Sustainability and Society
ENV 207: Syllabus
University of Michigan
Fall 2016

Lecture: Tuesday and Thursday 11:00am-12:00pm, Dana 1040

Discussion Sections: A. Thursday 12:00-1:00pm (Dana 2024), B. 4:00-5:00pm (Dana 1028), and C. Friday 11:00am-12:00pm (Dana 1028)

3 Credits

Instructor: Professor Josh Newell, 1064 Dana, jpnewell@umich.edu
Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday, 12:00-1:00pm, Dana 1064; and by appointment

Graduate Student Instructor: Michelle Bohrson, mbohrson@umich.edu
Office Hours: Monday 11:00am-12:00pm & Tuesdays 12:00-1:00pm in Dana 4325; and by appointment

Introduction and Purposes
Sustainability has become perhaps the most pressing scientific and social challenge of our time. Typically defined as utilizing natural resources so as to create a high quality of life for future as well as current generations, the idea of sustainability has been strongly contested since its introduction in the 1980s. Nonetheless, global climate change, habitat loss and species endangerment, desertification and deforestation, and the effects of rapid urbanization have fueled political debates over sustainability policies in both the industrialized and industrializing worlds.

In this course, you will gain an understanding of how key global challenges, such as population growth and consumption, are creating a sense of urgency in terms of developing and promoting theories, methods, and practices that foster sustainability in our society. Through a concentrated study of this emerging sphere we call sustainability, you will learn to articulate the relationships among observed phenomena, the principles and policies those observations can inform, particularly how best to integrate technology, education, and policy to best meet identified goals. Finally, you will gain an appreciation for why interdisciplinary approaches to sustainability are often necessary and useful.

The course is divided into four interdependent sections or modules: 1. Concepts and Concepts for Sustainability; 2. Challenges of a Planet; 3. Global Economy and the Search for Solutions; and 4. Social Activism and Change Agents. In addition to the two weekly lectures and the discussion sections, which students are expected to attend, the course has an experiential component consisting of field trips and in-class exercises.
Learning Objectives
At the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. Connect sustainability concepts and technology to real-world challenges, including individual/social needs and political debates;
2. Evaluate scientific and popular claims about sustainability;
3. Discuss pathways toward a more sustainable society and their significance to diverse audiences;
4. Learn how to write and read more effectively, both essential skills for your future.

Course Reading
Required Textbook: Paul Robbins, John Hinz, and Sarah A. Moore. 2014. Environment and Society: A Critical Introduction. Second Edition. London: Blackwell. This book has been stocked at local bookstores and you can buy it via the internet. The other required readings are posted on Canvas. Please note that only some chapters from the textbook are required. Also, the reading list may change slightly as the semester progresses. I will provide ample notice of these minor changes in class and a revised syllabus will be posted electronically on Canvas. Readings have been carefully selected, with particular attention to the reading load, which varies based on the topics, but averages less than fifty pages per week. In terms of how to read strategically, you might find this weblink useful: http://www.swarthmore.edu/SocSci/tburke1/reading.html.

Discussion Sections
The goals of discussion section are to clarify and elaborate upon the concepts introduced in lecture and within the readings and to further the learning objectives of the course. Discussion sections will consist of some combination of lecture, discussion, and interactive learning. You are expected to attend each period your discussion section is held. If you are unable to attend, please contact GSI Bohrson by email at least three days in advance or, in the case of emergency, as soon as possible. Your attendance and participation in discussion sections will largely determine the class participation/attendance portion of your grade. Although discussion sections will adhere to Michigan Time, students are invited to arrive early, especially to ask clarifying questions about the material and generally to ask GSI Bohrson about components of the course.

Grading
Your course grade will be based on a mid-term exam, a final exam, two short essay papers, and class participation as determined by bi-weekly mini-assessments and attendance. Please check the course calendar on Canvas for key deadlines. The grading breakdown is as follows:

- Midterm Examination: 28%
- Final Examination (non-cumulative): 28%
- Two essay papers (5 pages each): 22%
- Class participation and attendance: 22%
  - 8% mini-assessments, 14% attendance
Grades will be posted in the “Grades” tab in Canvas shortly after each assessment. Rather than ‘curving’ individual exams and essays, we will likely curve overall course grades (to your advantage), prior to their final submission.

**Essay Papers**
You are required to write two short essays. These essays should be a minimum of five pages in length, and a maximum of seven pages (double spaced, 1” margins, and 12 pt Times New Roman font). All ideas, terms, and quotes that are not your own need to be properly cited in your essay. For these two essays, please use the APA referencing style and include a bibliography at the end of your essay. This bibliography does not count towards the length requirement. Your essays will be evaluated based on the clarity and completeness, as well as on spelling, grammar, and referencing. These essays will be based largely on the course reading. The essay assignments will be discussed in class and posted on Canvas in the “Assignments” section at least two weeks prior to their due date. The due dates for the essays are: **Essay #1, October 4th; Essay #2, November 22nd**. These essays are due by the beginning of class on these days. You will turn in and receive comments on your essays via Canvas. Be sure to answer the essay question(s) completely and be sure to proofread your essays carefully before submitting them.

**Exams**
There is an in-class mid-term exam on **October 25th**. This exam covers the first half of the course, while the final exam covers material from the second half. In accordance with the UM exam schedule, the final exam will be held on **Tuesday, December 20th, 1:30-3:30 pm in Dana 1040**. There will not be any alternative dates for these exams. As you make travel plans, please keep these dates in mind.

**Mini-Assessments**
You are required to submit five mini-assessments over the course of the term (roughly every two weeks). These mini-assessment will be posted on the “Quizzes” section in Canvas. They are timed (45 minutes), composed of 5-10 questions (e.g. multiple choice, true/false, fill-in-the-blank), and designed to assess how well you are grasping key course concepts. Furthermore, these mini-assessments anticipate (sometimes directly) exam questions and important material. Mini-assessments are ‘open-note,’ but they must be done individually (rather than in groups). Once the mini-assessment is posted on Canvas, you have one week to complete it. Failure to do so will result in a mini-assessment grade of 0. We will drop the lowest mini-assessment score and average the other four scores to determine your overall mini-assessment grade for the course.

**Plagiarism**
Plagiarism involves presenting someone else’s words or ideas as your own. This includes using someone else’s assignment as your own as well as failing to properly cite the sources of ideas or words. We will report students who plagiarize to the Academic Judiciary Board. Plagiarizing can also result in getting a zero on the assignment and failing the course. For information on citing
sources, check the *Chicago Manual of Style* or contact me during office hours. Please see the following link for more information on plagiarism:
http://www.lsa.umich.edu/english/undergraduate/advising/plagNote.asp

**Writing Help**
One of the objectives of this course is to develop your writing skills. You may want to contact the Sweetland Writing Center (1139 Angell Hall, 764-0429, http://www.lsa.umich.edu/sweetland/) to get feedback on drafts of your work, as well as general guidance on how to improve your writing.

**Late Work**
Please turn in all assignments on time. Late assignments will be marked down one letter grade per day late, beginning as soon as the assignment is due. If you have extenuating circumstances, then please contact GSI Bohrson at least one week in advance of the assignment due date.

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**
Please contact the GSI Bohrson during the first week of class so that your needs can be accommodated. Accommodations cannot be made retroactively; protect your legal rights by contacting the GSI before any graded assignments are turned in. You may also wish to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (G-664 Haven Hall, 505 South State St.: 734-763-3000, http://ssd.umich.edu).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Class Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Discussion Section</th>
<th>Deliverable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/6/16</td>
<td>Introduction to Course</td>
<td><em>No reading</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>9/8/16</td>
<td>Sustainability: Brief History</td>
<td><em>Kates et al. (2005)</em></td>
<td>1. Introductions</td>
<td>2. Societal Collapse</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/15/16</td>
<td>Introduction to Environmental Ethics</td>
<td><em>Chapter 5 in Robbins et al. (2014), McKibben (2010), Landrigan (2015)</em></td>
<td>1. Theses on Sustainability</td>
<td>Essay #1 Assigned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/20/16</td>
<td>Key Thinkers in Environmental Ethics</td>
<td><em>Chapter 5 in Robbins et al. (2014), Devall &amp; Sessions (1985)</em></td>
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*Section 1: Concepts and Contexts for Sustainability*
## Section 2: Challenges of a Planet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Activities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/27/16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Introduction: Population and Scarcity</td>
<td>Chapter 2 in Robbins et al. (2014)</td>
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<td>1. Review Section One</td>
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<td>2. Footprint Calculation</td>
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<td>Essay #1 Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/6/16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Climate Change</td>
<td>Chapter 9 (pp. 139-148) in Robbins et al. (2014); McKibben (2012); Hoffman (2015)</td>
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<td>1. Ecosystem Dynamics</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/11/16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Consumption and IPAT</td>
<td>Maniates (2002); Ehrlich and Ehrlich (2008)</td>
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<td>1. Discourse and Climate Change</td>
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<td>10/18/16</td>
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<td>No Class Study Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/20/16</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Institutions and the Commons</td>
<td>Chapter 4 in Robbins et al. (2014); Hardin (1968)</td>
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<td>1. Commons Activity</td>
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<td>2. Mid-Term Review</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/25/16</td>
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<td>Mid-Term Exam</td>
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<td>Essay #1 Returned</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Reading Material</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/27/16</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Introduction to Markets and Commodities</td>
<td><em>Chapter 3 in Robbins et al. (2014)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>11/1/16</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Critique of Capitalism: Political Economy 1</td>
<td><em>Chapter 7 in Robbins et al. (2014)</em></td>
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<td>11/3/16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Critique of Capitalism: Political Economy 2</td>
<td><em>Chapter 7 in Robbins et al. (2014); Chapter 9 (pp. 149-162) in Robbins et al. (2014);</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>11/8/16</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Ecosystem Services and Valuation</td>
<td><em>Daily (2000); Pacala and Socolow (2004); Bayon (2008)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>11/10/16</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Industrial Ecology and Greeening of Production</td>
<td><em>Frosch et al. (1992), Lovins (2008)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>11/15/16</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>“Green” Consumerism and Trees</td>
<td><em>Chapter 10 in Robbins et al. (2014)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>11/17/16</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Green Consumerism Continued and Section 3 Summary</td>
<td><em>TBD</em></td>
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### Section 4: Social Activism and Change Agents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Guest</th>
<th>Additional Information</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11/22/16</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Introduction: Activism and Change Agents</td>
<td>Guest: Mike Shriberg, Regional Executive Director, National Wildlife Foundation</td>
<td>Hawken (2007), NWF Background Site and Video</td>
<td>Essay #2 Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/24/16</td>
<td>22</td>
<td><strong>No Class</strong></td>
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<td>Thankgiving Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/29/16</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Sustainability in Community: Ann Arbor</td>
<td>Guest: Environmental Coordinator, City of Ann Arbor</td>
<td>City of AA Sustainability Framework, Browse City of AA Sustainability Action Plan Dashboard</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/13/16</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Exam Review</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Final Exam Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/20/16</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Final Exam: Room 1040 1:30-3:30 PM</td>
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Reading List

You are required to purchase the primary course textbook, *Environment and Society: A Critical Introduction*. You may also want to purchase *Blessed Unrest*, as we will read a significant portion of it. The other required readings are on Canvas.

**September 6**
Required Reading

No Required Reading

**September 8**
Recommended Reading


**September 13**
Required Reading


http://www.orionmagazine.org/index.php/articles/article/5502/

**September 15**
Required Reading


http://www.orionmagazine.org/index.php/articles/article/5339


**September 20**
Required Reading


**September 22nd**  
Required Reading


**September 27th**  
Required Reading


**September 29th**  
Required Reading


**October 4th**  
Required Reading


**October 6th**  
Required Reading


**October 11th**
**Required Reading**


**October 13th**
**Required Reading**


**October 18th**
**No Class (Study Break)**

No Required Reading

**October 20th**
**Required Reading**


**October 25th**
**Mid-Term Exam**

No Required Reading
October 27\textsuperscript{th}
Required Reading


November 1\textsuperscript{st}
Required Reading


November 3\textsuperscript{th}
Required Reading


November 8\textsuperscript{th}
Required Reading


November 10\textsuperscript{th}
Required Reading


November 15\textsuperscript{th}
Required Reading

**November 17th**
Required Reading
To Be Determined

**November 22nd**
Required Reading


**November 24th**
No Class (Thanksgiving Break)
No Required Reading

**November 29th**
Required Reading


**December 1st**
Required Reading

December 6th
Required Reading


December 8th
Required Reading


Campus Farm Video

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nefeRes5Nh0&feature=youtu.be


December 13th
Final Exam Review

No Required Reading

December 20th
Final Exam