



# SUSTAINABILITY IN ACTION

EVPP 480 SPRING 2011

4 Credits



## Instructor

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## Course Description

In the wake of global concerns about environmental change, the issue of attaining sustainability has become internationally important. To attain sustainability requires action at environmental, social and economic levels. To provide students with valuable and tangible experience in practical aspects of realizing sustainability goals and to transfer theory into practice, this course allows students to engage in real-world, sustainability-related projects that provide benefits for a target community.

Working in interdisciplinary teams, students will identify and attempt to solve a sustainability-related problem or address a sustainability-related need in a specific target community. Priority will be given to sustainability projects on the GMU campus or the local community. However, options for other relevant projects will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

## Course Prerequisites

This is intended to be the capstone course for the B.A. in Environmental and Sustainability Studies and the minor in Sustainability Studies. To enroll in this course undergraduate students must have completed or be concurrently enrolled in all other required general education courses. Prior sustainability and/or environmental studies course is also highly recommended; prior knowledge of such material is assumed.

## Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- identify and effectively address sustainability needs in their target “community”;
- utilize appropriate sustainability resources effectively;
- recognize and appreciate the interdisciplinary nature of sustainability;
- transform sustainability theory into practice, through use of action research.

## Course Requirements

1) This course requires students to complete at least 50 hours of project-related service outside the class period and to attend 18 class meetings (~2 hours each), observe one local government sustainability meeting, and contribute to delivering 1 Earth Week [or related sustainability] event over the course of the semester. (20 sessions in all, but you pick the government meeting -- see Session 2 options below -- and Earth Week event.)

2) Student teams will plan and implement their projects in consultation with a mentor from the community served by the project. For projects on the George Mason campus, the mentor will be an official from the Office of Sustainability.

3) Student teams will submit a formal project proposal at the 6<sup>th</sup> class session. Detailed guidelines and an evaluation rubric for this proposal will be provided in advance.

4) Students will report on their progress at the 11<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> class meetings. Detailed guidelines and an evaluation rubric for these progress reports will be provided in advance.

5) Students will document their projects in a final portfolio. Detailed portfolio guidelines and an evaluation rubric will be provided. Portfolio will include written components to satisfy general education synthesis requirement for demonstration of competency in written communication.

6) At the final course meeting, students will make formal presentations on their projects to the class, along with a panel of guest faculty and community mentors. Detailed presentation guidelines and an evaluation rubric will be provided; this presentation will satisfy the general education synthesis requirement for demonstration of competency in oral communication.

7) Each student will select and circulate readings relevant to one of the weekly themes, and will facilitate discussion of these readings that week.

8) Participation in seminar discussions will also be graded (including providing readings and facilitation of discussion on a designated day.)

### **Assessment and Grading**

Community Mentor's Evaluation of Project—100 points (less 2 pts for each service hour recorded less than 50)  
Final Presentation—200 points  
Portfolio—400 points  
Participation—100 points

Grading scale:

<b>A+</b>	1000-970	<b>C+</b>	799-770
<b>A</b>	969-930	<b>C</b>	769-730
<b>A-</b>	929-900	<b>C-</b>	729-700
<b>B+</b>	899-870	<b>D</b>	699-600
<b>B</b>	869-830	<b>F</b>	599-0
<b>B-</b>	829-800		

### **Course Design**

Many of the 20 class meetings will be seminar sessions involving students and guest speakers from the GMU faculty and outside speakers dealing with sustainability issues in their teaching, research and practice. These sessions will focus on how sustainability is viewed by different disciplines and will provide practical information on how practitioners in different fields implement sustainability in their work. Presentations by guest speakers will be followed by student-facilitated discussions of readings relevant to the seminar topic. These readings will be chosen at least one week beforehand by the guest speakers and the student facilitators. The remaining class meetings will be designed to support student groups' work on projects and final presentations.

### **Course Web Site and Submission Policy**

Updated syllabus, all electronic course materials, announcements, rubrics, etc., will be posted to our course website, "201110.19639: EVPP-480-002," under the "Courses" tab at <http://mymason.gmu.edu>. Wherever practical, written assignments will also be submitted through this site, in order to reduce paper usage and ensure proper logging of submissions. If you have trouble accessing the site, please contact Dr. Dann.

### **Late Work**

Assignments are to be submitted before the beginning of class on the day due. Late work will be reduced one grade per day. No work will be accepted over one week late without a valid written medical excuse or notice of death in the family.

### **Honor Code**

When you enrolled in this course you agreed to abide by the university's Honor Code. The Honor Code does not preclude collaborative work, such as informal discussions and studying in communities. Nor does it preclude assigned group work. The Honor Code does require that work you, as an individual, turn in ultimately be the product of your own individual synthesis or integration of ideas, and that the work a group turns in ultimately be the product of the group's collective ideas. If you are uncertain of the line between collaboration and cheating, see an instructor. As always, cite your sources. If you do not, it is plagiarism. Plagiarism means lifting someone else's ideas or words and presenting them as your own without proper attribution of the source. This includes all sources, including those found on the Internet. Use an approved citation method, such as MLA, APA, etc.

### **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please communicate such to your professor and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703.993.2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

### **Sick Policy**

If you are too sick to come to class, have high fever, etc., please inform your professor ASAP. Insofar as no assignment is due that day, you will generally be offered attend in via [skype] webinar or provided with one or more optional make-up sessions (see "optional" items on schedule below). Assignments which are not submitted on-time on sick days will still be marked according to "Late Work" criteria above.

### **Email Policy**

GMU faculty and staff may only correspond with students through the students' GMU assigned email accounts. Emails sent from other accounts will not be answered.

## Tentative Schedule

#	Date	Activities	Tasks to complete <i>prior</i> to session
01	January 24 M	<b>Course Introduction</b> <b>On Campus and other Potential Projects</b> <b>Syllabus Refinement and Roles</b> <b>Logistics for Next Time</b>	Email Dr. Dann re: "Coming soon"  Complete weekly availability form at: <a href="http://doodle.com/fqwdxw5pu3k7zphs">http://doodle.com/fqwdxw5pu3k7zphs</a>
02A	Option 1 of 8: 26 W	<u>MWCOG Climate, Energy and Environmental Policy Committee</u> at MWCOG, Washington, DC (Union Station Metro sta., Red Line) 9:45-12:00pm (followed by free lunch) (or from a phone w/mute ON, call)	If participating, preview agenda items and materials on <a href="#">meeting page</a> ; coordinate with Dr. Dann in advance if calling in, or with peers if carpooling.
02B	Option 2 of 8: 28 F	<u>Arlington County Community Energy &amp; Sustainability Task Force</u> at Arlington County Central Library (Ballston Metro sta., Orange Line) 8:00-11:30am (preceded by free breakfast at 7:30am)	If participating, preview agenda items and Community Energy Plan draft report on <a href="#">CEP page</a> ; coordinate with peers if carpooling.
03	31 M	<b>C4SL Session 1. A Call to Sustainability: <i>The goal of a sustainable society is popular, but difficult to define. How does the way our society functions affect the earth, and how can we be "a blessing to the planet?"</i></b> <b>Session Facilitator:</b> <u>Lauren</u> <b>Session Opener:</b> <u>TBD</u>	Read <i>Choices for Sustainable Living</i> [C4SL], pp. 5-26 - from Dr. Dann
		<b>Syllabus Review/Revision</b>  <b>Introduction to Sustainability Transformation Action Research Teams (START):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Project approach, expectations, rubrics, process &amp; schedule.</li> <li>◆ Project discussion and team set-up</li> <li>◆ Proposal development</li> </ul>	Review UCLA's <a href="#">Action Research Teams site</a> ; be prepared to defend your choice of their best ART project executive summary  Optional: Skim Cogland and Brannick's <i>Doing Action Research in Your Own Organization</i> , pp. 3-17, <a href="#">on-line at Google Books</a> OR Allen's "The role of action research in environmental management," also <a href="#">on-line</a> .
**	February 2 W	<b>Planning/Service Day (Activity TBD)</b>	
2C	Option 3 of 8: 2 W	<b>Fairfax City Environmental Sustainability Committee</b> Fairfax City Hall (City Manager's Library, rm 316), 10455 Armstrong St. 6:30-8:30pm (For agenda and for credit, you <u>must</u> RSVP 48-hours in advance to Ms. Adrian Fremont at <a href="mailto:Adrian.Fremont@fairfaxva.gov">Adrian.Fremont@fairfaxva.gov</a> )	If participating, please preview agenda items and any materials provided by Ms. Fremont in advance.
--	optional: 3 Th (e.g., if you're missing a seminar and need a make-up)	<u>Edible Forest Gardens</u> Presented by David Jacke Sub II front Ballroom 1pm-2:30pm  OR  <b>Post-conflict natural resources management</b> Presented by Prof. Mikiyasu Nakayama, University of Tokyo Innovation 216G	

#	Date	Activities 4:30pm (followed by presented by Dr. Dann on Mason's sustainability)	Tasks to complete <i>prior</i> to session
04	7 M	<b>START meetings</b> , discuss draft START plans with peer/prof. feedback	Draft START proposals for sharing
05	9 W	<b>Seminar Topic 1: Sustainability in Architecture &amp; Engineering</b> Guest Speaker: Sharon DeMonsabert, Civil, Environmental, & Infrastructure Engineering <b>Session Facilitator(s):</b> _____	TBD by session facilitator, in consultation with speaker, and shared at least 1 week in advance.
06	14 M	<b>C4SL Session 2. Ecological Principles:</b> <i>Some argue that the earth is the best teacher of sustainable practices. How can nature's organizing principles be applied in design, production of goods, and everyday living?</i> <b>Session Facilitator:</b> _____ <b>Session Opener:</b> _____  <b>Present final START Proposals</b>	Read <i>C4SL</i> , pp. 27-40  Draft action plan (p. 40) and calculate Ecological Footprint, per link in <i>C4SL</i>  <b>Final START Proposals Due (100 points)</b>
07	16 W	<b>Seminar Topic 2: Generation Hot &amp; the New Era of Global Warming</b> Guest Speaker: Author Mark Hertsgaard Meese Conference Room, Ground Floor of College Hall, regular time (10:30am-12:30pm) <b>Session Facilitator(s):</b> _____	Read Hertsgaard's " <u>Confronting the Climate Cranks</u> " (Jan. 20, 2011)  Optional: Skim his new book, <i>HOT: Living Through the Next Fifty Years on Earth</i>
08	21 M	<b>C4SL Session 3. Buying:</b> <i>Daily messages tell us to buy, buy, buy. How can we escape from these cultural pressures, and instead only purchase what we truly need, from the most sustainable sources available?</i> <b>Session Facilitator:</b> _____ <b>Session Opener:</b> _____  <b>Earth Week:</b> Students ID and/or share which Earth Week events they plan to assist/help deliver.  <b>START meetings;</b> logistics for next session.	Read <i>C4SL</i> , pp.41-56 and do draft action plan.
09	23 W	<b>Seminar Topic 3: Managing the Planets' Freshwater*</b> w/Mason's Dr. Dann Sklarew (et al.) 3-5pm at Woodrow Wilson Center (Washington, DC – <i>RSVP required</i> )	(None)
**	28 M	<b>START meetings or Planning/Service Day (Activity TBD)</b>	
10	March 2 W	<b>C4SL Session 4. Food:</b> <i>According to one author, our food travels an average of 1300 miles before reaching our plates. How can we lessen our impact on the earth through conscious choices about the way we eat?</i> <b>Session Facilitator:</b> _____ <b>Session Opener:</b> _____ <b>OPTION:</b> Meet and tour Boxwoods restaurant (Mason Inn) or Southside? <b>OPTION:</b> Invite chef and/or sustainable food service reps?	Read <i>C4SL</i> , pp. 57-70 and do draft action plan (p. 70).
2D	Option 4 of 8: 2 W	<b>Fairfax City Environmental Sustainability Committee</b> Fairfax City Hall (City Manager's Library, rm 316), 10455 Armstrong St. 6:30-8:30pm (For agenda and for credit, you <u>must</u> RSVP 48-hours in advance to Ms. Adrian Fremont at <a href="mailto:Adrian.Fremont@fairfaxva.gov">Adrian.Fremont@fairfaxva.gov</a> )	If participating, please preview agenda items and any materials provided by Ms. Fremont in advance.

#	Date	Activities	Tasks to complete <i>prior</i> to session
**	7 M	<b>START meetings or Planning/Service Day (Activity TBD)</b>	
11	9 W	<b>First START Progress Reports:</b> Students will present their first progress report and gain faculty and peer feedback.	<b>Submit First Progress Report (50 pts)</b>
2E	<i>Option 5 of 8:</i> 11 F	<u><b>Arlington County Community Energy &amp; Sustainability Task Force</b></u> at Arlington County Central Library (Ballston Metro sta., Orange Line) 8:00-11:30am (preceded by free breakfast at 7:30am)	If participating, preview agenda items and any new materials on <u><a href="#">CEP page</a></u> ; coordinate with peers if carpooling.
--	14 M -16 W	SPRING BREAK	
12	21 M	<b>C4SL Session 5. Communities:</b> <i>Change does not come without people coming together and taking action. In what ways can your community work towards sustainability? How can you make your community a sustainable one?</i> <b>Session Facilitator:</b> _____ <b>Session Opener:</b> _____  <b>START meetings</b>	Read <i>C4SL</i> , pp. 71-86 and do draft action plan (p. 86).
2F	<i>Option 6 of 8:</i> 23 W	<u><b>MWCOG Climate, Energy and Environmental Policy Committee</b></u> at MWCOG, Washington, DC 9:45-12:00pm (followed by free lunch)  Required: <b>Seminar Topic 4: Managing the Ethnodiversity of Our Planet*</b> w/Mason's Dr. Susan Crate (et al.) 3-5pm at Woodrow Wilson Center (Washington, DC – RSVP required)	If participating at COG, preview agenda items on meeting page (see link from this date at <u><a href="#">CEEPC Events Calendar</a></u> ); coordinate with Dr. Dann in advance if calling in, or with peers if carpooling.
**	28 M	<b>START meetings or Planning/Service Day (Activity TBD)</b>	
13	30 W	<b>Seminar Topic 5: Sustainability and Public Policy</b> Peter Balint, Public and International Affairs (invited) Todd La Porte, School of Public Policy (invited) <b>Session Facilitator(s):</b> _____	TBD by session facilitator, in consultation with speakers, and shared at least 1 week in advance.
**	April 4 M	<b>START meetings or Planning/Service Day (Activity TBD)</b>	
14	6 W	<b>C4SL Session 6. Business and Economy:</b> <i>Is a growing economy equivalent to a healthy economy? What are other ways of measuring success, and how can we encourage businesses to adopt sustainable practices and perspectives?</i> <b>Session Facilitator:</b> _____ <b>Session Opener:</b> _____  <b>START meetings</b>	Read <i>C4SL</i> , pp. 87-102 and do draft action plan (p. 102).
2G	<i>Option 7 of 8:</i> 6 W	<b>Fairfax City Environmental Sustainability Committee</b> Fairfax City Hall (City Manager's Library, rm 316), 10455 Armstrong St. 6:30-8:30pm (For agenda and for credit, you <u>must</u> RSVP 48-hours in advance to Ms. Adrian Fremont at <u><a href="mailto:Adrian.Fremont@fairfaxva.gov">Adrian.Fremont@fairfaxva.gov</a></u> )	If participating, please preview agenda items and any materials provided by Ms. Fremont in advance.
**	11 M	<b>Seminar Topic 6. Strategic Planning and Entrepreneurship for Sustainability in the Private Sector</b> Nicole Darnall, Environmental Science and Policy, Mason (invited) Brenda Maday, Business Development and Management, LC (invited)	TBD by session facilitator, in consultation with speakers, and shared at least 1 week in advance.

#	Date	Activities	Tasks to complete <i>prior</i> to session
		<b>Session Facilitator(s):</b> _____	
15	13 W	<b>START meetings or Planning/Service Day (Activity TBD)</b>	
16	18 M	<b>Second Progress Report:</b> Students will present their second progress report and gain faculty and peer feedback on progress.  <b>Earth Week:</b> Students pitch Earth Week events, any last minute needs for peer assistance with delivery, PR or logistics.	<b>Submit Second Progress Report (50 pts)</b>
	<i>Optional:</i>	<b>Sustainability Economics</b> University Professor Thomas Lovejoy 2pm at location TBD	
17	18 M – 25 M	<b>Earth Week:</b> Each student helps deliver at least 1 activity or event.	
--	<i>Optional:</i> 19 T	<b>Innovating for Sustainability Showcase</b> 12-4pm in Johnson Center Dewberry Hall Lobby	
**	20 W	<b>Planning/Service Day (Activity TBD)</b>	
	<i>optional:</i> (e.g., if you're missing a seminar & need a make-up)	<b>Managing the Planet: Forests, Carbon, Climate and Fire*</b> w/Mason's Dr. William T. Sommers (et al.) 3-5pm at Woodrow Wilson Center (Washington, DC – RSVP required)  &/or <b>Pizza and Perspectives:</b> <b>US Climate Change Policy Options and Opportunities</b> Forum at Mason Arlington Campus (Founders Hall) 6-7:30pm at Mason Arlington Campus' Founders Hall (VA Sq. sta. Orange Line)	
**	27 M	<b>Planning/Service Day (Activity TBD)</b>	
18	29 W	<b>Seminar Topic 7: Sustainability and the Media</b> TBD, doctoral student, Mason Center for Climate Change Communication <b>Session Facilitator(s):</b> _____	TBD by session facilitator, in consultation with speaker, and shared at least 1 week in advance.
20	May 2 M	<b>C4SL Session 7. Visions of Sustainability:</b> <i>Choices we make today are shaping the world of tomorrow. What are the possible outcomes, and how can we create the most sustainable society for ourselves and our children?</i> <b>Session Facilitator:</b> _____ <b>Session Opener:</b> _____	Read <i>C4SL</i> , pp. 104-122  Finalize Final Action Plan
		<b>Share Final Action Plans</b>	
**	4 W	<b>Service Day (Activity TBD) &amp;/or Advising Session:</b> Although there will be no specific class this session, students can meet with Dr. Dann to discuss and finalize their presentations. Students should have a draft of their presentation prepared by this session. <b>OPTION:</b> Discuss sustainability film ? <b>Session Facilitator(s):</b> <b>Calvin Siler ?</b>	
2H	<i>Option 8 of 8:</i> 4 W	<b>Fairfax City Environmental Sustainability Committee</b> Fairfax City Hall (City Manager's Library, rm 316), 10455 Armstrong St. 6:30-8:30pm (For agenda and for credit, you <u>must</u> RSVP 48-hours in	If participating, please preview agenda items and any materials provided by Ms. Freemont in advance.

#	Date	Activities	Tasks to complete <i>prior</i> to session
		advance to Ms. Adrian Fremont at <a href="mailto:Adrian.Fremont@fairfaxva.gov">Adrian.Fremont@fairfaxva.gov</a> )	
19	11 W	<b>Final Presentations:</b> The presentations will be judged by a faculty panel comprised of the course instructor and guest speakers from the seminar sessions. (10:30-1:15 in our regularly scheduled room; followed by celebration?)	<b>Final Presentation (200 points)</b>

\* Visit sponsor's web site for access to videotaped archive.

\*\* No structured activities this session, so students can progress on their START project organizing or required service time.