

COURSE INFORMATION

Course Name: Evaluating Problems and Sustainable Solutions Course Code: Sustain 2S03

Session Offered: Fall 2021

Calendar Description:

Students will learn how to identify problems and evaluate sustainable solutions to societal issues from an interdisciplinary perspective, with a focus on cities. The course provides opportunity for active experiential education and inquiry, which emphasizes individual actions on sustainability projects. It will also explore the importance of local decisions and actions and their impact on national and international approaches.

Instructor(s): Peter Topalovic

Phone: N/A

Email: topalopj@mcmaster.ca

Office Hours/Location: By appointment

Class Schedule Day(s): Wednesdays Time: 7pm to 10pm Location: N/A

1. COURSE OBJECTIVES

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

1. Understand the meanings underlying the sustainability theories presented through forming opinions on the course content
2. Retrieve relevant knowledge on general themes and major points from course content
3. Integrate knowledge from course content into personal experience through planning and implementing a personal lifestyle challenge
4. Apply course concepts and theories to create solutions that improve the sustainability of cities
5. Create meaning by generating connections between academic theory and action through reflection

2. COURSE SPECIFIC POLICIES

SUSTAIN 2S03 is made up of readings, lectures, workshops, and tutorials.

- Readings are to 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.
- Lectures will be asynchronous, and available on Avenue in the form of video lectures
- Workshops and other learning exercises will take place in tutorial. They will cover important issues faced by cities and involve professionals in the community who will interact with the class in a workshop format. Ideas from the class will be used to enhance community initiatives and/or solve a problem faced by the community.
- Tutorial time will be used to support student understanding and the practical application of course material from lectures and readings. Tutorial time will also be used to offer guidance and support for class assignments.

Group Work

Throughout the course, students will be provided with a variety of opportunities for interdisciplinary discussion and group work. All group members will receive the same mark for group assignments. Part of this course is to provide students with the opportunity to develop their teamwork skills. If and when challenges arise, utilize the opportunity to employ strategies to better the group dynamics going forward. You are encouraged to seek support from the Teaching Assistants or Course Instructor.

In extreme circumstances, and once group members have attempted to address the situation as a team, they may approach the Course Instructor to proceed with further action. In such an instance, the group will be requested to submit documentation of the problem(s). After an initial warning, and if no significant improvement is made, the Course Instructor reserves the right to adjust any individual's assignment mark up to 50% of the group grade.

All group work submissions must indicate which group member contributed to which part of the assignment and/or include a pie chart depicting value of contributions put forth by each group member. Please include this throughout the document or at the end of the document (bullet points and/or percentages are sufficient).

Assignment Submission Guidelines

All assignments should be submitted in Word .doc format via Avenue to Learn. See assignment-specific criteria for instructions.

Late assignments will be penalized 10% each day, including Saturday and Sunday, 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, unless specific arrangements have been made with the TA. Any arrangements for late submission must be made at least 24-hours before the assignment is due. In the case of extenuating circumstances, please contact and discuss with the TA or the Course Instructor.

MSAF Policy and Missed Classes

Automatic MSAF's: Students are encouraged not to use their MSAF's. Instead, if a deliverable is not handed in on the due date, an automatic 3 day extension will be granted without the need to file an MSAF or for the student to contact their professor or TA. This means that if a deliverable is due on a Thursday and it is not handed in, an automatic extension will be granted and the new due date will be Sunday.

Regular MSAF's are not required in this course, however, if they are used in another course and then applied to a deliverable in this course, your due date will automatically extend the submission deadline by three calendar days. No other arrangements need to be made. Please ensure the instructor and your marking TA are included on the MSAF form to ensure it is properly recorded.

MSAFs are not required for course participation; instead, a student may miss 2 Tutorials without penalty, by notifying your tutorial TA.

Required Readings:

There is no textbook or course pack for this class. Consistent with the goals of the Sustainable Future Program, all required readings can be found on Avenue to Learn.

3. SCHEDULE

Week	Topic	Course Deliverable Due
WEEK 1 (Sept. 6)	Happy City - an Introduction	
WEEK 2 (Sept. 13)	The Food, Water, and Energy Nexus	
WEEK 3 (Sept. 20)	Climate Change Adaptation: Livability and Resiliency	Discussion Post 1 Submitted
WEEK 4 (Sept. 27)	Climate Change Mitigation - Land Use and Transportation	Project Plan submitted
WEEK 5 (Oct. 4)	Fall Break – no classes	
WEEK 6 (Oct. 11)	Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems	Discussion Post 2 Submitted
WEEK 7 (Oct. 18)	Risk and Responsibility: the role of government and the private sector	Discussion Post 3 Submitted
WEEK 8 (Oct. 25)	Transportation and Complete Streets	Group Assignment submitted
WEEK 9 (Nov. 1)	Culture, Behaviour Change, and Engagement	Discussion post 4 posted
WEEK 10 (Nov. 8)	Ecological Economics and Industrial Ecology	Final Presentations Begin
WEEK 11 (Nov. 15)	Public Policy and Sustainability	Reflection Submitted (Final Presentations continue)
WEEK 12 (Nov. 22)	Natural Capitalism, Measuring Sustainability, and the Sharing Economy	Discussion Post 5 Submitted (Final Presentations continue)
WEEK 13 (Nov. 29)	Emerging Issues and Sustainable Development Goals	Final Presentations continue Final presentation powerpoint or infographic submitted
FINAL EXAMINATION	There is no exam or tests for this course	

4. ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING**WEIGHT %**

Lifestyle Challenge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project Plan (15%) - Reflection (20%) - Project Presentation (15%) 	50%
Group Assignment (final report)	25%
Participation - Quizzes	10%
Participation - Tutorial Attendance and Participation	15%

5. LEARNING OUTCOMES

Develop project management skills and be able to articulate your ideas

Use self-directed learning techniques, understand your motivations and self-reflect on your progress

Apply critical thinking to sustainability challenges and be able to critique issues and policies

Use the course framework to develop solutions to sustainability challenges in your own and other's lives

6. COMMUNICATIONS

It is the student's responsibility to:

- Maintain current contact information with the University, including address, phone numbers, and emergency contact information.
- Use the University provided e-mail address or maintain a valid forwarding e-mail address.
- Regularly check the official University communications channels. Official University communications are considered received if sent by postal mail, by fax, or by e-mail to the student's designated primary e-mail account via their "@mcmaster.ca" alias.
- Accept that forwarded e-mails may be lost and that e-mail is considered received if sent via the student's @mcmaster.ca alias.
- Check the McMaster/Avenue email and course websites on a regular basis during the term.

7. POLICIES

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

You 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. **It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.**

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results 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. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](#), located at <https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

- plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- improper collaboration in group work.
- copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

AUTHENTICITY / PLAGIARISM DETECTION

Some courses may use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via an online learning platform (e.g. A2L, etc.) using plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish their work to be submitted through the plagiarism detection software must inform the Instructor before the assignment is due. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to the plagiarism detection software. **All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld** (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). For more details about McMaster's use of Turnitin.com please go to www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

COURSES WITH AN ON-LINE ELEMENT

Some courses may use on-line elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn (A2L), LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, 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 a course that uses on-line elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

ONLINE PROCTORING

Some courses may use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer activities, and/or lock/restrict their browser or other applications/software during tests or exams. This software may be required to be installed before the test/exam begins.

CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) (the “Code”). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, **whether in person or online**.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students’ access to these platforms.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or sas@mcmaster.ca to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University’s [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

PROTECTION OF PRIVACY ACT (FIPPA)

The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA) applies to universities. Instructors should take care to protect student names, student numbers, grades and all other personal information at all times. For example, the submission and return of assignments and the posting of grades must be done in a manner that ensures confidentiality - see <http://www.mcmaster.ca/univsec/fippa/fippa.cfm>

REQUESTS FOR RELIEF FOR MISSED ACADEMIC TERM WORK

McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF): In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar “Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work”.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION FOR RELIGIOUS, INDIGENOUS OR SPIRITUAL OBSERVANCES (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the [RISO](#) policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office **normally within 10 working days** of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

COPYRIGHT AND RECORDING

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCES

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.

8. MCMASTER GRADING SCALE

Grade	Equivalent Grade Point	Equivalent Percentages
A+	12	90-100
A	11	85-89
A-	10	80-84
B+	9	77-79
B	8	73-76
B-	7	70-72
C+	6	67-69
C	5	63-66
C-	4	60-62
D+	3	57-59
D	2	53-56
D-	1	50-52
F	0	0-49