Department of
Community Sustainability

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | College of Agriculture and Natural Resources

CSUS 200
Introduction to Sustainability
Section 2

Spring 2019
Monday/Wednesday, 10:20 - 11:40 a.m.
138 Brody Hall

INSTRUCTOR
Ruth Kline-Robach
Water Resources Specialist
Department of Community Sustainability *and*
Institute of Water Research
310 C Natural Resources Building
353-2880
kliner@msu.edu

OFFICE HOURS
Mondays, 2:00-3:00 pm, or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION
Introduction to sustainability and personal role in sustainability initiatives. Implications of individual actions for key sustainability challenges. Application of sustainability principles and leadership skills in community.

COURSE OUTCOMES
Students will be able to:

1. Identify key themes and principles in sustainability development
2. Apply a variety of critical thinking, analysis and research skills to evaluate the credibility of sustainability policy positions and scientific arguments.
3. Identify the concept of an ecological footprint and recognize their ecological footprint.
4. Improve decision-making capabilities within the context of sustainability.
5. Assess whether a societal issue is a wicked or tame problem.
6. Develop team leadership skills within groups to advance change within communities.
7. Use information technologies in their formal and non-formal learning.
8. Consider the importance of the Commons in developing community sustainability strategies.
9. Identify individual worldviews as they relate to sustainability and their implications for individual actions.
10. Examine the interaction between agriculture, food, natural resources and Michigan communities using a systems approach.
11. Use Life Cycle Analysis to consider the true costs of products and services.

REQUIRED TEXT

2018 Edition - *Choices for Sustainable Living*. Northwest Earth Institute (available at https://nwei.org/product/choices-for-sustainable-living-2018/). Additional required readings will be posted on MSU's Desire to Learn (D2L) site (https://d2l.msu.edu).

COURSE SCHEDULE (*This schedule is tentative and subject to change*)

Week 1 – Introduction

January 7, 2019 – Introducing the Class
January 9, 2019 – What are Wicked Problems?

Week 2 – Thinking Critically

January 14, 2019 – Analyzing Websites & Credibility of Information
January 16, 2019 – Developed or Not?

Week 3 – Human/Environmental Interdependence

January 21, 2019 – NO CLASS – Martin Luther King Jr. Day
January 23, 2019 – A Call to Sustainability (CSL Discussion - #1)

Week 4 – Thinking Critically/Ecological Principles

January 28, 2019 – Current Events Discussion/Evaluating Policy Positions
January 30, 2019 - Ecological Principles (CSL Discussion - #2)

Week 5 – Food Systems

February 4, 2019 – Feeding Yourself for a Year
February 6, 2019 - Food (CSL Discussion - #3)

Week 6 – Food Systems/Active Learning

February 11, 2019 –What is the Real Cost of Food?
February 13, 2019 - TENTATIVE Field Trip: Waste Sort (Meet at MSU Recycling Center)

Week 7 – Commons/Water

February 18, 2019 – Current Events Discussion/Governing the Commons
February 20, 2019 – Water (CSL Discussion - #4)

Week 8 – Ecological Footprints

February 25, 2019 - Defining What Matters: Community and Global Trends
February 27, 2019 – Analyzing Ecological Footprints/What's Your Ecological Footprint?

Week of March 4 – Spring Break

Week 9 – Strategies for Communities

March 11, 2019 – Implementing Sustainable Strategies for Communities
March 13, 2019 – Community (CSL Discussion - #5)

Week 10 – Energy Systems

March 18, 2019 – TENTATIVE Field Trip to MSU Power Plant (note: half the class will visit the Power Plant. The rest of the students will not meet, but should use the time to begin working on Policy Papers).
March 20, 2019 – TENTATIVE Field Trip to MSU Power Plant (note: half the class will visit the Power Plant. The rest of the students will not meet, but should use the time to begin working on Policy Papers).

Week 11 – Ecosystem Services/Transportation

March 25, 2019 – Classifying/Mapping Ecosystem Services
March 27, 2019 – Current Events Discussion/Transportation (CSL Discussion - #6)

Week 12 – Environmental Justice/Consumption and Economy

April 1, 2019 – Ensuring Environmental Justice
April 3, 2019 – Consumption and Economy (CSL Discussion - #7)

Week 13 – Life Cycle Analysis/Change Agents

April 8, 2019 – Current Events Discussion/Interpreting Life Cycle Analysis
April 10, 2019 – Diffusing Innovations

Week 14 – Visions of Sustainability

April 15, 2019 – Visions of Sustainability (CSL Discussion - #8)
April 17, 2019 – Policy Position Presentations

Week 15 - Presentations

April 22, 2019 – Policy Position Presentations
April 24, 2019 – Policy Position Presentations

Week 16 – Finals Week

Thursday, May 2, 2019 – **Final Exam** (7:45-9:45 am)

ASSIGNMENTS

Assignments must be submitted electronically via D2L no later than the date and time provided in this syllabus. More than one application (e.g., a web browser, Microsoft Word, Prezi, Excel, etc.) may be needed for a given assignment. The final exam will be completed in class on **Thursday, May 2nd, from 7:45-9:45 am.**

R^3 – Reduce, Reuse, Recycle Project. This set of assignments spans the semester. The task the first week is for you to identify a *daily* personal behavior that you can change which results in reducing, reusing or recycling a resource/product. Some examples might be decreasing the number of miles you drive your car

each week, decreasing your use of bottled water, or increasing your recycling rate. Please be creative, and choose a project that is meaningful to you.

- Weekly Blog. (10-20 points per blog - 200 total points) You will blog each week of the semester regarding the R3 project as well as current events related to course subject matter. You will be given the topic for each week's blog on the course D2L site. The first week's blog will focus on the selection of your behavior (subject to my approval) to modify, as well as how you will gather baseline data for what you are currently doing. Subsequent blogs will summarize your successes (and failures) to change your behavior. ***Each Weekly Blog is due by 11:59 pm Friday (e.g. Blog 1 is due January 11th at 11:59 pm).***

- **R3 Data Set**. You will keep a spreadsheet to track your changes (e.g., commuting miles via bike, how many water bottles you currently purchase each day on average, etc.) on a daily basis. ***The spreadsheet is due with the final report at the beginning of the Final Exam on May 2nd.***

- **R3 Literature Review.** (100 points)You will complete a 2-page literature review on your selected behavior change (place all references on a third page). What does the literature (this can include websites, online documents, papers, journal articles, as long as they are peer reviewed/refereed articles) say about your intended behavior change? ***This two-page paper is due by 11:59 pm on February 1st.***

- **R3 Final Report**. (150 points) You will also prepare a 3-page report that summarizes your change over the semester and analyzes the environmental impact (both primary and secondary) of your behavioral change at the individual level as well as the impact the change would have if every undergraduate at MSU had changed the same behavior (assuming they were not already doing it). The report should include summaries from your spreadsheet. You will also submit your final spreadsheet with this report. The report should be a Microsoft Word or a PDF file, and the spreadsheet an Excel file. T***he report and spreadsheet are due at the beginning of the Final Exam on May 2nd.***

Current Events. Five times over the course of the semester, your R3 blog prompt will ask that you summarize a current event or issue related to your project or a sustainability topic. You are expected to find credible news articles (using strategies we will discuss in class) and submit a one-page summary of the issue with a list of citations included. You are also expected to discuss your articles in class, so be sure to come to class prepared to do so.

Book Review. (150 total points) You will write a four-page review of a book related to sustainability (broadly defined). Below is a list of potential books. If you read a book that is not on this list, I will need to approve your selection. Be sure to choose a book that you have not read previously. Resources on how to write a book review are available in D2L in the Assignments folder. ***The Book Review is due by 11:59 pm on March 1st.***

Example Book Review Titles:

- *An Agricultural Testament* by Sir Albert Howard
- *Coming Home: Letters from a Tiny House* by Hari Berzins
- *The Death and Life of the Great Lakes* by Dan Egan
- *Farmacology* by Daphne Miller, MD
- *The Great Lakes Water Wars* by Peter Annin
- *Holistic Management – 3rd Edition* by Allan Savory and Jody Butterfield
- *Last Child in the Woods* by Richard Louv
- *The Myth of Progress: Toward a Sustainable Future* by Tom Wessels
- *Omnivore's Dilemma* by Michael Pollan
- *The One Straw Revolution* by Masanobu Fukuoka
- *Pleasant Valley* by Louis Bromfield
- *A Sand County Almanac and Sketches Here and There* by Aldo Leopold
- *Storms of My Grandchildren* by James Hansen
- *The Story of Stuff* by Annie Leonard
- *The Unsettling of America: Culture and Agriculture* by Wendell Berry
- *The Watchman's Rattle* by Rebecca Costa

Class Assignments and Participation. (150 total points) Your *active* participation in class is expected (including prior assigned readings and in-class activities) and worth 5 points per class. ***You must be in class and participate in order to earn the 5 points.***

Policy Position Paper and Presentation. (150 total points) You will identify a position on an issue that you care about that is relevant to this class and develop a policy paper. A policy paper is a persuasive document that outlines your views on a particular policy or issue you have studied (and is of interest to you). The policy paper is a way to apply what you have learned in a format that communicates ideas or recommendations, or persuades people to consider your views. The audience for the paper may be other students, citizens, members of a public commission, elected representatives, or anyone else with a stake in the issue. There is a resource to help you with writing a policy position paper in the Assignments folder on D2L. The paper is worth 100 points and the presentation 50 points. ***The presentations are scheduled for April 17th, 22nd, and 24th. The paper is due at 11:59 pm, April 26th).***

Final Exam. (100 total points) The Final Exam will be comprehensive and open note. ***It is scheduled for May 2nd from 7:45 – 9:45 a.m.).***

GRADING

Assignments[1]	Points	
Reduce, Reuse, Recycle/Current Events Blogs	200	**(Due Weekly)**
R3 Project Literature Review	100	**(Due Feb. 1)**
Book Review	150	**(Due March 1)**
Policy Paper and Presentation	150	**(Due April 26)**
Reduce, Reuse, Recycle Report	150	**(Due May 2)**
Final Exam	100	**(May 2)**
Class Attendance & Assignments	150	**(Each Class Session)**
Total Points	**1000**	

Grading Scale

Grade	Points
4.0	1000 – 920
3.5	919 – 860
3.0	859 – 820
2.5	819 – 750
2.0	749 – 700
1.5	699 – 650
1.0	649 – 600
0	< 600

Academic Misconduct
Article 2.III.B.2 of the Academic Freedom Report states that "The student shares with the faculty the responsibility for maintaining the integrity of scholarship, grades, and professional standards." In addition, the Department of Community Sustainability adheres to the policies on academic honesty as specified in General Student Regulations 1.0, Protection of Scholarship and Grades; the all-University Policy on Integrity of Scholarship and Grades; and Ordinance 17.00, Examinations. (See Spartan Life: Student Handbook and Resource Guide and/or the MSU Web site: www.msu.edu.)

---

[1] Late assignments will **NOT** be accepted. The D2L Dropbox will not accept uploads after the assigned date and time.

Therefore, unless authorized by your instructor, you are expected to complete all course assignments, including homework, lab work, quizzes, tests and exams, without assistance from any source. You are expected to develop original work for this course; therefore, you may not submit course work you completed for another course to satisfy the requirements for this course. Also, you are not authorized to use the www.allmsu.com website to complete any course work in CSUS 200. Students who violate MSU academic integrity rules may receive a penalty grade, including a failing grade on the assignment or in the course. Contact your instructor if you are unsure about the appropriateness of your course work. (See also https://www.msu.edu/unit/ombud/academic-integrity/plagiarism-policy.html). **There will be no warnings – the maximum sanction allowed under University policy will occur on the first offense**. Turnitin.com will be used for all written assignments.

Accommodations
Michigan State University is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services and activities. Requests for accommodations by persons with disabilities may be made by contacting the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities at 517-884-RCPD or on the web at rcpd.msu.edu. Once your eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, you will be issued a Verified Individual Services Accommodation (VISA) form. Please present this form to your instructor at the start of the semester and/or two weeks prior to the accommodation date (test, project, etc.). Requests received after this date will be honored whenever possible.

Grief Absence Policy:
Students seeking a grief absence should be directed to the Grief Absence Request Form found on the RO home page (https://reg.msu.edu/) under 'Student Resources – Grief Absence Request Form' OR to StuInfo (https://stuinfo.msu.edu/) under 'Academics – Grief Absence Request Form.'

Commercialized Lecture Notes
Commercialization of lecture notes and university-provided course materials is not permitted in this course.

Attendance
Students whose names do not appear on the official class list for this course may not attend this class. Students who fail to attend the first four class sessions or class by the fifth day of the semester, whichever occurs first, may be dropped from the course. This course follows the General University Attendance Policy. If you miss a class due to a Special Consideration Absence as defined by University Policy, your class participation grade for those excused absences days will be the average of your earned participation grades.

Internet
Some professional journals will not consider a submission for publication if the article has appeared on the Internet. Please notify your instructor in writing if you do not want your course papers posted to the course website.

Disruptive Behavior
Article 2.III.B.4 of the Academic Freedom Report (AFR) for students at Michigan State University states: "The student's behavior in the classroom shall be conducive to the teaching and learning process for all concerned." Article 2.III.B.10 of the AFR states that "The student has a right to scholarly relationships with faculty based on mutual trust and civility." General Student Regulation 5.02 states: "No student shall . . . interfere with the functions and services of the University (for example, but not limited to, classes . . .) such that the function or service is obstructed or disrupted. Students whose conduct adversely affects the learning environment in this classroom may be subject to disciplinary action through the Student Faculty Judiciary process.

You are expected to attend class regularly, arrive on time and participate in discussions. Attendance will be taken each class period. **Please refrain from texting, checking e-mail, surfing the web, or engaging in any other activities that are not directly related to the course during class time.** Those behaviors are disrespectful and more disruptive than you may realize. Be considerate.

Campus Emergencies
If an emergency arises in this classroom, building or vicinity, your instructor will inform you of actions to follow to enhance your safety. As a student in this class, you are responsible for knowing the location of the nearest emergency evacuation route or shelter. These directions appear on the maps posted on the walls throughout this building. If police or university officials order us to evacuate the classroom or building, follow the posted emergency route in an orderly manner and assist those who might need help in reaching a barrier-free exit or shelter. To receive emergency messages, set your cellular phones on silent mode when you enter this classroom. If you observe or receive an emergency alert, immediately and calmly inform your instructor. (See also www.alert.msu.edu.)

E-Learning Policies
Information technologies such as D2L and email are widely used in this class. As a result there are some additional policies that need to be understood.

- Students should visit the course's D2L site on a regular basis.
- Students should check their email frequently.
- All assignments submitted electronically should be free of any viruses and/or worms. Any infected file or media that is submitted will receive a zero (0) for that assignment.
- This course recognizes the students' right to privacy and adheres to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
- Students need to review the university policy "Acceptable Use of Computing Systems, Software, and the University Digital Network" at http://lct.msu.edu/guidelines-policies/aup/.
- Excessive emails make unreasonable time demands on both sender and recipient. Please ensure you have a legitimate need before you write.
- I will answer email about:
    o Questions arising from difficulty in understanding course content.
    o Requests for feedback about graded assignments.
    o Private issues appropriate for discussion within the teacher-student relationship.
- I will NOT answer email which:
    o Poses questions answered in the course information sections of the course D2L site
    o Poses questions answered in the course syllabus.
    o Lacks a subject line clearly stating the purpose of the email and the course number (CSUS 200).
    o Raises an inappropriate subject.
- The website tech.msu.edu provides a number of information technology resources for students.
- You are responsible for the operation of any personally owned computers you use on or off campus. A malfunctioning computer system is NOT a valid excuse for submitting late work.
- Students are expected to have a high degree of self-motivation and self-direction in this class and develop the needed technology skills to excel in this class and in life.