

ENVS497 Principles of Sustainability

I. General Information

Course syllabus spring 2016

Instructor: Johanna Delgado Acevedo, Ph.D.

Office: Science Building (STC) 262

Office hours: LWF 2-3:30

Phone: 903.468.3333

Email: johanna.delgado-acevedo@tamuc.edu

Prerequisites: none

Book: Professor will assign readings.

II. Course Description

This course is designed to provide an overview of the social and biological principles of sustainability. An emphasis will also be placed on understanding on the education, health, population dynamics, culture, agriculture, food security, and natural resources aspects of sustainability.

III. Student Learning Objectives

To understand sustainability concepts, how to apply them, and their implications.

To understand the mechanisms of society accepting or resisting sustainability.

To develop a reading tradition.

To develop communication skills and clarity to present ideas and explain them in public.

IV. Learning strategies

Lectures

Discussions and Talks

Reading assignments to be discussed in class

Analysis of Case Study Samples

Individual work, analysis of free reading

Homework

Audiovisual projections

V. Assumptions, Expectations, Philosophy

University students are a select group of students soon to be professionals.

Instructors can have high expectations of student performance.

Demanding courses benefit students more than easy courses.

Assignments are due on time unless you have made a prior arrangement with me (only granted for unusual or extenuating circumstances and in case of health issues proper medical excuse is required.

Come to class prepared, having read and thought about the assigned readings; course

materials are meant to be studied, not merely read.

Actively participate in class discussions; ask questions.

In university, a lot of your learning will occur outside of the classroom, during your own research, and in formal and informal interactions with your peers– both here and at meetings, correspondence, etc. Therefore, I expect you to take full advantage of ALL learning opportunities, including seminars and invited speakers.

Reading and assimilating information is a critical part of your current and continuing education. This will help you become a better writer, a more rounded individual, and expose you to subjects outside of your immediate knowledge.

VI. Tentative course outline

Part I. Introduction and basic principles of Sustainability

Most used terms

Origins

week: 1

Part II. Education and Culture

Social protection

Human rights

Equality

Cities and human settlements

week: 2-5

Part III. Biodiversity

Climate change

Oceans and seas

Desertification, land degradation, and drought

week: 6-11

Part IV. Agriculture

Consumption and production

Food security and nutrition

week: 12-13

Part V. Energy

Science, technology, and innovation

week: 14

VII. Course Requirement and Evaluation Method

Attendance and punctuality is required and non-negotiable.

Homework, quizzes, exams, and term paper are required.

Activities that distract surrounding people are inconsiderate and disrespectful.

Activities such as texting, emailing, browsing or using cellular phones are prohibited.

We encourage student contribution to the overall progress of the group. We encourage interactive participation.

It is necessary that students have a professional and ethic behavior through the entire course.

Lectures are a group activity, and so it requires social consideration and respect amongst members of the group, teachers and professors.

Grade basis:

2 tests, including final (200 points)

Research project (50 points)

5 Assignments (50 points)

5 Quizzes (50 points)
Total 350 points

Penalty enforcement (I reserve the right to adjust your grade for violation of the minimum expectations).

Make-up exams will only be given if arrangements are made with the instructor before missing the scheduled exam. A documented excuse will be required. Otherwise, missing exams will be counted as zeroes in the overall grade computation.

Grading Scale: The following scale is adhered to strictly.

90.0 - 100% = A

80.0 - 89.9% = B

70.0 - 79.9% = C

60.0 - 69.9% = D

<60.0% = F

Assignments (5)

Journal articles

Reading and assimilating information is a critical part of your current and continuing education. For each assign date, a journal is named in the right column of the table, choose and read a paper from that journal that you find interesting or relevant. These journals are available in our library (online resources). On that date, provide me a citation and a short description of the paper (10 sentences).

Date	Journal
26 JAN	Environment, development and sustainability
9 FEB	International journal of agricultural sustainability
9 MAR	International journal of sustainability in higher education
6 APR	Sustainability science*
4 MAY	Sustainability: science, practice, and policy*
	*non peer reviewed

Research project

Each student will identify a research project exemplifying sustainability. You will be responsible of understand and apply concepts of sustainability.

You will develop a document with the format described below. Format should follow the International journal of sustainability on higher education guidelines. Deadline is the last day of class. Students will present their projects last week of class.

Format for the research project:

I. Describe the problem.

II. Describe your research

Introduction

Methods

Results

Discussion

III. Conclusions

VIII. Course and University and Policies

Responsible Use of Technology — It is expected that all students will only use cellphones, PDAs, laptop computers, MP3 players and other technology outside of class time or when appropriate in class. Answering a cell phone, texting, listening to music or using a laptop computer for matters unrelated to the course may be grounds for dismissal from class and/or other penalties. Students are not allowed to use image, video, nor audio recording devices of any kind during class time without prior consent of the instructor.

University Specific Procedures:

ADA Statement-Students with Disabilities:

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities.

If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services Texas A&M-Commerce

Gee Library

Room 132

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment.

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Note regarding reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities:

Any student or faculty with a disability that requires adaptations to the curriculum or reasonable accommodation should contact the:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services Texas A&M-Commerce

Gee Library

Room 132

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**THIS SYLLABUS IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITH PREVIOUS NOTICE TO ATTENDING STUDENTS,
DUE TO ANY UNFORSEEABLE CAUSE.**

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTOOD THE SYLLABUS FOR THE
COURSE ENVS497 Principles of Sustainability, AS DISCUSSED BY THE PROFESSOR DURING CLASS
SESSION ON THE DATE SIGNED BELOW.

NAME: _____

INSTITUTIONAL E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____

PLEASE DESCRIBE ANY SPECIAL PERSONAL SITUATION OR CONDITION THAT YOU WISH THE
PROFESSOR TO BE AWARE OF:

DATE / SIGNATURE: _____