

PA 3382 / SOC 3382  
**Sustainable Communities**  
Fall 2016

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**Contact Information**

**Instructor:** John McCaskill, Ph.D.

**Meetings:** Tuesday & Thursday: 2:30 pm – 3:45 pm CB3 1.312

**Office:** GR 2.204

**Email Address:** [john.mccaskill@utdallas.edu](mailto:john.mccaskill@utdallas.edu)

**Office Hours:** Tuesday & Thursday 1:00 pm – 2:15 pm and by appointment.

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**Course Pre-requisites, Co-requisites, and/or Other Restrictions**

There are no prerequisites for this course.

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**Course Description**

This course will survey the following topics in public policy and environmental justice: climate change, loss of habitat and biodiversity, water security, and the effects of new technologies. We will examine policy issues in light of the challenges faced by societies to balance the needs of all stakeholders in terms of economic, social, and environmental impacts; e.g., the triple bottom line. Emphasis is placed upon gaining an understanding of the elements of environmental justice and their impacts on different sectors of society through multiple ethical paradigms.

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**Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes.** Students will be able to:

1. Relate the study of sustainability to what they see in their day to day lives.
  2. Differentiate the basic concepts, structures, and key issues associated with the study of sustainability.
  3. Demonstrate improved ability to reason analytically and present analysis cogently both as individuals and as part of a group.
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**Required Textbooks and Materials**

- Meadows, Donella. 2008. *Thinking in Systems: A Primer*
- Ostrom, Elinor. 2011. *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action*
- Sustainable World Coalition. 2014. *Sustainable World Sourcebook: The essential guidebook for the concerned citizen.* \*\*\* I will distribute this book in class at no charge! Don't try to buy it! \*\*\*

\*Additional reading will be assigned in class.

**Recommended for the LEED Green Associate Exam:** Study Bundle: *LEED Green Associate Exam Preparation Guide, LEED v4 Edition* and *LEED Core Concepts Guide*. This reference can be found at: <http://www.usgbc.org/resources/study-bundle-leed-green-associate-exam-preparation-guide-leed-v4-edition-and-leed-core-con>.

**Assignments & Academic Calendar**

Aug 23	Course introduction and syllabus distribution
Aug 25	Sourcebook Part One: Setting the Context
Aug 30 / Sep 1	Sourcebook Part Two: Healing the Web of Life
Sep 6 & 8	Meadows (Chapters 1 & 2) System Structure and Behavior
Sep 13 & 15	Ostrom Chapter 1 "Reflections on the Commons"
Sep 20 & 22	<b>Group Project Discussion &amp; Exam Review / Exam</b>
Sep 27 & 29	Sourcebook Part Three: Smart Power

Oct 4 & 6	<b>Sustainability Tour / Speakers</b>
Oct 11 & 13	Ostrom Chapter 2 “Self-organization and Self-governance in CPRs”: <b>Reflections due 10/15</b>
Oct 18 & 20	Meadows (Chapters 3, 4, & 5) Systems and Us <b>Group Assignments 10/20</b>
Oct 25 & 27	Ostrom Chapter 3 “Analyzing Long-enduring Self-organization and Self-governance CPRs” Sourcebook Part Four: A Just Society
Nov 1 & 3	Meadows (Chapters 6 & 7) Creating Change Sourcebook Part Five: Valuing Life <b>Submit Group System Selection 11/1 – Confirmation provided 11/3</b>
Nov 8 & 10	Ostrom Chapter 4 “Analyzing Institutional Change” Sourcebook Part Six: Living Well Together
Nov 15 & 17	Ostrom Chapter 5 “Analyzing Failures in CPR Governance” Sourcebook Part Seven: Our Choices Matter
Nov 22 & 24	<b>Fall Break!</b>
Nov 29 & Dec 1	<b>System Analysis Group Presentations</b>
Dec 6	<b>Write-ups Due</b>

### Grading Policy

Exam	20%
Reflections x 2	20%
Group Presentation	15%
System Group Analysis Write-up	15%
Ostrom / Meadows Chapter Summaries (1 ea)	20%
Attendance	10%

A = 94-100	C+ = 77-79
A- = 90-93	C = 73-76
B+ = 87-89	C- = 70-72
B = 83-86	D = 65-69
B- = 80-82	F = <65

**Class Attendance and Participation:** One of the primary activities we will engage in during the semester is dialogue. Each of you bring a unique set of perspectives and experiences that inform our civic discourse. If you don’t show up and contribute to the discussion, we are all diminished in our understanding of the issues facing society. Therefore, students are expected to attend all classes and to actively participate in class discussions and activities. Students who do not attend classes and do not participate in class discussions probably will not receive an “A” for their final course grade.

**Exam:** The exam will consist of multiple choice and two short-answer questions. Students may use one 5” X 8” note card, *but not textbooks or other notes*, during the exam.

**Group Presentation and Write-up:** Groups of 2 to 3 students will utilize the “systems” concepts we explore to analyze a system of their choosing (with clearance from the Professor). Presentations should be 15 minutes. Write-ups should be 1,000 to 1,200 words in length and comply with the expectations and requirements stated in the “Writing Expectations” section.

**Reflections:** We will have guest lecturers and a campus tour relating to sustainability. You will need to submit a reflection of your thoughts regarding these activities. Your reflections should be submitted in eLearning by 11:00 PM on the date assigned. The reflection should be 300-600 words in length and comply with the expectations and requirements stated in the “Writing Expectations” section.

**Reading Summary:** During this course, we will cover 6 chapters from Ostrom's book and 7 from Meadows. You will need to choose 1 chapter from each to summarize. Your summary should be submitted in eLearning by the beginning of class on the Tuesday of the week they are covered in class. The summaries should be 300-600 words in length and comply with the expectations and requirements stated in the "Writing Expectations" section.

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### **Writing Assignment Expectations and Requirements**

All assignments will be graded based on the student's ability to effectively communicate his or her understanding of a subject. Students must clearly demonstrate that they understand the assigned material and apply their own critical thinking to the course subject matter in order to place the theories and issues of sustainability in context. There will be no extra credit assignments.

All papers should be written in 12 point font, Times New Roman, and double-spaced. Margins should be 1 inch on all sides and the paper should include page numbers on the bottom center of each page. Please include your name, date, and title of the assignment in the header of your paper. Proper citation of all sources is required. The Public Affairs program requires that all written work follow the Turabian format, which can be found in the 8<sup>th</sup> edition of Kate Turabian's book, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. Please use the Reference list style, which is found in chapters 18 and 19. I will also post 'quick reference guides' in eLearning to assist you with citation – please use them!

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### **GENERAL POLICIES**

For UT Dallas policy related to the following go to: <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies>

**Field Trip Policies / Student Conduct & Discipline / Academic Integrity / Email Use / Withdrawal from Class / Student grievance Procedures / Incomplete Grade Policy / Disability Services / Religious Holy Days**

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*These descriptions and timelines are subject to change at the discretion of the Instructor.*