syllabus

Sustainability in Action (EVPP 480-001)
Syllabus - Summer 2020

Meeting Times: Monday, Wednesday, Friday, June 1-30, 10am - 4pm

Room: On-line via **webinar**.

Class Website: http://evpp480su20.pbworks.com
(submissions and scores via http://mymasonportal.gmu.edu)

Credit Hours: 4

Instructor(s)

Section 480-001a	Section 480-001b
"Dr. Dann" Sklarew, Ph.D. Email: dsklarew@gmu.edu	Rupal Mangukiya Email: rmanguki@gmu.edu
Office: Via scheduled WebEx webinar: https://gmu.webex.com/join/dsklarew	Office: Via scheduled WebEx webinar: https://gmu.webex.com/join/rmanguki
Office Hours: Tues./Thurs. 10:30-12:30pm by appointment	Office Hours: Tues. 1:30-2:30pm or by appointment
Voicemail: 703-993-2012 (but email or WebEx are better options)	Phone: 571-284-8553

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Course Description

In the wake of the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the international community, the issue of attaining sustainability has become especially timely and important. Sustainable development incorporates and integrates environmental, social and economic concerns. To provide students with valuable and tangible experience in practical aspects of realizing sustainability goals, and transfer theory into practice, this course allows students to engage in real-world, sustainability-related action research projects that provide benefits for a target community.

Working in interdisciplinary teams, students will identify and work to solve a sustainability-related problem or address a sustainability-related need in a specific target community. Projects can be focused on the GMU campus or the nearby community, or on other target communities. Options for relevant projects will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Many of the class meetings will be seminar sessions involving lectures by the course instructors, and presentations by guest speakers dealing with sustainability issues in their teaching, research and/or daily practices. These sessions will focus on how sustainability is realized by different disciplines, stakeholders and approaches. They will provide practical information on how practitioners in different fields implement sustainability in their work. Presentations by guest speakers will be followed by discussions of readings relevant to the seminar topic. The remaining class meetings will be designed to support student groups' work on action research projects and final presentations.

The course is taught in 2 sections, one by Ms. Rupal Mangukiya (480-001b), the second by Dr. Dann Sklarew (480-001a). Class will mostly be combined into one "plenary" (both sessions together in one location). See schedule for details.

Course Prerequisites

The course is intended to be the capstone course for the B.A. in Environmental and Sustainability Studies and the minor in Sustainability Studies. To enroll in this course undergraduate students must have completed or be concurrently enrolled in all other required general education courses. Prior sustainability and/or environmental studies coursework is also highly recommended, as prior knowledge of such material is expected.

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students should demonstrate "Sustainability in Action" (SA) competence by being be able to: [1]

1. Identify and effectively address sustainability needs in their target "community" (SA-1);
2. Utilize appropriate sustainability resources effectively (SA-2);
3. Recognize and appreciate the interdisciplinary nature of sustainability (SA-3);
4. Transform sustainability theory into practice, through use of action research (SA-4).

In addition, to fulfill Mason-wide expectations for integrating scholarship into classes, students will pursue scholarly inquiry (SI) and Creation of Scholarship (CS), specifically becoming competent in their ability to:

1. Articulate and refine a focused and manageable ACTION RESEARCH question that appropriately addresses key aspects of a priority SUSTAINABILITY CHALLENGE (SI-1).
2. Gather evidence appropriate to the question (SI-3b)
3. Situate ACTION RESEARCH within a broader context (SI-4b)
4. Report and present ACTION RESEARCH (process, results, lessons learned) to peers and faculty using appropriate scholarly conventions [see #6 of graded course components below] (SI-3d, CS-3)
5. Demonstrate awareness of broader implications of ACTION RESEARCH (CS-4)

Finally, in order to meet the expectations for a Mason Core Synthesis course, students should be able to:

1. Communicate effectively in both oral and written forms, applying appropriate rhetorical standards (e.g., audience adaptation, language, argument, organization, evidence, etc.). (MCS-1)
2. Using perspectives from two or more disciplines, connect issues in a given field to wider intellectual, community or societal concerns. (MCS-2)
3. Apply critical thinking skills to evaluate the quality, credibility and limitations of an argument or a solution using appropriate evidence or resources. (MCS-3)

(Course activities are designed to simultaneously address multiple learning objectives.)

Materials

Useful information resources identified by professor or students for this course are provided on our references wiki page. Highlights among these materials are -

Textbooks:

1. ecochallenge.org's **Choices for Sustainable Living** ("CSL"), **2018 Edition**, used for our discussions. The first chapter can be downloaded here. The whole will be available directly in the GMU Bookstore or from the publisher for purchase (at cost). Note also the Choices Ecochallenge web site has useful activities related to each section.
2. John C. Dernbach's **Acting as if Tomorrow Matters** (also available as an ebook) may serve as an OPTIONAL, supplementary reference.

Academic literature to be used in lectures and class discussions (see references).

(If you prefer to access a copy of either via 2-hour reserve in the Johnson Center library, please inform your instructor(s) to place such on reserve for you.)

The **Infoguide for EVPP480** is a helpful research tool for your discussion leadership and STARTs (action research teams), created by GMU Research Librarian Kathy Butler, and now curated by Research Librarian (for ESP) Kimberly Hoffman (khoffma@gmu.edu).

The **#evpp480** hashtag on Twitter is also used to share news, information etc., pertinent to "actioneers" (students and alumni of this course). Please feel free to use it to explore and contribute your own tweeted tidbits!

Attendance Requirement

This course relies on face-to-face social learning to enrich participants' sustainability skills and expertise. To do so effectively, attendance is mandatory. If you must miss part or all of a session, please make prior arrangements with your instructor well in advance of the class you will miss. Such arrangements may include substitute activities, supplementary contributions, or other make-up assignments. In case of urgent, unforeseen absence, please contact your instructor promptly thereafter to convey the extenuating circumstances. **Failure to attend at least 16 of 20 Summer sessions (without instructor-authorized make-up work, submitted in a timely fashion) will result in an "F" grade for this course.**

Graded Course Components

This course requires students to realize:

1) **Sustainability Transformation Action Research Teams (STARTs)** will plan and implement their action research projects in consultation with their instructor and/or a mentor from the community served by the project. For projects on the George Mason campus, the mentor may be a representative from the Office of Sustainability or another staffer identified (with instructor's guidance, as needed):

- Student teams will present a formal project proposal in the 3rd week, refined and finalized and written version submitted by the 4th week. Detailed guidelines and an evaluation rubric for this proposal will be provided.
- Students will report on their progress in the 8th and 12th week. Detailed guidelines and an evaluation rubric for these progress reports will be provided in advance.
- At the final course meeting(s), students will participate in a public **action research symposium**, making formal presentations on their projects to the class, along with a panel of guest faculty and community mentors. Detailed presentation guidelines and an evaluation rubric will be provided. This presentation will satisfy the general education synthesis requirement for demonstration of competency in oral communication.

2) At least **20 hours of service learning** (for examples, see service opportunities page) with hours, recorded within 1 week on our **service log**.

3) **CSL Discussion Leadership**: Based on CSL guidelines (CSL pp. 10-11), teams of 2-3 students will serve provide opening, facilitation and note-taking for each of our 8 CSL session discussions this semester.

4) **Write one 3-5 page opinion-editorial piece ("op-ed")**: This formal writing assignment should make a persuasive argument to a target audience of your choice. Op-eds should synthesize evidence and lessons you gleaned from your service learning; CSL actions, reflection and discussion; and, if desired, START projects and overall sustainability studies at Mason. (This activity also serves to satisfy the Mason Core synthesis requirement for demonstration of competency in written communication.)

Grading – YOU WILL **NOT** RECEIVE CREDIT FOR SUBMISSIONS YOUR INSTRUCTOR CANNOT ACCESS OR OPEN. ALSO, YOU CANNOT CLAIM NOR RECEIVE CREDIT FOR A TEAM SUBMISSION TO WHICH YOU DID NOT CONTRIBUTE.

1. START Report and Final Presentation (team) — 400 points per start rubric.
2. Service Learning Hours (individual) — 200 points per service learning rubric, i.e., 10 points for each service hour recorded in full on the service log
3. Attendance - 150 points, i.e., 7.5 points per half-day (3-hour) session attended over 20 sessions (10 days); otherwise see Attendance Requirement above.

4. CSL discussion leadership (team) w/opening, facilitation and notes — 150 points, per <u>discussion leadership rubric</u>.
5. Op-Ed — (individual) 100 points, per <u>editorial rubric</u>.

Grading scale:

970-1000 **A+**	870-899 **B+**	770-799 **C+**	600-699 **D**
930 - 969 **A**	830-869 **B**	730-769 **C**	000-599 **F**
900 - 929 **A-**	800-829 **B-**	700-729 **C-**	

Course Web Site and Submission Policy

Updated syllabus, all electronic course materials, announcements, rubrics, etc., will be posted to our course website, <u>http://evpp480su20.pbworks.com</u>. Wherever practical, written assignments will also be submitted through blackboard via <u>http://mymasonportal.gmu.edu</u>, in order to reduce paper usage and ensure proper logging of submissions. If you have trouble accessing the site, please contact your instructor.

Assignments are to be submitted **<u>before</u>** the beginning of class on the day due. Late work will be reduced one grade per day. No work will be accepted over one week late without a valid written medical excuse or notice of death in the family.

Honor Code

When you enrolled in this course you agreed to abide by the university's <u>Honor Code</u> and pledge "not to **cheat**, **plagiarize**, **steal**, and/or **lie** in matters related to academic work."

The Honor Code does not preclude collaborative work, such as informal discussions and studying in communities. Nor does it preclude assigned group work. The Honor Code does require that work you, as an individual, turn in ultimately be the product of your own individual synthesis or integration of ideas, and that the work a group turns in ultimately be the product of its members' individual contributions and ideas. **If you do not contribute to a group assignment or the work upon which is is based, you may <u>NOT</u> include your name among its creators.**

If you are uncertain of the line between collaboration and cheating, talk with your instructor. As always, cite your sources. If you do not, it may be plagiarism. Plagiarism means lifting someone else's ideas or words and presenting them as your own without proper attribution of the source. This includes all sources, including those found on the Internet. Use an approved citation method, such as MLA, APA, etc.

Finally, please note that accurate reporting of service hours - which may be audited - is also important part of academic integrity. **Misrepresentation of service learning hours will be considered a violation of the Honor Code.**

Accommodation for Students With Disabilities

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please communicate such to your professor and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703.993.2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

Sick Policy

If you are too sick to come to class (have high fever, etc.), please inform your professor ASAP. Insofar as no assignment is due that day, you will generally be offered attend in via [skype] webinar or provided with one or more optional make-up sessions (see "optional" items on schedule below). Assignments which are not submitted on-time on sick days will still be marked according to "Late Work" criteria above, unless medical excuse provided by your doctor's office.

Email Policy

GMU faculty and staff may only correspond with students through the students' GMU assigned email accounts. Emails sent from other accounts will not necessarily be answered.

Need Help?

We're here for you!

Librarian Liaison for Environmental Science and Policy (EVPP) Courses

She may be able to assist you in your research for any aspect of this course (service, action research or CSL session leadership). Her contact information is:

Kim Hoffman
khoffma@gmu.edu
703-993-8344

The Writing Center

The Writing Center is staffed by both undergraduate and graduate tutors, who can help improve your writing skills through direct support on specific assignments or in general, face to face or on-line. http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/

Learning Services

Learning Services -- https://learningservices.gmu.edu/ -- provides a variety of experience based learning opportunities through which students explore a wide range of academic concerns. Study skills workshops and individual study skills counseling provide learning experiences to improve academic skills. Information about tutors available through many Mason academic departments can be found on our Tutoring page. http://caps.gmu.edu/learningservices/

Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) and Resources for Crises

SSAC -- https://ssac.gmu.edu -- provides comprehensive (and confidential) services for your safety and well-being. helps students develop and maintain healthy lifestyles through one on one support, and interactive programs and resources.

Some students struggling to make ends meet may be trading off studies for shelter, food, healthcare or other human needs. Others are in crisis in other ways. If you or a friend are facing any of these sorts of challenges, please help others to help you! We hope these resources may help you to achieve lasted personal security, sustainability and well-being!

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

CAPS -- http://caps.gmu.edu/ -- provides a wide range of services to students by a staff of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors. CAPS individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs are designed to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance.

Gender-based/Sexual Discrimination

The George Mason University Title IX Resources site may benefit those of you seeking resources to prevent, address &/or recover from gender-based discrimination – including sexual harassment, sexual assault, stalking, domestic violence, and sexual exploitation. It includes on- and off-campus sources of assistance, including confidential ones.

Other Information

See schedule.

Footnotes
   1. Any learning objectives YOU would like to add or change? If so, please do so within 3 days of the first class! ▲