

SUSTAIN 2SS3 – ADVOCATING FOR SUSTAINABILITY

SPRING/SUMMER 2020

Lectures: Mondays 6:00-9:00pm via Zoom

Tutorials: Wednesdays 6:00-9:00pm via Zoom

Instructor: Sarah Precious, precious@mcmaster.ca

Office: KTH B110

Office Hours: Available between 9-5 for appointments, please book via email. Please identify if you are requesting a phone call or Zoom meeting.

Teaching Assistant: TBD *Office Hours:* By appointment. Please schedule via email.

COURSE OVERVIEW

With a goal to inspire students to consider new possibilities and look beyond what is to what could be. This course will provide students with foundational advocacy skills and further develop essential communication and leadership skills to influence decisions through interdisciplinary, student-led, community based, experiential based learning opportunities related to sustainability. This course will prepare students with the skills and knowledge to identify and advocate for needed change for many of the challenging problems our society faces today. Some of these problems include poverty, equality, health, environment, and the ability for leaders to identify and act on advocacy issues. We will begin by understanding advocacy and how it relates to sustainability, from there we will develop the skills and competencies to enact advocacy in our daily lives, work and education. We will consider local and global examples of advocacy and explore how we could support work being done locally. Emphasis will be placed on developing interdisciplinary perspectives, resolving conflicts, group work, communication and leadership skills through virtual community-based experiential learning projects designed to help students put theory into practice, while also theorizing their practice.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

Avenue to Learn will be used specifically for important course-specific updates, for students to submit assignments, and for the instructor to provide assignment feedback and to record grades. It is important to visit Avenue to Learn regularly to be kept informed of any new information. Go to the website (<http://avenue.mcmaster.ca/>) to find out how to log-on to the course's home page. Please note that this course will be entirely online and make use of virtual platforms such as zoom, Microsoft Teams and other platforms.

COURSE STRUCTURE

SUSTAIN 2SS3 is made up of readings, lectures, and tutorials, all of which are mandatory.

- Readings must be completed prior to each class.

- Lecture time will be used to help guide students through the readings and will expand upon key ideas by exploring case studies, current events, and by making connections to general course themes.
- Tutorial time will be used to offer information, guidance, and support for class assignments, which will include the personal reflection and experiential learning. Tutorials will facilitate and support the practical application of course material (lectures and readings).

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate a deep understanding of local advocacy and sustainability issues and their interconnectedness within a broader system through written assignments, discussions, and practical application.
- Apply essential advocacy and soft skills within an interdisciplinary setting, including project planning, implementation, problem solving, teamwork, and communication to influence decisions.
- Generate solutions to problems and evaluate outcomes through conducting research and implementing critical thinking and interdisciplinary problem-solving skills.
- Create meaning by generating connections between academic theory and action through reflection.

GROUP WORK

An objective of this course is to provide students with the opportunity to develop their teamwork and interpersonal skills. Throughout the course, students will be provided with a variety of opportunities for interdisciplinary discussion and group work. If and when challenges or conflicts arise, students should utilize the opportunities to employ strategies to improve the group dynamics going forward.

To support formative assessment and feedback on group work skills, students will conduct weekly self and group assessments. Additionally, students will submit an evaluation of contribution along with the submission of each group assignment.

Students are encouraged to work as a team and seek support from the course instructor early on if challenges arise. Initial actions will include a facilitated discussion with all group members focused on listening and seeking first to understand in order to resolve the conflict and strengthen group dynamics.

CLASS ATTENDANCE, PARTICIPATION, & WEEKLY UPDATES TO PROJECT CHAMPIONS

Students are expected to attend each class and group meeting, be on time and stay for the full duration. Additionally, students are expected to be fully present, which includes removing all potential distractions, demonstrating respect for their own learning and the experience of those around them, and participating in activities and discussions.

Grace will be permitted one time for lateness, missed attendance, lacking participation, or inappropriate or missed weekly meetings. A second instance will require meeting with the course instructor to explore the situation, learn from the experience, and develop a plan for moving forward.

ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Format: To ensure the instructor can include detailed feedback and comments, assignments should be submitted in Word format via Avenue to Learn, unless otherwise stated.

Style: APA Style is preferred, but consistency is of utmost importance. See [OWL](#) for support.

Late Assignments: Please make arrangements for the submission of any late assignment. A reasonable timeframe would be at least 24-hours before the assignment is due. That being said, the more notice the better. If arrangements are not made, late assignments will be penalized 15% each day, including Saturday, starting at 12:01 am the following day. A maximum of three days will be permitted for late assignments, after which the assignment will receive a grade of zero.

REQUIRED READINGS, INSTRUCTIONAL VIDEOS, AND LEARNING RESOURCES

Consistent with the goals of the Sustainable Future Program, all readings, instructional videos, and learning resources are available via open access and can be found on Avenue to Learn. There is no required textbook for this course.

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND PROCESS

Some project opportunities for this course will be offered through a collaborative initiative with community organizations and guest lecturers. In completing their project, students will engage in practical research and application through working with individuals, groups and/or organizations on campus and/or within the Hamilton community to develop their advocacy sustainability project. All students will work in groups of 4-5. Groups will be determined based on students' choice of project. Each group will work with a Community Project Champion (CPC), who will assist in guiding students to plan and evaluate their project.

A variety of project opportunities will be made available to students to choose from. Summary descriptions of each project will be made available on the course website in June, with all projects posted before the second class. Additionally, CPCs will virtually attend one of the first few classes to meet with students and to provide more information about the available projects.

Students are encouraged to view the list of projects online before the first class and to start thinking about which are of greatest interest. Conducting some background research on the topic and/or on the individual CPC will be useful prior to the first class. Attending class prepared with specific questions will be helpful.

Students will then rank all projects, including a brief description about why each of their first three choices is right for them. Students will submit their list of project choices to the

course instructor who will formulate project groups considering students' project selection and ranking. Please note that students do not choose their group members. Student should focus on choosing a project that is most in line with their individual learning outcomes and personal interests. Based on individual project selection, groups will be formulated. The course instructor will aim to communicate projects and group members to all students within 24 hours.

Students will conduct regular self-reflections and group evaluations throughout the course and will submit a formal group evaluation at the end of the term.

EVALUATION

Please note that detailed guidelines and marking rubrics for each assignment can be found on Avenue to Learn.

Advocacy Letter (Individual): 10%

Students will develop an advocacy letter based on one of the community projects presented in class. The purpose of this assignment is to learn how to write letters to advocate on behalf of an individual or to bring about change at the cultural or structural level for individuals, groups or communities.

Due Dates: TBD **Time Due:** TBD
Format: Word, submitted in Avenue to Learn.

Weekly Reflections (Individual): 15%

Approximately once each week, students will reflect on course readings and/or lectures as well as on their teamwork. Individual student grades will be calculated based on the quality of their weekly reflections, not the evaluation provided to self and others. This assessment is intended to foster critical reflection, generate discussion, and promote successful teamwork.

Due Dates: Between Wednesday evening and the following Monday evening each week.
Time Due: between 10:00pm Thursday evening and 11:59pm the following Monday evening
Format: Any format, submitted in Avenue to Learn.

Attendance and Participation (Individual): 15%

Students are expected to attend each class and group meeting, be on time and stay for the full duration. Additionally, students are expected to be fully present, which includes removing all potential distractions, demonstrating respect for their own learning and the experience of those around them, and participating in activities and discussions.

Final Project (Group): 45% (broken down into subsections)

The purpose of the final project is for students to use their knowledge and advocacy skills to develop a plan to advocate for a need currently being faced by society today.

Project Plan (Group): 5%

Students in each group will work together to create a project plan road map. This plan will outline the roles and responsibilities of each group member, tasks and deadlines, meeting dates, how work will be reviewed by all members prior to submission, and methods of communication. This plan will be submitted to the instructor prior to work starting on the final project. This plan will serve as a guide for the group as they navigate the project and any divergences that might arise.

Advocacy Plan (Group): 15%

Upon choosing a project and forming a project group, all members of the group will then work together to prepare an advocacy plan. The group will follow the advocacy plan format. A good plan will clearly explain the *why*, *how*, and *what* of the project, along with the specific actions, deliverables, roles and responsibilities, and timelines required for implementation. The advocacy plan should provide all necessary details and information so the course instructor can understand and the CPC could effectively implement the plan successfully. The plan will have a clearly defined advocacy problem, determined a goal, defined the current context, developed strategy options, and thought through the steps required for implementation. The plan will include a timeline for the goals that are feasible, and outline expected challenges with clearly stated methods for managing any negative consequences that could impact implementation of the initiative. The plan should be continuously reviewed, revised, and updated.

Students must have their project plan reviewed by their CPC and by the course instructor prior to formal submission on the due date below.

Due Dates Word format. Images as JPEG and in a separate attachment. Submitted in Avenue to Learn

Weekly progress updates (Group): 5%

Each week students will send a weekly update email to their project champion, copying all group members. Once it is sent, students will forward the sent update to the course instructor and TA. The update email should include: updates from the past week on the group project; next steps for the coming week; questions needing a reply (if applicable); and the agenda for the next meeting, along with the date, time and meeting method.

Due Dates: TBD **Time Due:** 11:59pm

Format: To be submitted via email.

Final Project (Group): 15%

Students will prepare a final project with the following components to support their presentation and to provide to the CPC to use:

- Advocacy Plan (refined advocacy plan)

- Implementation Plan
- Evidence to support methods
- Evaluation Tool
- Leadership and engagement skills needed
- Advocacy Letter
- Promotional materials and/or supporting documents

Due Dates: TBD **Time Due:** 11:59pm

Format: As appropriate

Presentation (Group): 10%

Each group will prepare and present a 15 minute presentation and be prepared for a five minute question and answer period on their final project to the class. This presentation will provide an overview of their project, implementation plan, supporting materials, lessons learned, and opposing views considered. Consider your leadership styles and how your environment can be used to support your presentation. Classmates will be invited to participate by offering suggestions for an area of growth, an area of strength, and a question raised by the presentation.

Due Dates: TBD **Time Due:** in class

Format: Presentation to occur online via Zoom.

Final Reflection 10%

Each student will establish personal and learning goals at the start of the semester setting SMART goals for themselves and will strive to accomplish these goals by the end of the course. Students are encouraged to utilize their weekly self-reflections or a personal journal to reflect on their experiences and learning. Students are then encouraged to pull from these personal reflections to prepare one formal reflection of academic quality. Students are encouraged to reflect on the challenges they faced, things that worked well, what they could have done differently, and how they can continue their learning. Each student will prepare one reflection paper, addressing the following:

1. Recount your experience within this course, and discuss your learning. You may choose a theme related to one of your learning goals, your project plan, or even something you did not expect to learn.
2. What contributed to your learning and how did it happen?
3. How will you apply this new knowledge to your field of study? And what impact do you think it could have?
4. What aspects of the course (readings, lectures, leadership, workshops, etc) supported your experiential learning? Make connections using three sources demonstrating how your experiences can be better understood in relation to the course material, and vice versa.

Students are encouraged to draw from readings, self-reflections, lectures, and workshops to support their work. Your reflection is your own personal learning journey and needs to be supported by evidence.

Due Dates: TBD

Time Due: 11:59pm

Format: Word format.

Word Limit: 2,000 words (Flexible. Do not feel pressured to reach 2000 or constrained to keep within it)

Sources: Minimum of three sources, at least one from class/readings and at least one outside source.

Rubric: Evaluation for the final reflection will be based on the information found in the Report on Guided Reflection.

POLICY STATEMENTS

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Students are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that result or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, located at <http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

INCLUSIVITY

The Instructor is committed to creating an equitable environment and encourages openness to multiple perspectives and points of view. Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. If you have a disability or health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach one of the instructors and/or Student Accessibility Services (<http://sas.mcmaster.ca/>) as soon as possible.

A NOTE ABOUT AVENUE TO LEARN

This course uses Avenue to Learn. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with a course instructor.

COURSE MODIFICATIONS

The instructor and University reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The University may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

MCMASTER STUDENT ABSENCE FORM (MSAF)

If you are seeking relief for missed academic work because of an absence lasting less than three days in duration, you must use the McMaster Student Absence Form.

It is the student's responsibility to contact the course instructor as soon as possible (ideally within three days) to discuss appropriate relief. It is the prerogative of the instructor of the course to determine the appropriate relief for missed term work in his/her course.

Students should expect to have academic commitments Monday through Saturday but not on Sunday or statutory holidays.

CLASS AND TUTORIAL SCHEDULE

- Class 1: June 22, 2020
 - Introductions, course overview, assignment review, and lecture on advocacy.
- Tutorial 1: June 24, 2020
 - The Triple bottom line, PCS and local advocacy discussion.
- Class 2: June 29, 2020
 - Community Presentations and lecture on creating space and structure for advocacy.
- Tutorial 2: July 1, 2020
 - NO CLASS, Happy Canada Day!
- Class 3: July 6, 2020
 - Knowing your target audience, sources of power, why all advocacy is political, and writing an advocacy letter.
- Tutorial 3: July 8, 2020
 - Leadership and soft skills workshop
- Class 4: July 13, 2020
 - Principles of advocacy, advocacy plan, and engagement principles.

- Tutorial 4: July 15, 2020
 - Delivery methods of advocacy work, how do you make it happen?
- Class 5: July 20, 2020
 - How do we sustain advocacy?
- Tutorial 5: July 22, 2020
 - Evaluation, the lesson and growth in failing.
- Class 6: July 27, 2020
 - Social justice, oppression, trends, and advocacy as an attitude.
- Tutorial 6: July 29, 2020
 - In class presentations for all final projects.
- Class 7: August 3, 2020
 - NO CLASS, Happy Civic Monday!
- Tutorial 7: August 5, 2020
 - Unpacking SUSTAIN 2SS3.

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