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# SUSTAIN 4S06 A/B – LEADERSHIP IN SUSTAINABILITY

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FALL 2021 - WINTER 2022

**Class:** Tuesday 7:00pm-10:00pm

**Location:** Microsoft Teams

**Instructor:** Dr. Kate Whalen, [whalenk@mcmaster.ca](mailto:whalenk@mcmaster.ca)

**Office:** Microsoft Teams

**Office Hours:** By appointment. Please schedule via online [here](#).

**Teaching Assistant:** Natalie Ciancone, [cianconn@mcmaster.ca](mailto:cianconn@mcmaster.ca)

**Office:** Microsoft Teams

**Office Hours:** By appointment. Please schedule via email.

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## COURSE OVERVIEW

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### *Calendar Description*

Final-year course where students gain leadership skills and apply them by working in interdisciplinary teams to develop and implement a sustainability-focused project within the community.

### *Course Overview*

With the goal to inspire in all students a desire for continued learning and inquiry through experiential education, this course will provide students with interdisciplinary, student-led, and community based opportunities related to sustainability. This course will enable students to develop essential skills to effectively tackle complex problems with emphasis on applying interdisciplinary solutions. Some of these problems include climate change, poverty, distribution of wealth and resources, food insecurity, environmental degradation, and loss of biodiversity.

Students are involved in these issues to varying degrees. They are consumers deciding which product or service to select, they are members of one or more communities, they are advocates for change, and they may also be in leadership positions on or off campus. What becomes evident as their experiences grow is that implementing sustainability initiatives does not happen in isolation. Learning how to listen, form successful collaborations, work effectively within diverse groups, recognize and consult with various stakeholders, resolve conflicts, foster engagement, and recognize achievements are skills that will be emphasized in this course. Furthermore, knowing how to apply skills in project management, organization, time management, and communication, are also integral to implementing successful sustainability initiatives.

Throughout this course, students will apply the transferrable skills they have obtained throughout much of their undergraduate career to conduct primary, qualitative research and to develop and implement a real-world sustainability initiative within the Hamilton community.

## COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- Demonstrate a deep understanding of local sustainability issues and their interconnectedness within a broader system through written assignments, discussions, and practical application
- Apply essential skills within an interdisciplinary setting, including project management, change management, problem solving, teamwork, and communication
- 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

## COURSE STRUCTURE

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While SUSTAIN 4S06 is focused on the student-led development and implementation of a research-focused project within a community, students will be provided with support throughout the course. Support will include readings and learning resources, facilitated class discussions, and written assignments, which are aimed to assist students in the successful completion of their project and enhance their experiential learning.

A unique aspect of this course is that students will be encouraged to develop a wide range of essential skills by participating in workshops led by the instructor and/or by guest speakers, which will take place during scheduled class time.

## ONLINE COMMUNICATION PLATFORMS

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This course uses Avenue to Learn to post assignments, rubrics, readings, and other notices. It is important to visit Avenue to Learn regularly to be kept informed of any new information. Most course assignments will be submitted via Avenue to Learn (<http://avenue.mcmaster.ca/>).

Classes will take place using Microsoft Teams.

Additional non-course-specific information, including events and opportunities, will be shared using MacSustain social media platforms, specifically [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#).

## REQUIRED READINGS, INSTRUCTIONAL VIDEOS, AND LEARNING RESOURCES

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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

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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 implement their sustainability project. All students will work in groups of ~3-5. Groups will be determined based on students' choice of project whenever possible. However, the instructor reserves the right to create student project teams. Each group will work with a Community Project Champion (CPC), who works for the University, City of Hamilton, or in the Hamilton community and who will assist in guiding students to plan and implement 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 to students before the first day of classes in September.

Students are encouraged to review the project description before the first class and start thinking about which projects 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. Early in the course, CPCs will be available to meet with students, provide more information, and answer any questions that students might have. Attending class prepared with specific questions will be helpful, as students will be making their project selection immediately following the term one course add/drop deadline.

Students will rank all projects and include a brief description of their perspective and why they would like or would not like to be assigned each project. Students will submit their list of project choices via A2L. The TA 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 project groups within 24 hours of the submission due date/time.

Throughout term one, students will engage in working with the community to understand the issue from the community's perspective. Class time will include workshops on qualitative research methodology, study design and research ethics; project planning; and more.

Students will develop their qualitative research study, which will include between six and nine personal interviews, verbatim transcription, coding and thematic analysis, reporting, and iterative development and refinement of results. To support their primary research, students will create an ethics application and all associated resources, which will be submitted to McMaster Research Ethics Board (MREB) for review and approval before students can begin participant recruitment. Students should familiarize themselves with the MREB website including the Tips and Resources available: <https://reo.mcmaster.ca/home>. Students must have their ethics application reviewed by their CPC and by the course instructor prior to formal submission on the due date below.

During term two, students will be heavily engaged in data analysis, report writing, and potential implementation of study recommendations. Students will be able to utilize some scheduled class time for group meetings and to obtain support from the course instructor and teaching assistant but should plan to complete most of their project's implementation outside of class time. While a class schedule has been included in this syllabus, it is tentative. This course will embrace that there will be unknown events and will encourage flexibility for what content will be discussed based on when it will be most as it supports the students experiential learning. Classes will focus on providing guidance and support for items as they arise and as requested by students. Students can expect to engage in readings and discussion on topics such as successful negotiations and moving forward in the face of resistance. These topics may change based on the progress of the projects and support required by the students. In the latter part of term two, students will focus on reflection as well as the creation and submission of their final project reports.

## EVALUATION

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

Assignment	Due Date	Percent of Grade	Notes
Weekly Reflections and Teamwork Assessments (individual)	Weekly, most Mondays 9am	15%	Reflection prompts will be given in class the previous Tuesday.
Quizzes (individual)	Usual in-class	5%	Will have one week's notice.
Ethics Application (group)	October 8. 5PM	15%	For review & feedback.
Project Plan 1 (group)	October 8. 5PM	10%	Focus on Term 1
Term Reflection (Individual)	Dec 1. 9AM or April 14. 9AM	10%	Term 1 or Term 2. Students choose.
Current Event Discussion (pairs)	Term 2	5%	Weekly in Term 2. Schedule to be determined.
Project Plan 2 (group)	January 31. 9AM	5%	Update for Term 2
Research Report Draft (Group)	Feb 7. 9AM	5%	Draft report
Research Report Final (Group)	Feb 18. 5PM	20%	Final report of publication-quality. Option to post online.
Final Report Page (Group)	Mar 21. 9AM	5%	One page report. Option to be included in ASP Annual Report online.
Presentation & Report to Decision-makers (group)	April 4. 9AM	5%	Recorded presentation and report on who, what, where, when, why, and how.

## Tentative SCHEDULE

Date	Topic
September 7	Introduction Project pitches
September 14	Getting messy with qualitative research
September 21	Introduction to ethics Project planning
September 28	Ethics workshop
October 5	Ethics groupwork Instructor review of Ethics application
October 12	Midterm Recess
October 19	Study recruitment Asking great questions Mock interviews
October 26	Transcribing Coding Boundaries
November 2	Reflection for learning Qualitative research presentation preparation Radical candor Reporting to decision-makers workshop

<i>November 9</i>	<i>Qualitative research presentations Saboteurs, strengths, &amp; values</i>
<i>November 16</i>	<i>Defining leadership Reference letters</i>
<i>November 23</i>	<i>Reflection workshop Creating code structures</i>
<i>November 30</i>	<i>Facilitated reflection writing</i>
<i>December 7</i>	<i>Term wrap-up</i>
<i>BREAK</i>	
<i>January 11</i>	<i>NVIVO workshop</i>
<i>January 18</i>	<i>Current event 1 Creating code diagram Selecting quotes</i>
<i>January 25</i>	<i>Current event 2 Confirming quotes Project planning</i>
<i>February 1</i>	<i>Current event 3 Research report workshop</i>
<i>February 8</i>	<i>Current event 4 Goal setting Habits Research report group work</i>
<i>February 15</i>	<i>Current event 5 Perspectives Judgement Research report group work</i>
<i>February 22</i>	<i>Midterm recess</i>
<i>March 1</i>	<i>Research report review</i>
<i>March 8</i>	<i>Current event 6 Effective communication</i>
<i>March 15</i>	<i>Current event 7 Negotiations</i>
<i>March 22</i>	<i>Current event 8 Advocacy workshop Final report consultation</i>
<i>March 29</i>	<i>Current event 9 Mock presentations</i>
<i>April 5</i>	<i>Project presentations Current event 10</i>
<i>April 12</i>	<i>Virtual campfire</i>

## COURSE-SPECIFIC POLICIES

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### *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. If any group members' overall assessment is below 70%, the instructor reserves the right to apply their weighting to the group members overall project grade. For example, if the group's total project grade is an 80% but one group member was assessed at a 69%, that group member would receive a 55% on their overall project.

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.

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 TA. The update email should include updates from the past week; 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 location.

Acceptance will be permitted one time for lateness, missed attendance, lacking participation, or late/missed weekly meeting with a project champion. 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:* Using APA, MLA or Chicago 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.

### *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.

### *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.

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## POLICIES

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### *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](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/), 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](http://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 Accommodations 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](mailto: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/fipppa/fipppa.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 Accommodations 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.