Sustainability in Action EVPP 480 - All sections

Syllabus - Spring 2023 (https://go.gmu.edu/480syllabus)

Meeting Times: Fridays 10:30am - 2:20pm

Credit Hours: 4

Rooms: Please see course schedule for the room we will meet in as it varies by the week

Course Schedule

Zoom Room (when needed):

https://go.gmu.edu/evpp480zoom

+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington D.C)

Meeting ID: 948 4250 2801 /

Passcode: 570976

One tap mobile

+13017158592,,94842502801#,,,,,,0#

,,570976#

Find your local call-in number:
https://gmu.zoom.us/u/acij6AnOfD

Class Website:
Blackboard - http://mymasonportal.gmu.edu

Instructors

	Section 480-001	Section 480-002	X-Section Support
	"Dr. Jen" Sklarew, PhD Professor, Env Sci & Pol Pronouns: she/her Email: jsklarew@gmu.edu	**Dr. Cindy Smith** Professor, Env Sci & Pol Pronouns: she/her Email: csmitc@gmu.edu	**Luke Cannon** GTA Pronouns: he/him Email: lcannon6@gmu.edu
	Please schedule appointments in advance to meet via 480 webinar (see URL above).		
	Office Hours: by appointment: F 2:20-3:20 pm or virtually	Office Hours: by appointment: F 2:20-3:20 pm or virtually	Office hours: by appointment
	Phone: 703-993-6177 (but email is best)	703-993-7157 (but email is best)	
	We aim to respond within 48 hours to contact by email or phone during regular business hours.		

Table of Contents

<div style="border">

GMU and Pandemic Policy

Please visit [Mason's Safe Return to Campus website](#) for information and required COVID-19 related health and safety protocols prior to returning to campus or engaging in any in-person courses or other university activities.

EVPP 480 is being offered as a face to face course, including required community-based service learning (which, at your option, may take place in-person and/or online).

To respect the health needs of all students, faculty, visiting presenters, and service learning partners, masks and social distancing are encouraged and preferred for all in-person EVPP 480 classes and during all in-person service learning, either on GMU campus or in the community at large. If you are feeling unwell and are concerned you are sick and/or you are awaiting the results of a test for a contagious illness please stay home.

</div>

Course Design

Course Description

In the wake of the 2015 adoption of **UN 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 perpetually meet human needs. 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 other target communities and/or habitats. Options for relevant projects will be considered on a case-by-case basis in the context of their advancing SDG "global goals."

Many of the class meetings will be seminar sessions involving interactive lectures and discussions led by faculty, students and guests 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. The remaining class meetings will be designed to support student groups' work on action research projects, service learning and evidence-based persuasive communication.

The course is taught in 3 sections, one by "Dr. Dann" Sklarew, the second by "Dr. Jen" Sklarew, and the third by GTA Elizabeth "Liz" Schierbeek, with general course support provided by Dr. Rupal Mangukiya. Class will at times be combined into one "plenary" (all sessions together in one classroom); other times we will meet in "breakout" (distinct classrooms). See our schedule for details.

Course Prerequisites

The course is intended to serve as a Mason Core: Synthesis option and capstone course for the Environmental and Sustainability Studies B.A., Environmental Science B.S., Sustainability Studies minor and Sustainable Enterprise minor. To enroll in this course, undergraduate students should ideally 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. 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); and
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 professors or students for this course are provided on our References Google doc page. Highlights among these materials are:

Required Textbook:
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 from the publisher for purchase (if you cannot afford this text, please contact your instructor ASAP!). Note the Choices Ecochallenge website also has useful activities related to each section.

Optional Textbook:
2. John C. Dernbach's (2012) **Acting as if Tomorrow Matters** (also available as an ebook) may serve as an OPTIONAL, supplementary reference.

Academic literature used in lectures and class discussions plus model submissions: see references.

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

Mason Libraries' **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!

Schedule

Our **schedule** is dynamic and may change based on external factors; please preview our schedule prior to each class day.

Grading Policies

Graded Course Components

This course requires students to realize:

1) Sustainability Transformation Action Research Team (START) projects with 2-4 class peers

2) At least 40 hours of individually selected service learning

3) Participatory social learning via in-class discussions

4) CSL Discussion Leadership for 1 scheduled in-class discussion

5) Write one opinion-editorial piece ("op-ed") of 700-1000 words

Please check our schedule for submission deadlines, scoring. Rubrics available on Blackboard (BB).

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-**	

Attendance Policy

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 via email to convey the

extenuating circumstances. **Failure to attend at least 12 of 15 sessions (without instructor-authorized make-up work, submitted in a timely fashion) will result in an "F" grade for this course. Please note, attendance of only a partial class session may result in an absence for the day. Missing class to conduct service-learning hours for class will result in an absence, unless approved by the instructor well in advance.**

Religious or Cultural Observances

Some class times may be in close proximity to religious or cultural observances. If a class date or assignment creates a conflict, please let the professor know well in advance so we can make appropriate arrangements.

Sickness

If you are too sick to come to class (e.g., active cough, high fever, etc.), please inform your professor ASAP. Insofar as no assignment is due that day, you will generally be offered to attend class via archived video 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 is provided by your doctor's office.

Campus Closure

If the campus closes or class is canceled due to weather, COVID-19, or other concern, students should check our course's Blackboard announcements/email for updates on how to continue learning and information about any changes to events or assignments

Submission Policy

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.

Updated syllabus, all electronic course materials, announcements, rubrics, etc., will be posted to our course website. Wherever practical, written assignments will be submitted through blackboard via http://mymasonportal.gmu.edu. If you have trouble accessing the site, please contact your instructor.

Please make sure to review spelling, grammar, and formatting prior to submission. All submissions should follow APA citation method and formatting style. Consider using GMU's Zotero software to create your citations.

Unless faculty announce otherwise, assignments are to be submitted **before** the scheduled 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, notice of death in the family, or advance arrangement with the instructor.

Honor Code

When you enrolled in this course you agreed to abide by the university's Honor Code and pledge "not to **cheat**, **plagiarize**, **steal**, and/or **lie** in matters related to academic work." NO grade is important enough to justify academic misconduct.

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 based, you may NOT 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.

Another aspect of academic integrity is the free play of ideas. Vigorous discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the firm expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions. When in doubt (of any kind), please ask for guidance and/or clarification from your instructor(s).

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

Course Technology

Minimum Course Technology Requirements

Activities and assignments in this course will regularly use webinar apps (e.g., Zoom), Blackboard and links from there to Google documents. Students are required to have regular, reliable access to a computer with an updated operating system (recommended: Windows 10 or Mac OSX 10.13 or higher) and a stable broadband Internet connection (cable modem, DSL, satellite broadband, etc., with a consistent 1.5 Mbps [megabits per second] download speed or higher). You can check your speed settings using the speed test on this [website](.). In the situation that we must shift to online learning due to COVID-19, students are required to have a device with a functional camera and microphone. In an emergency, students can arrange to connect through a telephone call, but video connection is the expected norm. **Please contact your instructor ASAP if your computer or internet access are initially or later unable to meet these specifications.**

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.

Course Materials and Student Privacy

Video recordings of class meetings that are shared only with the instructors and students officially enrolled in a class do not violate FERPA or any other privacy expectation. Video recordings that only include the instructor (no student names, images, voices, or identifiable texts) may be shared without violating FERPA.

All course materials posted to Blackboard or other course site are private to this class; by federal law, any materials that identify specific students (via their name, voice, or image) must not be shared with anyone not enrolled in this class without explicit consent:

- Video recordings — whether made by instructors or students — of class meetings that include audio, visual, or textual information from other students are private and must not be shared outside the class.

- Live video conference meetings (e.g. Collaborate or Zoom) that include audio, textual, or visual information from other students must be viewed privately and not shared with others in your household or recorded and shared outside the class.

Diversity and Inclusion

In EVPP 480, we seek to celebrate diversity and create a learning environment that fosters respect for people of all identities. We welcome and value individuals and their differences, including (but not limited to) gender expression and identity, sex, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, national origin, citizenship-status, first language, religion, age, ability, or political or ideological perspective. We encourage all members of the learning environment to engage with the material personally, but to also be open to exploring and learning from experiences different from their own. Demeaning, intolerant, and/or disruptive behavior or responses at any time are inappropriate and will not be tolerated. Use points of disagreement/conflict to learn more about yourself, others, and the course material. We expect you to communicate diverse and opposing ideas and perspectives with professionalism and civility.

Land Acknowledgement Statement

Land acknowledgment engages all present in an ongoing Indigenous protocol to enact meaningful, reciprocal relationships with ancestors and contemporary tribal nations. As a state university, we have a responsibility to include and support Indigenous communities and sovereign tribes in our work.

At the place George Mason University occupies, we give greetings and thanksgivings

to these Potomac River life sources,

to the Doeg ancestors, who Virginia annihilated in violent campaigns while ripping their lands apart with the brutal system of African American enslavement,

to the recognized Virginia tribes who have lovingly stewarded these lands for millennia including the Rappahannock, Pamunkey, Upper Mattaponi, Chickahominy, Eastern Chickahominy, Nansemond, Monacan, Mattaponi, Patawomeck, and Nottaway, past, present, and future, and

to the Piscataway tribes, who have lived on both sides of the river from time immemorial.

Land Acknowledgement via the [GMU Center for Mason Legacies](#)

Commitment to Anti-Racist Action

We, the EVPP 480 teaching team, condemn the systemic racism that is responsible for violence and harms perpetrated against Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). We commit ourselves to anti-racist action. We will listen, educate ourselves, examine our biases, actively support groups working against racism, and strive to make anti-racism and decolonization a focus of our work.

A sustainable society has clean air, clean water, a safe climate, resilient and biologically diverse natural systems, strong communities, healthy people, economic opportunity, and living wages. A sustainable society is also, necessarily, just, equitable, inclusive, without violence, and without racism. **To be successful, the sustainability movement must be anti-racist. To be effective agents of change within the movement, we must engage in anti-racist work.**

We invite your thoughts on how to evolve our work to be reliable allies and accomplices in ending racism. (This statement was adapted from [Dickinson College's Center for Sustainability Education](#).)

Student Name, Gender Identity and Pronoun Use

We respect your right to be called by the name and pronouns you expect. If the name you go by is different from what is reflected in Blackboard, please let your professor know. Additionally, students may change their names in the following platforms related to the course:

- Update [your name and pronouns](#) on [Patriotweb](#) and [Blackboard](#).
- Input your name in Zoom preference settings to reflect the name you go by (including removing last name if you prefer to keep this private).

If you wish, please share your name and gender pronouns with us and how best to address you in class and via email. As for your instructors:

1. **Jennifer Sklarew:** I use she/her for myself and you may address me as "Dr. Jen" in email and verbally.
2. **Dann Sklarew**: I use he/him or they/them for myself and you may address me as "Dr. Dann" in email and verbally.
3. **Elizabeth Schierbeek**: I use she/her for myself and you may address me as "Liz" in email and verbally.
4. **Rupal Mangukiya**: I use she/her for myself and you may address me as "Dr. Rupal" in email and verbally.

Accommodation for Students With Disabilities

Your instructional team includes person(s) with disabilities; we support your right to equitable support for any disability you have. Disability Services at George Mason University is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students by upholding the laws that ensure equal treatment of people with varied abilities. If you are seeking accommodations for this class, please first visit http://ds.gmu.edu for detailed information about the Disability Services registration process. Then please

discuss your approved accommodations with your professor. Disability Services is located in Student Union Building I (SUB I), Suite 2500. Email: ods@gmu.edu | Phone: (703) 993-2474

Dependents in Class

It is our belief that if we want parents in academia, that we should also expect children to be present in some form. Currently, the university does not have a formal policy on children in the classroom. The policy described here is a reflection of our own beliefs and commitments.

1. You and your nursing baby are welcome in our class anytime, and you do not need permission to leave class to pump.
2. In all cases where dependents need to come to class, we ask that you make sure they are not a disruption to the learning environment.
3. We ask that all students work with us to create a welcoming environment that is inclusive of all forms of diversity, including diversity in caregiving status.

Whole-Person Support for Students

Need Help? *We're here for you!*

SAIL and Service Learning

Social Action & Innovative Learning (SAIL), housed within the School of Integrative Studies, fosters integrative, innovative, and experiential learning opportunities on campus, regionally, and globally that educate and activate towards a more equitable, just, nonviolent, and sustainable world. They partner with people, organizations, and communities to increase collaborators' capacity for community-driven social change and to develop and enact creative solutions to complex shared public problems.

SAIL provides forms and materials to support your service learning, as well lists of organizations interested in hosting students. See http://sail.gmu.edu for links to information and service-learning forms.

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.

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.

College students often experience issues that may interfere with academic success, such as academic stress, health and sleep problems, juggling responsibilities, life events (e.g., loss of job or loved one), relationship concerns, homelessness, hunger, or feelings of anxiety, hopelessness, or depression. If you

or a friend is struggling, we strongly encourage you to seek support, from the course teaching team or others on campus or in the community. Helpful, effective resources are available on campus, and most are at no-charge.

Your instructional team is living with their own physical and/or psychological ability challenges and we're happy to be resources as you work to maintain your own physical and mental wellbeing.

Gender-based/Sexual Discrimination, Harassment, and Interpersonal Violence

George Mason University is committed to providing a learning, living, and working environment free from discrimination and a campus free of sexual misconduct and other acts of interpersonal violence in order to promote community well-being and student success. We encourage students who believe they have been sexually harassed, assaulted, stalked or subjected to sexual misconduct, sexual exploitation, or domestic violence to seek assistance and support. University Policy 1202: Sexual Harassment and Misconduct speaks to the specifics of Mason's process, the resources, and the options available to students. Sources of assistance are available on- and off-campus, including confidential ones.

As faculty members and designated "Responsible Employees," we are <u>required</u> to report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason's Title IX Coordinator per university policy 1412. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact the Student Support and Advocacy Center (703-380-1434) or Counseling and Psychological Services (703-993-2380). You may also seek assistance from Mason's Title IX Coordinator (703-993-8730; titleix@gmu.edu).

Questions?

Please see our schedule or contact your professor, per contact information atop this syllabus.

Note: This syllabus builds upon the fine work of GMU faculty Dr. Graziella McCarron and the wonderful staff at GMU's Stearns Center for Teaching and Learning, and the instructors thank these colleagues for their intellectual contributions to the course.