

# NRES 200: Introduction to Sustainable Communities

## Fall 2020 Syllabus

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**Dr. Robin Rothfeder**

**Monday and Wednesday from 2:00 – 3:15 pm**

### Contact

- [rrothfed@uwsp.edu](mailto:rrothfed@uwsp.edu)
- CANVAS messenger

### Lecture

- Access through CANVAS Zoom Application
- Meeting Password: 200

### Office Hours

- Mon. & Thurs., 11 am – 12 pm, or by appt.
  - <https://uwsp.zoom.us/j/9074408715>
    - Phone: (312)-626-6799
  - Meeting ID: 907 440 8715
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## 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 approach is to create a learning environment that is engaging, interactive, participatory, and hands-on. 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***

- This is new and different for all of us. We will be patient and kind to ourselves and others. We will adjust our expectations as necessary and appropriate for unprecedented circumstances.
- We will approach this course with the same enthusiasm, commitment, and overall learning style as a traditional in-person class. We will work together to build a learning community by mastering the technology we have available.
- 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***

- Please monitor your own health each day using this screening tool. 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, and (b) *Sustainable World: Approaches to Analyzing and Resolving Wicked Problems* by Remington-Doucette. 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 (250 points, 20% of grade)**

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

##### **a. Attendance (100 points)**

- Synchronous – Students are encouraged to attend lectures synchronously whenever possible.
- Asynchronous: All course meetings will be recorded in Zoom and posted to CANVAS. For any class day not attended synchronously, students may earn attendance points by doing the following: (i) watch the recorded lecture, (ii) write 1-2 comments or questions that you think would add to the synchronous discussion, and (iii) post these to the class *Asynchronous Participation* discussion thread available in CANVAS. For full credit, these posts will be due by midnight on Friday each week.

**b. Discussions in CANVAS (150 points)**—You will participate in an ongoing discussion thread hosted through CANVAS, in which you will answer instructor prompts; post comments, news, events, etc.; and otherwise discuss a variety of sustainability issues. Students are expected to complete a minimum of 2 discussion posts per week.

#### **2. Class Activities (100 points, 10% of grade)**

In place of standard course field trips, students will have the opportunity to complete exploratory activities that provide experiential knowledge of community sustainability.

#### **3. SimCity – Creating a Sustainable Community (150 points, 15% 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, 20% of grade)**

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

#### **5. Midterm Exam (150 points, 15% of grade)**

#### **6. Final Exam (150 points, 15% of grade)**

### *D. EXTRA CREDIT OPPORTUNITIES*

1. **Campus Sketchup (50 points):** You may use Sketchup software to make a 3D image of campus.
2. **Photoshop Campus Map (50 points):** You may use photoshop to make a map of campus.
3. **Campus Event (50 points):** You may attend a campus sustainability event and write a short report summarizing the experience.

#### *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](http://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](http://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. \*\***

Class #, Date	Lecture Topic	Readings & Activities	Assignments
1) Sept. 2	Introductions, Sustainability def.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Green and Haines, Chapter 3</li> <li>Remington-Doucette, Chapter 1, p.3-13 and 28-42</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Start Sim City</li> <li>Start CANVAS Discussion</li> </ul>
2) Sept. 9	Challenges, Assets, & Community Capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Green and Haines, Chapter 1</li> <li><a href="#">How COVID challenges sustainability goals</a></li> </ul> Activity 1: Say hello	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Activity 1 due 9/11</li> </ul>
3) Sept. 14	Systems Thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kim, Introduction to Systems Thinking</li> <li><a href="#">How Complexity Leads to Simplicity Video</a></li> <li>Remington-Doucette, Chapter 2, pp. 66-98</li> </ul>	
4) Sept. 16	Systems Mapping	Activity 2: Map a system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sustainability Report Proposal due 9/16 by noon</li> <li>Activity 2 due 9/18</li> </ul>
5) Sept. 21	Resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walker et al., Chapter 2, pp. 28-38</li> <li>Remington-Doucette, Chapter 5, pp. 235-298</li> </ul>	
6) Sept. 23	Human Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remington-Doucette, Chapter 1, pp. 21-31</li> <li><a href="#">Planetary Boundaries Video</a></li> </ul>	
7) Sept. 28	Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kelly &amp; Becker, Chapter 01, Introduction to Planning</li> </ul>	
8) Sept. 30	Community Plans	Activity 3: Explore a plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Activity 3 due 10/2</li> </ul>
9) Oct. 5	Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Green and Haines, Asset Building, Chapter 4, p.78-89</li> <li>Remington-Doucette, Chapter 2, p. 99-111</li> </ul>	
10) Oct. 7	Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Green and Haines, Asset Building, Chapter 4, p.89-106</li> <li>Remington-Doucette, Chapter 3, pp. 121-161, 176-179</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sim City photo due 10/9</li> </ul>
11) Oct.12	Economics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Newton and Contarello, Chapter 1</li> <li>Senge, Chapter 8</li> <li><a href="#">Neoliberal Capitalism</a></li> </ul>	
12) Oct. 14	Exam Review	Activity 4: Create a question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Activity 4 due and Sustainability Report Draft #1 due 10/16</li> </ul>
*13) Oct. 19 – Oct. 21	<b>Midterm</b>	<b>Midterm available 10/19 @ 6 am to 10/21 @ 6 am</b>	
14) Oct. 21	Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mathez, Chapter 10</li> <li><a href="#">Wisconsin Megatrends: Energy</a></li> </ul>	

15) Oct. 26	Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Mathez, Chapter 5 and 6</b></li> </ul>	
16) Oct. 28	Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Green and Haines, Asset Building, Chapter 13, p.321-330</b></li> <li>• <b>Caton-Campbell – Community Food Systems</b></li> </ul>	
*17) Nov. 2	Local Food and Agriculture	Activity 5: Find the energy, and/or the food	
18) Nov. 4	Environmental Capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Green and Haines, Asset Building, Chapter 10, p. 254-256 and 260-282.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activity 5 due 11/6</li> </ul>
19) Nov. 9	Social, Financial, and Human Capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Green and Haines, Asset Building, Chapter 7 and 9</b></li> </ul>	
20) Nov. 11	Political Capital and Power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Green and Haines, Asset Building, Chapter 11</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainability Report Draft #2 due 11/13</li> </ul>
*21) Nov. 16	Peer Reviews	Activity 6: Give and receive feedback	
22) Nov. 18	Physical Capital: Green Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Green and Haines, Asset Building, Chapter 8</b></li> <li>• <a href="#">Wisconsin Megatrends: Housing</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activity 6 due 11/20</li> </ul>
23) Nov. 23	Physical Capital: Neighborhoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Girling and Kellett. Skinny Streets, Chapter 1</b></li> <li>• <b>Infill Restructuring, pp. 1-36</b></li> </ul>	
24) Nov. 25	Work Day		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sim City Final Report due 11/25</li> </ul>
*25) Nov. 30	Urban Form	Activity 7: Explore zoning or transportation	
26) Dec. 2	Research Presentations		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activity 7 due 12/4</li> </ul>
27) Dec. 7	Research Presentations		
28) Dec. 9	Review for Final	Activity 8: Create a question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activity 8 and Sustainability Final Report due 12/11</li> </ul>
<b>*29) Dec. 14 – Dec. 16</b>	<b>Final Exam</b>	<b>Final available 12/14 @ 6 am to 10/16 @ 6 am</b>	

\*No class meeting; please complete the assigned activity on your own time.