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Portland State University
USP 588 Sustainable Development Practices - Integrating Sustainability
Spring 2023, 3 credits

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Thursdays, 10:00am - 1230pm
Online: https://pdx.zoom.us/j/2782657031
Instructor: Christa McDermott, Ph.D.
Email: Christa@pdx.edu
Office hours: By appointment

Course description

Development often refers to increased economic growth - driven by people and our institutions - that has been shown to have many harms and benefits. This development uses a wide variety of organizational strategies and policy tools that are now being pursued by governments, NGOs and businesses in an effort to accomplish *sustainable development (SD),* to reduce environmental, social, and economic harms. Sustainable development exists in a paradox, asking whether the tools and institutions used to create inequitable growth and environmental damage be used to heal these very wounds? Can continued and expanded economic growth be sustainable for people and the planet?

This course is a graduate-level consideration of those sustainable development practices. It surveys newly emerging approaches that are intended to avoid or limit the social, economic, and environmental harms associated with most past, and current, patterns of development and—ideally—to provide environmental, economic, and social benefit through more sustainable development practices. The course is intended to build upon basic understandings of socio-environmental change from earlier coursework and independent study. It is also intended to provide a foundation for subsequent in-depth studies of particular sustainable development strategies and analytic techniques. It is hoped that you will leave with a deeper understanding of effective, real-world applications of sustainability goals and principles, as well as a respect for the serious challenges faced by sustainability change-makers.

The course will focus each week on a specific issue in sustainability to give you an opportunity to learn in detail about a topic as well as connect it back to broader issues - such as, climate change mitigation, land use, housing, systems of consumption - and SD strategies - such as building a workforce for addressing climate change, materials management policies, zoning and other housing policies, multi-stakeholder engagement processes, and changing norms.

UPS 588 serves multiple purposes in the PSU curriculum. It is an elective course in the environmental specialty of the urban and regional planning degree and an elective in the real estate graduate certificate. It is also one of the core courses in the Graduate Certificate in Sustainability and is a required course in the School of Urban Studies and Planning's Urban Design Certificate.

The course is taught by Christa McDermott, Ph.D. My research focuses on the social and psychological aspects of pro-environmental behaviors, particularly reducing waste and using materials more sustainably. My disciplinary training is in Personality and Social Psychology and Women's Studies. I have a long-standing interest in the role of gender in social practices and the intersections of gender with other social identities that affect sustainability. I also spent many years working in environmental and energy policy in Washington, DC, including in the US Senate, US EPA, and US Department of Energy. At PSU, I teach this course and direct Community Environmental Services, a waste reduction, research, and professional development program.

To speak to other areas of sustainable development and to give you the perspectives of practitioners, there will be several guest speakers throughout the course. These experts are a valuable resource - take advantage of their sharing their knowledge with you in this small setting by reading the articles related to their talks ahead of class, preparing thoughtful questions, and digging deep into their issue areas. Equally, respect your classmates' time and effort by preparing for your weekly learning circles, engaging in our discussions and material, and letting your curiosity about how sustainability happens in the world drive you through the work needed to get past the surfaces of and common assumptions about these practices.

Learning Objectives
A student who successfully completes this class will:
- Be able to identify and analyze the harms and benefits of typical development patterns;
- Understand the key features of sustainable development practices
- Use a complex systems framework to analyze the components of "wicked problems" in sustainability and their proposed solutions.
- Become familiar with sustainable development practices as demonstrated in specific examples explored in class, with the potential to apply them in students' future work.

Teaching Methods
This course is a discussion oriented, graduate level seminar held once a week, Thursdays, 10am – 12:30pm. Class sessions will primarily involve sustainable practice cases and learning circle discussions, supplemented by lectures and guest speakers. Since discussion is such an important component of the course, students are expected to attend every session unless prevented by specific, extenuating circumstances. Arrangements must be made with the instructor and your learning circle prior to class. Students are also expected to read all required readings, respond to all learning circle prompts and memos, and come to class prepared to discuss that week's topics.

Texts and readings
One book is required: *The Ministry for the Future* by Kim Stanley Robinson.
Other required readings and supplemental materials are available online either through the University Library's website or other online sources. Copies or links to these readings will be provided on the CANVAS site.

Assignments and grading: The ungrading approach
There is a great deal of evidence that grades shift learning from being intrinsically motivated (inside the student) to extrinsically motivated (outside of the student).[1]

For this and for other reasons (bias, students starting from different levels of knowledge), I do not grade in a traditional manner. At the end of the course, I ask you to reflect on the class, what you have learned, and your effort, and you determine your own grade. You will definitely receive feedback throughout this course – from me, from your peers, and in your own self-reflections. There is feedback from your peers in our learning circles every week. There is a mid-term and final self-reflection. I reserve the right to change grades as appropriate, if your self-assessment seems out of line with my observations over the term and your classmates' assessments.

In Canvas, you will receive credit for the work you complete in the form of points from 0 to 2. Students receive 2 out of 2 points for every assignment as long as you do three things: (1) submit it on time, (2) follow the directions, and (3) do the work completely. For example, if you write a response memo that does not address all of the prompts you are asked to reflect on, you will receive 1 point instead of 2. Turning in late work causes problems for your fellow classmates and me and so you will lose a point for work that is late. If you do not turn in work, you will receive 0 points.

2 out of 2 points on every assignment does not mean you are doing perfect work. It means you are doing the work you are supposed to in order to learn from this course and tracking your participation will help you in your self-reflection and self-assessment. I can also look back on this participation when I reflect on your final, self-assessed grade.

All assignments will be submitted via Canvas or Google Drive.

Activity	"Points"	Percent of total grade
Weekly responses and other work for learning circles	2 points/task (memo, role specific work, feedback form)	70%
Self-reflection; mid-term and final	2 points/assignment	30%

Detailed instructions on learning circles and assignments will be provided in class and via CANVAS.

In USP, the basic rubric used to grade graduate and post-bac student work is as follows:
● A: Demonstrates original thought and synthesis of ideas, sophisticated, cogent analysis, and is clearly written or presented. Excellent work.

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[1] A great podcast from Yale's Happiness Lab on how grades work against learning is definitely worth a listen: Episode 10: Making the Grade.

- A- or B+: Presents above average analysis with appropriate evidence to support the ideas and is clearly written or presented. Good work.
- B or B-: Shows a basic level of understanding, with analysis limited to the most obvious arguments. Writing is competent. Adequate work.
- C+ or below: Misunderstands or misrepresents the material, or is so poorly written presented as to obscure the analysis. Inadequate work.

Assignment 1: Weekly learning circles (70%)[2]

Purpose: To encourage reflection, dialogue, and debate on the concepts and cases shared in this course.

Task: For this assignment, you need to do four things:
1. Prior to and during class, actively think about and engage with the material, including readings;
2. Complete weekly assignments intended to help stimulate your thinking;
3. Be prepared and willing to engage in discussion and debate, and (perhaps most importantly);
4. Be willing to do the above with an open mind and respectful of alternative ways of thinking.

Due: Every week, via Collaborations section in CANVAS on the following schedule

Role	Task	Due Date
Everyone	Feedback form	Friday, 5pm
Everyone	Response memo	Tuesday, 12pm
Illustrator/reporter	Visual(s) and memo	Wednesday, 12pm
Connector/Community Builder	Connection(s) memo	Wednesday, 12pm
Lexicographer/interpreter	Lexicon memo	Wednesday, 12pm
Coordinator/Facilitator	Agenda	Thursday, 9am

Assignment 2 & 3: Self-reflection (30%)

Due:
- Self-reflection #1 Due Week 5 - Wednesday by 5pm on CANVAS.
- Self-reflection #2: Due Week 10 – Wednesday by 5pm on CANVAS.

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[2] The Learning Circle teaching tool was originally demonstrated to me by Matthew Gebhardt and Norene Hough. With great appreciation, descriptions of the purpose and processes of Learning Circles, instructions for students, and other Learning Circle materials have been adapted from Matthew Gebhardt's USP 541 course materials.

Generative AI (Chat GPT, GPT4, etc)

Generative AI is here and, frankly, faculty are just figuring out how to address its use in coursework. I see generative AI tools as helpful for brainstorming and clarifying writing, in the minimum. One of the main downsides of generative AI is that it can sound more accurate than it is. Relying on it for research and writing can also short circuit your own problem solving process. AI tools are not a replacement for your own critical thinking and original ideas. The ultimate goal of this course is to enhance your own learning and understanding, not to undermine it.

As a student, it is your responsibility to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. This includes a) ensuring that all work submitted is your own original work, and b) properly citing any sources that you use. Having AI write your paper constitutes plagiarism. If the source of the work is unclear, I will require you to meet with me to explain the ideas and your process.

If you have questions about what is permitted, please reach out to me. Better yet, raise it in class as we can all benefit from discussing what is helpful and ethical, and what isn't, about these tools.

Citations
In all of your writing or productions in other media, **you must cite sources** where they are relevant. You may use footnotes, endnotes, in text citations and reference list according to and may use any style guide you prefer as long as it is used consistently. I use APA style.
https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/general_format.html

Another option is: http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html

Whichever citation style you choose, **please note which style you are using.** Please include the following at the start of your assignments:

Date:
Name:
Title:
(Citation Style)

If you are not familiar with citation styles, please make an appointment with the PSU Writing Center. https://www.pdx.edu/writing-center/. A Writing Center consultant who works only with graduate students will be available for online sessions Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2-4pm. Consultants who work with all students are available by appointment through the week.

Schedule of Topics and Readings

1	4/6	Intro and overview: A systems framework	In class: Meadows, D. (1999). Leverage Points: Places to Intervene in a System. Hartland: The Sustainability Institute. Austin's butterfly https://youtu.be/hqh1MRWZjms Bring personal artifact for introductions Complete poll
2	4/13	Local government and climate change	Guest discussant: Kif Scheuer, Ph.D. Farallon Consulting, Climate Corps Reading: City of Portland/Multnomah County. (2015) *Climate Action Plan. (Intro, Emissions Measurement, and Consumption sections)* Armstrong, M. et al. (2021) The State of Local Climate Planning. Chapters 1 – 10, Ministry for the Future
3	4/20	Preventing wasted food	Reading: HOLT-GIMÉNEZ, E. (2017). Food, a Special Commodity. In *A Foodie's Guide to Capitalism: Understanding the Political Economy of What We Eat* (pp. 57-82). NYU Press. McDermott, C., Elliot, D., Moreno, L., Broderson, R. & Mulder, C. (2019). *2017 Oregon Wasted Food Study: Summary of Findings.* Report prepared for Oregon Department of Environmental Quality. PAGES 8 - 14, 18 - 41 Izumi, Betty et al. (2019). Exploring Factors that Minimize School Lunch Waste in Tokyo Elementary Schools. *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior,* Volume 51, Issue 7, S6.
4	4/27	Social customs + land use: Systems of death and memorial	Guest Speaker: Carole Hardy, USP 588 alumni working on natural burial project Reading: Coutts, C., Basmajian, C., Sehee, J., Kelty, S., &

			Williams, P. C. (2018). Natural burial as a land conservation tool in the US. *Landscape and Urban Planning*, *178*, 130-143.
5	5/4	Co-housing, community, and land development	Assignment: Self-reflection #1 due No learning circles - Field Trip! Tour of housing alternatives in the Cully neighborhood. Guest speaker and tour host: Eli Spevak, Developer, Orange Splot Meet at Cully Green co-housing community, NE Going St, Portland (between 47th and 50th) Park on the street. Meet by the arch. Reading: Peter Jakobsen & Henrik Gutzon Larsen (2019) An alternative for whom? The evolution and socio-economy of Danish cohousing, Urban Research & Practice, 12:4, 414-430 Outsiders podcast - episodes 1, 2, 4 https://www.knkx.org/programs/outsiders Chapters 26 – 35, Ministry for the Future
6	5/11	Housing policies and homelessness	Reading: Heben, A. (2014). *Tent City Urbanism: From Self-organized Camps to Tiny House Villages.* Village Collaborative. Chapters 1-3 Chapters 11 – 25, Ministry for the Future Outsiders podcast episodes 6, 7, 8, 9 https://www.knkx.org/programs/outsiders
	5/18	Informal workforces: The case of canners	Guest discussant: Zac Willette, M.Div. Personal and professional burnout and climate change *Redemption* [Video file]. (2013).

			http://stats.lib.pdx.edu/proxy.php?url=https://fod.infobase.com/PortalPlaylists.aspx?wID=102733&xtid=115026
			Reading: Tucker, J.L., & Anantharaman, M. (2020) **Informal Work and Sustainable Cities: From Formalization to Reparation** *One Earth*, Vol.3 (3), p.290-299
			Chapters 46 - 60, Ministry for the Future
8	5/25	AI – Environmental impacts and potential uses	Guest discussants: Dawn Nafus, Ph.D (Anthropologist at Intel) and Leon Barrett, Ph.D. (Cognitive Scientist at Sony AI)
			Reading: Kelly Bronson & Phoebe Sengers (2022) Big Tech Meets Big Ag: Diversifying Epistemologies of Data and Power, Science as Culture, 31:1, 15-28, DOI: 10.1080/09505431.2021.1986692
			Chapters 61 - 75, Ministry for the Future
9	6/1	Extended producer responsibility	Reading TBD
			Frontline: Plastic Wars (2020) *https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/plastic-wars/*
			Optional: *This Week Tonight with John Oliver: Plastics* *https://youtu.be/Fiu9GSOmt8E*
			Optional: Seldman, N. (2018). EPR: The good, the bad, and the ugly. *Waste Dive.* https://www.wastedive.com/news/epr-good-bad-ugly/519582/
			Chapters 76- 85, Ministry for the Future
10	6/8	The Ministry for the Future	Assignment: Self-Reflection #2 Due
			Reading: Chapters 86 - end, Ministry for the Future

Other resources

Assadourian, E. (2013). Building an enduring environmental movement. *State of the World: Is sustainability still possible?* WorldWatch Institute.

Baker, S. (2016) Introduction. Sustainable development. Routledge. New York, NY, 1-12

Baker, S. (2016) Ch 4: Sustainable Production and Consumption. Sustainable development. Routledge. New York, NY

Feng et al. (2019) Chapter 7: CONSUMPTION-BASED ACCOUNTING OF U.S. CO2 EMISSIONS FROM 1990 TO 2010. Local consumption and global environmental impacts.

HOLT-GIMÉNEZ, E. (2017). Food, Capitalism, Crises, and Solutions. In *A Foodie's Guide to Capitalism: Understanding the Political Economy of What We Eat* (pp. 175-212). NYU Press.

Jaffee, D. (2014). *Brewing justice : Fair trade coffee, sustainability, and survival.* Chapter 5. ProQuest Ebook Central

https://www.seattletimes.com/life/recompose-the-human-composting-project-finds-a-home-in-seattles-sodo/

Academic Honesty

Students are expected to be ethical not only in the classroom, but also out of the classroom. It is in all students' interest to avoid committing acts of academic dishonesty and to discourage others from committing such acts. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following examples: engages in any form of academic deceit; refers to materials or sources or uses devices not authorized by the instructor for use during any quiz or assignment; provides inappropriate aid to another person in connection with any quiz or assignment; engages in Plagiarism. Plagiarism is the act of claiming someone's work as your own through copying it without giving the creator of the work credit. Plagiarism can also include using another person's theories, ideas, or phrases without proper attribution. The simplest way to avoid plagiarizing is to always cite the sources from which you gather information or develop arguments – just cite anything you use from someone else (it actually makes your work stronger!). Plagiarism is a serious issue and is a violation of the PSU Student Conduct Code . University policy requires instructors to report all instances of plagiarism and penalize the perpetrator(s) according to guidelines set. Please see me if you ever have any questions about how to cite your work.

Submitting work online

For assignments that require uploading files to CANVAS or Google Drive, it is the student's responsibility to verify that (1) all files are submitted in CANVAS or Google Drive prior to the deadline and (2) all submitted files are those that the student intends to be graded for the assignment. Submitting the "wrong" file by accident is not acceptable grounds for a deadline extension. Assignment grades will be based on the file submitted prior to the posted deadline. Files submitted in a format that cannot be accessed by the instructor cannot be graded and will therefore receive a 0. Acceptable file formats are MS Office formats (e.g. Word, Excel, Powerpoint) or PDF files. Individual assignment instructions may contain a required file format.

Choosing P/NP instead of a letter grade

If you choose to take this course on a P/NP basis instead of receiving a letter grade you need to attend and fully participate in all weekly sessions and complete *all* of the assignments on time and with your best effort. To get a P, you must complete coursework at a B- or better for graduate courses. Graduate students who would earn a C in a course. Switching to P/NP would cause you to fail the course.

P/NP grades have no impact on your grade point average (GPA), but P/NP courses on your transcript could possibly be viewed unfavorably by committees evaluating you for scholarships, graduate school, etc. Before choosing the P/NP option, review the university's policy and discuss with your academic advisor whether it is the right choice for you. You sign up for the P/NP grading option on Banweb; the instructor cannot see what you chose until they submit your final grade for the course. The deadline for changing your grading option is Monday of Week 10. Contact the registrar with any questions about the policy and registration.

Technology access

Proficiency in the use of CANVAS, Google Drive, PSU email, and other computer tools such as ZOOM or parts of the google suite is required for this course. This course requires consistent access to functioning computer equipment and Internet access throughout the length of the course. Reliance on a cellular connection may not provide reliable and fast access to online learning resources. Here are some broadband programs that are free or low-cost:

https://www.highspeedinternet.com/resources/are-there-government-programs-to-help-me-get-internet-service

Access and Inclusion for Students with Disabilities

PSU values diversity and inclusion; we are committed to fostering mutual respect and full participation for all students. My goal is to create a learning environment that is equitable, useable, inclusive, and welcoming. If any aspects of instruction or course design result in barriers to your inclusion or learning, please notify me. The Disability Resource Center (DRC) provides reasonable accommodations for students who encounter barriers in the learning environment.

If you have, or think you may have, a disability that may affect your work in this class and feel you need accommodations, contact the Disability Resource Center to schedule an appointment and initiate a conversation about reasonable accommodations. The DRC is located in 116 Smith Memorial Student Union, 503-725-4150, drc@pdx.edu, https://www.pdx.edu/drc.

- If you already have accommodations, please contact me to make sure that I have received a faculty notification letter and discuss your accommodations.
- Students who need accommodations for tests and quizzes are expected to schedule their tests to overlap with the time the class is taking the test.
- For information about emergency preparedness, please go to the Fire and Life Safety webpage (https://www.pdx.edu/environmental-health-safety/fire-and-life-safety) for information.

Gender or sex-based discrimination or sexual harassment

Title IX violations and sexual misconduct under PSU's PSU's Prohibited Discrimination and Harassment policy (Interim) include gender/sex discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault or any other form of gender based violence. We all strive to build a community that treats others respectfully and with civility; however, we want to be sure that you are prepared if incidents occur.

Portland State is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of prohibited discrimination and sexual harassment (sexual assault, domestic and dating violence, and gender or sex-based harassment and stalking). If you have experienced any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or sexual harassment, know that help and support are available. Information about PSU's support services on campus, including confidential services and reporting options, can be found on PSU's Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response website at: http://www.pdx.edu/sexual-assault/get-help or you may call a confidential IPV Advocate at 503-725-5672 or schedule Online at https://psuwrc.youcanbook.me . You may report any incident of discrimination or discriminatory harassment, including sexual harassment, to:

•   PSU's Title IX Coordinator: Julie Caron by calling 503-725-4410, via email at titleixcoordinator@pdx.edu or in person at Richard and Maureen Neuberger Center (RMNC), 1600 SW 4th Ave, Suite 830

•   Deputy Title IX Coordinator: Yesenia Gutierrez by calling 503-725-4413, via email at yesenia.gutierrez.gdi@pdx.edu or in person at RMNC, 1600 SW 4th Ave, Suite 830

Please be aware that all PSU faculty members and instructors are required to report information of an incident that may constitute prohibited discrimination, including sexual harassment and sexual violence. This means that if you tell me about a situation of sexual harassment or sexual violence that may have violated university policy or student code of conduct, I have to share the information with my supervisor, the University's Title IX Coordinator or the Office of the Dean of Student Life. However, the Title IX Coordinators will keep the information confidential and refer you to a confidential advocate. For more information about Title IX please complete the required student module *Creating a Safe Campus* in your CANVAS.

More PSU resources

https://www.pdx.edu/sexual-assault/sites/g/files/znldhr4031/files/2020-08/2-sheet_SexualRelationshipViolenceResourcesforstudents.pdf

Pursuant to PSU's Prohibited Discrimination and Harassment policy (Interim), all instructors and supervisors have an obligation to report any disclosure involving sexual misconduct or other forms of discrimination to PSU's Title IX Coordinator, Julie Caron or by submitting a CARE Team report with the Dean of Student Life office (DOSL). The first steps that these university officials take is to connect the student or colleague with a confidential advocate or other resources. The university officials keep these matters private and work to determine the best mode of addressing concerns.

Please note that the Department of Education has issued new regulations regarding Title IX and the Oregon legislators have passed new laws regarding sexual harassment in higher education. PSU has instituted interim policies: Title IX Sexual Harassment Interim and Prohibited Discrimination and Harassment policy (Interim), which reflect the new laws. These policies will be going through the University Policy Committee and the Title IX Coordinator will be providing more information about the changes to PSU policies and procedures in the near future.