participation (50%)  
15 reading responses/reading quizzes (2-5% each)  
5% in-class participation
2. Discussion leader (group project) (20%)  
Details will be provided in a separate handout
3. Sustainability Analysis and Envisioning Paper (30% total)  
Topic summary (3%) (week 6)  
Paper Proposal and in-class workshop (10%) (week 8)  
Final paper (17%) (week 11)  
Details will be provided in a separate handout

<b>Grading Scale</b>	
A = 94-100	C+ = 77-79
A- = 90-93	C = 74-76
B+ 87-89	C- = 70-73
B = 84-86	D+ = 67-69
B- = 80-83	D = 60-66

### **ATTENDANCE**

Students are permitted one unexcused absence. Each unexcused absence beyond one will lower a student's attendance grade by three percent of the total course grade. Three

late arrivals or early departures will equal one absence. No attendance 'make-up work' will be provided for missed classes.

**To emphasize the importance of bringing print copies of readings to class, the instructor may choose to 'take attendance' for the readings - that is, I may check that you have brought the readings with you. Three times of no readings will be equal to one absence.**

Absences will be excused only in circumstances of serious and documented health or family emergency. Late reading responses will be accepted only in such circumstances. Please do not ask for exceptions.

#### PARTICIPATION

This course will run as an upper level undergraduate seminar, which means that active student discussion and engagement with course materials is essential. The class will be highly interactive, and will include various opportunities for active engagement during each class session, including exploratory writing, organized discussions, small group work, question and answer sessions, and so on. Activities that include writing may be collected and reviewed as part of your participation grade. It is therefore essential that you come to class prepared to engage the instructor and your peers and to contribute your thinking and voice to class activities. Your participation will be graded based on the consistency and thoughtfulness of your contributions, and on your alert and respectful interaction with others in the class.

#### READING RESPONSES AND READING QUIZZES

To aid reading comprehension and reinforce the policy that students must come to class having read the assigned readings and be prepared to contribute to in-class discussions, students will complete reading responses and reading quizzes. Prompts for each will be provided on Canvas.

#### EXPECTATIONS

You can expect me to do my best to facilitate your learning. Specifically, I will communicate clear expectations, criteria and feedback on your efforts, demonstrate the value of course activities and requirements, and guide you in the completion of tasks in a timely manner so you can demonstrate your achievement and be successful in this class.

You are expected to be present for every class, complete class readings and assignments on time and in the manner required, check Blackboard announcements and your email regularly, and participate actively in class discussions and activities. This means you will share your ideas openly, relate course concepts and skills to your interests and real world experiences, and work to synthesize information from a variety of sources. You are also expected to let me know if something about the course is not going well for you. All constructive feedback will be welcomingly received. I will provide formal evaluation opportunities halfway through the term, but regular feedback is encouraged.

All of us are expected to respect everyone in the room, to listen, read, reflect upon, and comment appropriately on each others' contributions, to challenge each other to clarify our ideas, and to encourage each other to deepen our mutual learning.

#### POLICIES

Incompletes and extensions will be given only in the event of documented emergencies. No attendance 'make-up work' will be provided for missed classes.

Retaining copies of all coursework: Please retain copies of all work submitted and the original copy of all work returned to you during the term until the final course grade has been posted. In the event of any question concerning whether grades have been accurately recorded, it is your responsibility to provide these copies as documentation.

Computers and other electronic equipment: We may use devices such as laptops for in class exercises. I will notify you in advance when that will be the case. At all other times, leave them somewhere else or turn them off. Exceptions granted only for legitimate academic reasons, for which you must receive approval from me in advance.

Academic Honesty: Please review and familiarize yourself with the provisions of the Code of Student Conduct regarding academic honesty, <http://conduct.uoregon.edu>. Violations of academic honesty will be met with disciplinary action (the usual punishment is an "F" for the course).

Inclement Weather: It is generally expected that class will meet unless the University is officially closed for inclement weather. If it becomes necessary to cancel class while the University remains open, this will be announced on Canvas.

#### RESOURCES

Accessible Education: The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in accessibility related barriers to your participation, please notify me as soon as possible. You may also wish to contact the Accessible Education Center (formerly Disability Services) in 164 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155, [uoaec@uoregon.edu](mailto:uoaec@uoregon.edu), or at [aec.uoregon.edu](http://aec.uoregon.edu).

University Teaching and Learning Center (TLC): TLC provides numerous resources (including courses, workshops, and tutoring) to help UO students succeed. They work with a diverse student body with a wide range of needs. If you are unsure which resources would work best, they are happy to answer questions and share suggestions. Web: <http://tlc.uoregon.edu/> – Phone: 541-346-3226.

University Counseling and Testing Center (UCTC): The UCTC provides comprehensive mental health care and testing services to the University of Oregon campus. The primary mission of the UCTC is to provide quality clinical/therapeutic services, psychological testing and assessment, psychoeducational workshops, and outreach as

well as emergency services. Web: <http://counseling.uoregon.edu/dnn/> – Phone: 541-346-3227

**Sexual Violence:** The UO is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic and dating violence and gender-based stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences gender-based violence (intimate partner violence, attempted or completed sexual assault, harassment, coercion, stalking, etc.), know that you are not alone. UO has staff members trained to support survivors in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more.

Please be aware that all UO employees are required reporters. This means that if you tell me about a situation, I may have to report the information to my supervisor or the Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity. Although I have to report the situation, you will still have options about how your case will be handled, including whether or not you wish to pursue a formal complaint. Our goal is to make sure you are aware of the range of options available to you and have access to the resources you need.

If you wish to speak to someone confidentially, you can call 541-346-SAFE, UO's 24hr hotline, to be connected to a confidential counselor to discuss your options. You can also visit the SAFE website at [safe.uoregon.edu](http://safe.uoregon.edu)

**Threatening, Violent or Disruptive Behavior:** The University provides both counseling services and training opportunities related to violence prevention and active shooter training. You can find out more here: <http://emc.uoregon.edu/content/threatening-violent-or-disruptive-behavior>