

NRES 200: Introduction to Sustainable Communities

Spring 2023

Syllabus

Professor: Chamomile Nusz

Class: Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:00 am – 12:15 pm

Office: TNR Room 271

Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday mornings by appointment

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

What is community sustainability? How do we envision, create, and maintain sustainable communities? NRES 200 will explore these important questions. We will critically examine how sustainability's social, economic, institutional, and environmental dimensions interconnect with asset-based community development. Key concepts covered in the course include systems thinking, complexity, and resilience; sustainable infrastructure and green building; food, energy, and economics; and collaborative approaches to community planning and design.

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY AND APPROACH

My goal is to help you develop the knowledge, skills, and creativity required to address the sustainability challenges facing humanity and create and capitalize on new opportunities. My teaching style is to create a space for you to learn that is engaging, interactive, participatory, and hands-on. Knowledge has to be built by every individual. No one can give you knowledge. With this class, like most other situations, you will get out of the class what you put into it. That is, your learning will be proportional to your effort and engagement. Every student will be responsible for a significant amount of the learning that takes place both inside and outside the classroom.

I. COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the completion of this course, students will be able to critically evaluate the social, economic, institutional, and environmental dimensions of sustainability challenges facing communities and formulate clear, effective solutions to those challenges. More specifically, students will be able to:

1. Define “sustainability” in terms of social, economic, institutional, and environmental dimensions;

2. Use systems thinking to explore how these dimensions interact in coupled social-ecological systems;
3. Examine the core concepts, processes, and methods of the planning field and explore relevant community plans;
4. Explore and apply key concepts, strategies, and tools for sustainable community development;
5. Conduct self-directed sustainability research including creating a research question, analyzing relevant literature, collecting and analyzing data, and reporting results and conclusions;
6. Communicate ideas formally and informally through speaking and writing.

These course learning outcomes are closely aligned with the UW-Stevens Point General Education Program (GEP) outcomes for both Social Science and Environmental Responsibility, as detailed below.

GEP Social Science Outcomes:

1. Explain or apply major concepts, methods, or theories used in the social sciences to investigate, analyze, or predict human behavior.
2. Examine and explain how social, cultural, or political institutions influence individuals or groups

GEP Environmental Responsibility Outcomes:

1. Identify interactions between human society and the natural environment.
2. Analyze the individual, social, cultural, and ecological factors that influence environmental sustainability.
3. Evaluate competing claims that inform environmental debates.

II. COURSE DETAILS

A. LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

This course will use the online learning management software CANVAS. All assignments, discussions, instructor updates, non-textbook readings, and other course materials will be posted on the CANVAS platform. We will use class time for interactive lectures, field trips, discussions, exams, peer reviews, and other activities. Our classroom will be an inclusive environment. We will have a great opportunity to learn from each other and to appreciate and understand our differences through a respectful exchange of ideas and opinions. Disrespect or disparagement will not be tolerated.

B. READINGS AND LECTURES

The required textbooks for this course are (a) Asset Building and Community Development by Green and Haines. Other weekly readings will be posted on CANVAS. The reading assignments are required and will structure our class discussions. I expect you to be able to explain,

interpret, apply, analyze, and evaluate the reading material. Please note that I may amend required readings during the semester.

C. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

1. Participation (50 points, ~8% of grade)
 - a. Active participation is a crucial component of this course.
 - b. You will participate in field trips and other exploratory activities that provide experiential knowledge of community sustainability.
2. Weekly responses to questions and discussion with classmates in Canvas about field trips/readings (100 points, 17% of grade)
 - a. You will be expected to answer the questions asked and respond to at least two classmates' questions.
3. Postings/Discussions in Canvas (50 points, ~8% of grade)
 - a. You will participate in an ongoing discussion thread hosted in Canvas. You can post news, events, photos, etc.; and otherwise, discuss a variety of sustainability issues. You are expected to complete a minimum of 1 discussion post per week.
4. Sustainability Research Report (200 points, ~33% of grade)
 - a. In this assignment you will learn how to propose, research, write, and present a professional research report.
5. Community Involvement (100 points, ~17% of grade)
 - a. By midterm, you will be expected to be actively involved with one community or school organization/club. You will turn in a paper on why you chose that organization/club.
6. Final Presentation on Community Involvement (100 points, ~17% of grade)
 - a. You will share a presentation on your organization/club and how they are positively impacting sustainability within the community.
7. Total Points = 600 points

D. EXTRA CREDIT OPPORTUNITIES

1. Campus Event (30 points): You may attend up to 3 campus sustainability events and write a short report summarizing the experience (10 points for each event).
2. Participate in an Earth Day Event (10 points): You may attend an earth day event and write a short report summarizing the experience.
3. Intentional Shopping (30 points): You may write a short report summarizing your experience of intentionally shopping for one month (10 points for each month you do it up to 3 months)

E. GRADING SCALE

92.6% or higher = A
90.0 – 92.5% = A-
87.6 – 89.9% = B+
82.6 – 87.5% = B

80.0 – 82.5% = B-
77.6 – 79.9% = C+
72.6 – 77.5% = C
70.0 – 72.5% = C-
67.6 – 69.9% = D+
62.6 – 67.5% = D
60.0 – 62.5% = D-
Less than 60% = F

III. COURSE POLICIES

A. ASSIGNMENTS

To receive full credit, assignments must be submitted by the stated deadline. Assignments turned in after the deadline will be considered late and will be subject to a 10% per day late penalty, including weekends. Deductions will be capped after one week; if the instructor opts to accept a very late assignment, it will be worth up to 30% of the total available points. We understand that extenuating circumstances may come up, those will need to be evaluated on a case by case basis by the professor.

B. ATTENDANCE

A student will be marked absent if they do not (a) attend a scheduled synchronous lecture, or (b) follow instructions for asynchronous participation as detailed above. Absences due to illness, family emergency, etc. may be excused if a written explanation is provided beforehand (except for emergencies, in which case an explanation should be provided as soon as practical). If absences occur on days when assignments are due, it is the student's responsibility to submit their work prior to the due date in order to receive full credit. If you need to miss a scheduled presentation assignment or exam, you must inform me beforehand and must explain why you are unable to be present at the scheduled time. Unexcused absences from presentations and exams will result in a grade of zero points.

C. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

All work (unless part of a group project) must be done independently. Cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic misconduct will not be tolerated and will result in a grade of zero on the assignment. In addition, assignments turned in through CANVAS will be linked to turnitin.com – a program that compares your work to other sources to check for originality. The UWSP Community Bill of Rights and Responsibilities specifies the University policies regarding academic misconduct and disciplinary action. This can be found at the following web address: <https://www.uwsp.edu/dos/Pages/Academic-Misconduct.aspx>.

Please further note that free-riding will not be tolerated in group activities; no student will be allowed to share the benefits of group work without completing their share of the workload. If there is a problem with the group dynamics, it is imperative that you call it to my attention at the

earliest possible time. If your group would like to meet with me for assistance on a group project, I will make myself readily available. If evidence of a free-riding problem arises, we will attempt to address it at a group meeting. If the problem persists, the free rider will be removed from the group by the instructor and will receive 0 points for the project.

D. OTHER COURSE POLICIES

- All written work is expected to be grammatically correct, neat, and well-organized. Work that is sloppy, hard to read, does not follow the prescribed format, and/or contains many spelling and/or grammatical errors will receive a deduction.
- Cell phones will be put into pockets/backpacks/bags or otherwise stowed away during lectures and discussions. The appearance of your cell phone during class will indicate your disinterest in the topic and will thus count as an absence, and you will lose attendance points when this occurs.

E. EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

- See the UW-Stevens Point Emergency Management Plan at www.uwsp.edu/rmgt for details on all emergency response issues at UWSP.

F. ACCESSIBILITY STATEMENT

If you have a learning or physical challenge which requires classroom accommodation, please contact the UWSP Disability Services office with your documentation as early as possible in the semester: 103 Student Services Center, (715) 346-3365; TTY (715) 346-3363; www.uwsp.edu/special/disability/studentinfo.html

**** THE SYLLABUS, ASSIGNMENTS, GRADE WEIGHTS, AND COURSE SCHEDULE ARE ALL SUBJECT TO CHANGE. THE INSTRUCTOR WILL NOTIFY THE STUDENTS AS SOON AS ANY SUCH CHANGES ARE MADE AND WILL PROVIDE UPDATED COURSE MATERIALS AS APPROPRIATE. ****