

NRES 200: Introduction to Sustainable Communities

Spring 2022

Syllabus

Dr. Jeremy Solin

Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 11:00am – 12:15pm

Office: TNR Room 176

Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursdays by appointment

Office phone number:

E-mail: jsolin@uwsp.edu (preferred method of contact)

I. 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 the social, economic, institutional, and environmental dimensions of sustainability 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.

A. TEACHING PHILOSOPHY AND APPROACH

My goal is to help you develop the knowledge, skills, and creativity required to address the sustainability challenges facing humanity, as well as creating and capitalizing 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.

B. 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 to 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. CORONAVIRUS

A. CLASS PRINCIPLES

- We will be patient and kind to ourselves and others. We will adjust our expectations as necessary and appropriate for unprecedented circumstances.
- We will prioritize clear communication and flexibility, shared support for one another.

B. FACE COVERINGS

At all UW-Stevens Point campus locations, the wearing of face coverings is mandatory in all buildings, including classrooms, laboratories, studios, and other instructional spaces. Any student with a condition that impacts their use of a face covering should contact the Disability and Assistive Technology Center to discuss accommodations in classes. Please note that unless everyone is wearing a face covering, in-person classes cannot take place. This is university policy and not up to the discretion of individual instructors. Failure to adhere to this requirement could result in formal withdrawal from the course.

C. OTHER GUIDANCE

- [Testing](#) is now required every week for all unvaccinated employees and students. Learn more about health precautions, testing and transitioning safely to campus at our [COVID-19 website](#). If you are not feeling well or believe you have been exposed to COVID-19, do not come to class; email your instructor and contact Student Health Service (715-346-4646).
- As with any type of absence, students are expected to communicate their need to be absent and complete the course requirements as outlined in the syllabus.
- Maintain a minimum of 6 feet of physical distance from others whenever possible.
- Do not congregate in groups before or after class; stagger your arrival and departure from the classroom, lab, or meeting room.
- Wash your hands or use appropriate hand sanitizer regularly and avoid touching your face.
- Please maintain these same healthy practices outside the classroom.

III. 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, 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 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)

Active participation is a crucial component of this course. Your participation grade includes the following elements:

- a. **Attendance (25 points, ~4% of grade)**
- b. **Class Activities (25 points, ~4% of grade)**

You will participate in field trips and other exploratory activities that provide experiential knowledge of community sustainability.

2. Postings/Discussions in Canvas (50 points, ~8% of grade)—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 2 discussion posts per week.

3. SimCity – Creating a Sustainable Community (100 points, ~17% of grade)

You will download SimCity 2000 or SimCity BuildIt on your PC, laptop, or mobile device, and create two different cities throughout the semester. You will then compose an analytical paper comparing and contrasting your two cities.

4. Sustainability Research Report (200 points, ~33% of grade)

In this assignment you will learn how to propose, research, write, and present a professional research report.

5. Midterm Exam (100 points, ~17% of grade)

6. Final Exam (100 points, ~17% of grade)

Total Points = 600 points

D. EXTRA CREDIT OPPORTUNITIES

1. **Campus Sketchup (10 points):** You may use Sketchup software to make a 3D image of campus.
2. **Photoshop Campus Map (10 points):** You may use photoshop to make a map of campus.
3. **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).

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

IV. 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.

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 in 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

- Posting course materials onto course-sharing websites directly violates the instructor's copyright on his intellectual property; permission to do so is unequivocally denied.
- 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 grade of zero points.
- Cell phones will be put into pockets/backpacks/bags or otherwise stowed away during lecture and discussion. 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. ****

Week	Date	Lecture Topic	Readings	Assignments and Activities
1	January 25	Overview and Introductions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Green and Haines, Chapter 3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read!
	January 27	Defining Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remington-Doucette, Chapter 1, p.3-13 and 28-42 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start Sim City Activity 1: Say Hello Start Canvas Discussion
2	February 1	Challenges, Assets, & Community Capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Green and Haines, Chapter 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
	February 3	Systems Thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kim, Introduction to Systems Thinking How Complexity Leads to Simplicity Video Remington-Doucette, Chapter 2, pp. 66-98 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Canvas Discussion Activity 2: Systems Map
3	February 8	Resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walker, et al. Chapter 2, pp. 28-38 City Resilience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainability Research Proposal due
	February 10	Human Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remington-Doucette, Chapter 1, pp. 21-31 10 years to transform the future of humanity -- or destabilize the planet Johan Rockström - YouTube Planetary Boundaries Video 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Canvas Discussion
4	February 15	Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mathez, Chapter 5 and 6 	
	February 17	Economics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newton and Contarello, Chapter 1 Senge, Chapter 8 Neoliberal Capitalism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Canvas Discussion
5	February 22	Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kelly & Becker. Chapter 01, Introduction to Planning. 	
	February 24	Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Green and Haines, Asset Building, Chapter 4, p.78-89 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sim City photo due; delete/start again Canvas Discussion
6	March 1	Exam Review	Ask questions about the material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainability Report Draft #1 due
	March 3	Midterm - online		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Canvas Discussion
7	March 8	Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Green and Haines, Asset Building, Chapter 4, p.89-106 	
	March 10	Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mathez, Chapter 10 Wisconsin Megatrends: Energy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Canvas Discussion

8	March 15	Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green and Haines, Asset Building, Chapter 13, p.321-330 • Caton-Campbell – Community Food Systems • Eshel, et al. Livestock production impacts 	
	March 17	Local Food and Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field trip – Meet at the Farmshed downtown on Briggs Street (TENTATIVE) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canvas Discussion • Activity 3: Find the Food
March 21-27 Spring Break				
9	March 29	Community Capitals - Environmental Capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green and Haines, Asset Building, Chapter 10, p. 254-256 and 260-282. 	
	March 31	Social, Financial, and Human Capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green and Haines, Asset Building, Chapter 7 and 9 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canvas Discussion
10	April 5	In-class research project work time		
	April 7	Political Capital and Power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green and Haines, Asset Building, Chapter 11 • Bring 2 hard copies of Draft #2 to class for peer reviewers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability Report Draft #2 due • Canvas Discussion
11	April 12	Peer Reviews		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity 4: Peer Feedback
	April 14	Physical Capital: Neighborhoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Girling and Kellett. Skinny Streets and Green Neighborhoods, Chapter 1 • Infill Restructuring, pp. 1-36 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canvas Discussion
12	April 19	Physical Capital: Green Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green and Haines, Asset Building, Chapter 8 • Wisconsin Megatrends: Housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity 5: Explore Urban Form
	April 21	Transportation	Community tour/discussion (TENTATIVE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canvas Discussion • Sim City Final Report due
13	April 26	Campus Sustainability	Campus Tour (TENTATIVE)	
	April 28	Research Presentations		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canvas Discussion • Sustainability Final Report (Due May 1)

14	May 3	Research Presentations		
	May 5	Research Presentations		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canvas Discussion
15	May 10	Research Presentations		
	May 12	Class wrap up, prep for final exam		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canvas Discussion
	May 16	Final Exam	Monday, May 16, 12:30PM - 2:30PM	online