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**Sustainability and Society**  
**SUST 201, Fall 2015**  
**3 credits**  
**University of South Dakota**

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**Instructor:**

Dr. Meghann Jarchow

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Office hours: Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays 11am-1pm or by appointment

**Course meeting times and location:**

Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 1pm-1:50pm in Beacom Hall room 244

**Course prerequisites**

None

**Course textbook**

*Demystifying Sustainability: Towards Real Solutions* by Haydn Washington [ISBN: 978-1-138-81269-7]

Other course materials will be made available through the course Desire to Learn (D2L) site.

**Course overview**

Sustainability is an emerging field that seeks to address many of society's complex and interdisciplinary issues. Many people have different definitions of sustainability. I think of sustainability as asking the questions "What kind of world do we want?" and "How can we effect change to move towards that world?" Sustainability is often described as moving towards systems that are environmentally beneficial, socially just, and economically profitable both now and into the future.

Unlike many other academic disciplines, sustainability is *normative*, which means that we are saying how we value things and are making claims about how they should be. We will not all have the same opinion on how things should be – for example, because of different values that we hold, we may not agree about whether the government should require all businesses to provide health care for its employees. But, a focus of this class will be on how to discuss complex, sustainability issues with others.

Because sustainability is normative and often action oriented, there will be three distinct types of learning that I hope will happen in this course.

- We will learn about a range of sustainability issues (i.e. learn the "content").
- We will work in teams to apply the content to specific – often local – issues.
- We will do sustainability.

Therefore, we will be "examining," "evaluating," and "doing" sustainability.

### ***Desired learning outcomes***

I have eight course-specific, desired learning outcomes. These learning outcomes span knowledge acquisition to application and integration of that knowledge to using that knowledge to effect change to learning how to be a more effective learner.

| <b>Learning outcomes</b>   | <b>Assessments evaluating outcomes</b>   |
|--|--|
| Explain the concepts of sustainability, affluence, privilege, environmental justice, and sustainable development | Quizzes (individual & group)   |
| Schematize how the component parts of sustainability are related   | Projects (individual & group)  |
| Evaluate how your lifestyle, race, and background affect social and environmental sustainability                 | Projects (individual & group), Voices of Discovery, NICC collaboration               |
| Evaluate sustainable development in Vermillion, SD   | Projects (individual & group)  |
| Create concept maps to evaluate topics using a systems-thinking approach   | Projects (individual & group)  |
| Appraise group/team dynamics and personality styles better   | Team-member evaluations  |
| Identify an area of sustainability that you are passionate about   | AtES project, quizzes (individual & group), projects (individual & group)            |
| Identify opportunities for how you can effect change   | AtES project, Voices of Discovery, NICC collaboration, projects (individual & group) |

This course also partially fulfills a general education requirement in the social sciences. There are five desired learning outcomes related to fulfilling this general education requirement.

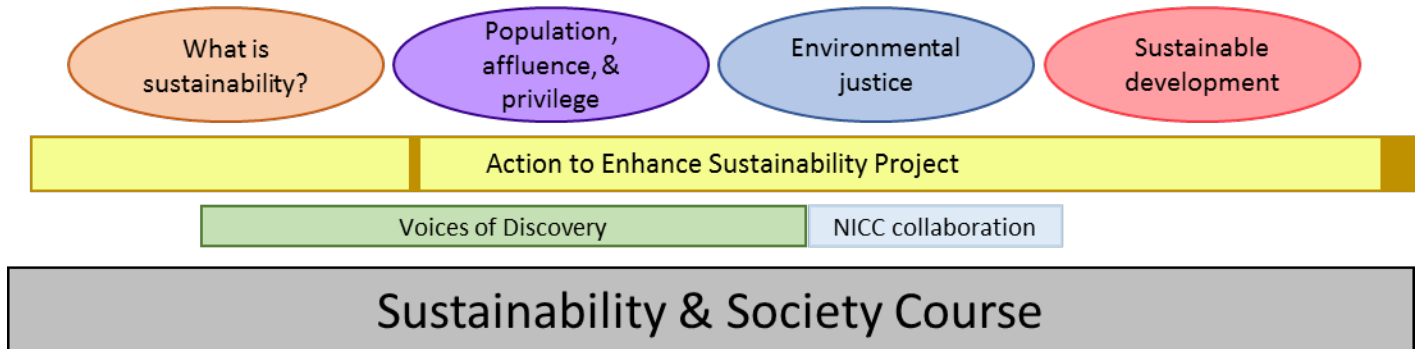
| <b>Learning outcomes</b>  | <b>Assessments evaluating outcomes</b>   |
|---|--|
| Identify and explain basic concepts, terminology, and theories of the selected social sciences disciplines from different spatial, temporal, cultural and/or institutional contexts | Quizzes (individual & group), projects (individual & group)  |
| Apply selected social science concepts and theories to contemporary issues  | Quizzes (individual & group), projects (individual & group)  |
| Identify and explain the social or aesthetic values of different cultures   | Voices of Discovery, NICC collaboration, projects (individual & group)                               |
| Have a basic understanding of the allocation of human or natural resources within societies   | Quizzes (individual & group), projects (individual & group), AtES project                            |
| Have a basic understanding of the impact of diverse philosophical, ethical, or religious views  | Voices of Discovery, NICC collaboration, quizzes (individual & group), projects (individual & group) |

**Course structure**

I will be using a strategy called team-based learning in this course. Team-based learning is centered on small-group learning where students gain foundational knowledge largely outside of class and use in-class time to apply the knowledge in teams. The structure of team-based learning courses is different from more traditional lecture courses. *Some students will find this type of course easier than lecture-based courses, while other students may find team-based learning to be more difficult.*

Because team-based learning emphasizes working in teams, a significant proportion of your grade will be determined by the scores that your team receives and feedback from your team members (see the “Assessments” section below for more information).

Below is a schematic of the general structure of the course. The course will be divided into four modules: what is sustainability; population, affluence, and privilege; environmental justice; and sustainable development. There will also be three projects that will be ongoing for large portions of the semester: the Action to Enhance Sustainability (AtES) project, the Voices of Discovery program, and a collaboration with the Nebraska Indian Community College (NICC). See the “Course schedule” section below for more information.



**Attendance:**

This is a team-based, discussion class. Therefore, your attendance is critical for maximizing your learning experience. If you will be missing a class, please inform me BEFORE the absence. You will be allowed **three absences** over the course of the semester. Beyond three absences, *ten points* will be deducted from your attendance grade for each absence (unless more than three absences are excused as described by the “Excused Absence Policy” – <http://link.usd.edu/243>).

**Assessments:**

You will be assessed using a variety of methods. The tentative assessments and point totals are listed below. More detailed descriptions of the assessment are available on D2L.

|   |                   |
|---|-------------------|
| Attendance (100% individual)                                      | 50 points         |
| Quizzes (50% individual, 50% group)                               | 90 points         |
| Action to Enhance Sustainability (AtES) project (100% individual) | 100 points        |
| Voices of Discovery (100% individual)                             | 50 points         |
| NICC collaboration (80% individual, 20% group)                    | 50 points         |
| Projects (25% individual, 75% group)                              | 160 points        |
| Team-member evaluations (33% individual, 67% group)               | 30 points         |
| Extra credit (per approved event) (100% individual)               | 5 points          |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  | <b>530 points</b> |

Grades for the course will be assigned using the following scale:

|             |            |
|-------------|------------|
| A (100-90%) | D (69-60%) |
| B (89-80%)  | F (59-0%)  |
| C (79-70%)  |            |

No make-ups will be allowed for the individual and group quizzes unless you have made arrangements with me prior to the quizzes. Late assignments will not be accepted for some assignments such as the individual projects. Please talk with me about specific incidences for late assignments.

***Diversity and Inclusive Excellence:***

The University of South Dakota strives to foster a globally inclusive learning environment where opportunities are provided for diversity to be recognized and respected.

***Academic integrity:***

The College of Arts and Sciences considers plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic dishonesty inimical to the objectives of higher education. The College supports the imposition of penalties on students who engage in academic dishonesty, as defined in the "Conduct" section of the University of South Dakota Student Handbook.

No credit can be given for a dishonest assignment. A student found to have engaged in any form of academic dishonesty may, at the discretion of the instructor, be:

- a. Given a zero for that assignment.
- b. Allowed to rewrite and resubmit the assignment for credit.
- c. Assigned a reduced grade for the course.
- d. Dropped from the course.
- e. Failed in the course.

***Freedom in learning:***

Under Board of Regents and University policy student academic performance may be evaluated solely on an academic basis, not on opinions or conduct in matters unrelated to academic standards. Students should be free to take reasoned exception to the data or views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled. Students who believe that an academic evaluation reflects prejudiced or capricious consideration of student opinions or conduct unrelated to academic standards should contact the dean of the college that offers the class to initiate a review of the evaluation.

***Disability accommodation:***

Any student who feels s/he may need academic accommodations or access accommodations based on the impact of a documented disability should contact and register with Disability Services during the first week of class or as soon as possible after the diagnosis of a disability. Disability Services is the official office to assist students through the process of disability verification and coordination of appropriate and reasonable accommodations. Students currently registered with Disability Services must obtain a new accommodation memo each semester.

Please note: if your home institution is not the University of South Dakota but one of the other South Dakota Board of Regents institutions (e.g., SDSU, SDSMT, BHSU, NSU, DSU), you should work with the disability services coordinator at your home institution.

Ernetta L. Fox, Director  
Disability Services, Room 119 Service Center  
(605)677-6389  
Web Site: [www.usd.edu/ds](http://www.usd.edu/ds)  
E-mail: [disabilityservices@usd.edu](mailto:disabilityservices@usd.edu)

### Tentative course schedule

An up-do-date course schedule will be available on D2L.

| Date   | Topic  | Before-class preparation  |
|--------|--|---|
| 24-Aug | Course goals & introductions                             |   |
| 26-Aug | Assign teams & syllabus quiz                             | Read syllabus   |
| 28-Aug | Personality styles, pre-course assessments, AtES project | Do Big 5 personality test, read AtES description  |
| 31-Aug | What is sustainability quizzes                           | Book (pg 1-46, 136-158), Deep Sustainability (article)  |
| 2-Sep  | What is sustainability                                   |   |
| 4-Sep  | What is sustainability                                   |   |
| 7-Sep  | Labor Day – no class                                     |   |
| 9-Sep  | Visioning for sustainability                             |   |
| 11-Sep | Vermillion visioning                                     |   |
| 14-Sep | Systems thinking   |   |
| 16-Sep | Systems thinking & describe projects                     |   |
| 18-Sep | Concept mapping  |   |
| 21-Sep | Group project #1   | Individual project #1   |
| 23-Sep | Dr. John Ikerd guest lecture                             |   |
| 25-Sep | Population, affluence, & privilege quizzes               | Book (pg 114-135), Vegan Diet Best for Planet (article), White Fragility (article), Another Dead Black Male (animation), America's Native Prisoners of War (TED Talk) |
| 28-Sep | Population   |   |
| 30-Sep | Affluence  |   |
| 2-Oct  | Privilege  | AtES proposal due   |
| 5-Oct  | Privilege  |   |
| 7-Oct  | Privilege  |   |
| 9-Oct  | Group project #2   | Individual project #2   |
| 12-Oct | Native American Day – no class                           |   |
| 13-Oct | USD to NICC (different class day & class from 11am-5pm)  |   |
| 16-Oct | Environmental justice quizzes                            | Book (pg 94-115), Love Canal (video), Homeland (documentary), Dammed Indians (video)  |
| 19-Oct | Dr. Justin Moss guest lecture (proposed)                 |   |
| 21-Oct | Environmental justice                                    |   |
| 23-Oct | NICC to USD (class from noon-2pm)                        |   |
| 26-Oct | AASHE - no class   | Formative team-member evaluations due   |
| 28-Oct | NICC & Voices of Discovery reflection                    |   |
| 30-Oct | Women & water  |   |
| 2-Nov  | Hazardous waste & Love Canal                             |   |
| 4-Nov  | Justice for Native Americans                             |   |
| 6-Nov  | Group project #3   | Individual project #3   |
| 9-Nov  | Dr. Devan McGranahan guest lecture                       |   |
| 11-Nov | Veterans Day – no class                                  |   |
| 13-Nov | Sustainable development quizzes                          | Book (pg 47-70), No Growth is the Answer (book chapter); The Age of Sustainable Development (video)   |

|        |   |                                       |
|--------|---|---------------------------------------|
| 16-Nov | Ms. Mandie Weinandt guest lecture (proposed)                      |                                       |
| 18-Nov | Growth versus development   |                                       |
| 20-Nov | Sustainable development   |                                       |
| 23-Nov | Course evaluations & assessments                                  |                                       |
| 25-Nov | Thanksgiving Break – no class                                     |                                       |
| 27-Nov | Thanksgiving Break – no class                                     |                                       |
| 30-Nov | Vermillion sustainable development                                |                                       |
| 2-Dec  | Group project #4  | Individual project #4                 |
| 4-Dec  | Solutions   | Book (pg 191-214)                     |
| 7-Dec  | AtES presentations  | Summative team-member evaluations due |
| 11-Dec | AtES presentations <b>(final exam period, class from 3pm-5pm)</b> | AtES final report due                 |