

EESC34H3/ ESTC34H3 – Sustainability in Practice Winter 2015

Instructor: Prof. Adam Martin (adam.martin@utoronto.ca), Room SW 565, office hours Thursday 2-4pm throughout the semester.

Course meetings: Wednesday 9am-12pm, Room AA 206

Course synopsis: This course is designed to impart an understanding of how the theoretical principles of environmental sustainability are applied in real world settings. More specifically, this course is designed to identify the key actors making decisions on issues of environmental sustainability, and discuss how these decisions are implemented.

Class meetings will consist of lectures and small group discussions that identify and evaluate the key actors in sustainability practices. An understanding of how these actors implement sustainability-related programs and policies will be highlighted through case studies, with a focus on Canada. Students will further explore these themes by conducting a detailed analysis focused on a sustainability issue of their own interest.

Prerequisites: Enrollment in the Environmental Studies major program, 9.5 credits.

Required reading: See reading list below.

Course evaluation:

Course Item	Date	Percent
Discussant contributions	5% * 3 discussions (see schedule)	15%
Discussion lead	See schedule	10%
Paper proposal	Feb. 4 th	15%
Speaker bio	March 4 th	5%
Conference presentation	March 25 th or Apr. 1 st	25%
Final paper	April 1 st	30%

Course Content and Schedule:

Week	Date	Lecture topic	Reading	During this week
1	Jan. 7 th	Introduction to Sustainability in Practice		
2	Jan. 14 th	What is sustainability?	Reading #1	Discussion 1
3	Jan. 21 st	Governments and sustainability	Reading #2	Discussion 2
4	Jan. 28 th	International bodies and sustainability	Reading #3	Discussion 3
5	Feb. 4 th	NGOs and sustainability	Reading #4	Discussion 4 Paper proposal
6	Feb. 11 th	Corporations and sustainability	Reading #5	Discussion 5
	Feb. 18 th	Reading week		
7	Feb. 25 th	Consumers, eco-labeling and sustainability	Reading #6	Discussion 6
8	March 4 th	Media and sustainability	Reading #7	Discussion 7 Speaker bio
9	March 11 th	Higher education, students and sustainability	Reading #8	Discussion 8
10	March 18 th	Pop culture, social media and sustainability	Reading #9	Discussion 9
11	March 25 th	Sustainability in Practice Conference		Conference presentation
12	April 1 st	Sustainability in Practice Conference		Conference presentation Final paper

Reading list

Reading #1. Kuhlman, T. & Farrington, J. (2010) What is Sustainability? *Sustainability* **2**, 3436-3448.

Reading #2. Toner, G. & Bregha, F. (2009) Institutionalizing sustainable development: the role of government institutions. Chapter 3 in: *Innovation, Science, Environment: Charting Sustainable Development in Canada, 1987-2007* (eds G. Toner & J. Meadowcraft), pp. 30-53. McGill-Queen's University Press.

Reading #3. Andresen, S. (2007) The effectiveness of UN environmental institutions. *International Environmental Agreements: Politics, Law and Economics* **7**, 317-336.

Reading #4. Jamison, A. (1996) The shaping of the global environmental agenda: the role of non-governmental organisations. *Risk, environment and modernity: towards a new ecology* (eds S. Lash, B. Szerszynski & B. Wynne), pp. 224-243. Sage Publications Ltd., London, England.

Reading #5. Sukhdev, P. (2012) The corporate climate overhaul. *Nature* **486**, 27-28.

Reading #6. Horne, R.E. (2009) Limits to labels: The role of eco-labels in the assessment of product sustainability and routes to sustainable consumption. *International Journal of Consumer Studies* **33**, 175-182.

Reading #7. Davidsen, C. & Graham, D. (2014) Newspaper reporting on climate change, green energy and carbon reduction strategies across Canada 1999-2009. *American Review of Canadian Studies* **44**, 151-168.

Reading #8. Helferty, A. & Clarke, A. (2009) Student-led campus climate change initiatives in Canada. *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education* **10**, 287-300.

Reading #9. Sullivan, S. (2011) Conservation is sexy! What makes this so, and what does this make? An engagement with celebrity and the environment. *Conservation & Society* **9**, 334-345.

Assignments and graded material in brief

Discussion group lead

The discussion sessions are an opportunity to summarize the key points on the readings, and discuss the key topics in sustainability in an informal setting. Each discussion will be primarily based on that week's reading, but may expand to address different questions/ comments based on that reading. Each week a different student(s) will lead the discussion sessions. Suggestions for how to lead a discussion are provided on the assignment sheet on Blackboard.

Discussion group participation

Students are expected to attend and participate in each of the discussion groups. However due to logistical reasons, students will be graded on their participation as a "discussant" in 3 designated discussions. As a discussant, students are expected to come prepared with questions and/ or comments based on that week's readings, or prepare questions or comments that extend from that week's reading (see assignment sheet on Blackboard).

Paper proposal

The final paper for EESC34/ ESTC34 will be a comprehensive evaluation of the actors associated with a sustainability topic of interest (see assignment sheet on Blackboard). Prior to advancing to the final paper stage, each student will be required to submit a 1.5-2 page paper proposal. This is largely a means by which the instructor can ensure you are on the right track, and address any questions you might have well in advance of the final paper.

Final paper

The final paper for EESC34/ ESTC34 is an opportunity for each student to identify and evaluate the relevant actors participating in implementation of policy and practice, for a sustainability-related issue of interest. The goal of the paper is not only to allow you a chance to learn more about an issue of interest, but also to gain a better understanding of who participates in these overall policies and practices. From a practical sense, ideally the final paper in EESC34/ ESTC34 will

provide you with an opportunity to identify the specific careers options that exist, within the broader context of environmental sustainability.

Speaker bio

In advance of our final “Sustainability in Practice” conference, each student will be responsible for writing a biography that will be used as an introduction (see assignment sheet on Blackboard for details). The goal of this exercise is to reflect on your education and other professional experience to date, and to use this background as a means to present yourself as an expert in the field. Ideally this exercise is a way in which each student can comprehensively identify, describe, and promote your skills and training.

Conference presentation

A key skill in nearly any environmental career will be the ability to present environmental issues to larger audiences. Our “Sustainability in Practice” conference at the end of the semester will provide this opportunity. Through a 10-12 minute presentation (+3 minutes for questions; see assignment sheet on Blackboard), each student will have the opportunity to present his/her findings to the class in a setting that will mimic conferences or workplace settings.

Course policies – discussions and presentation

Due to precise scheduling, the following policies are in place for EESC34/ESTC34:

1. Discussion attendance is mandatory. I will be taking attendance and adjusting grades accordingly.
2. If a student does not attend his or her assigned discussion lead session, they will receive a **grade of zero** for that component of the course.
3. If a student does not attend his or her assigned discussant session, they will receive a **grade of zero** for that component of the course.
4. If a student does not attend his or her session for their presentation, they will receive a **grade of zero**.

Course policies – written assignments

Formatting: Coursework must be word-processed, 1.5-spaced, 12-point font size. Assignments must include a list of all references cited in the text, using the APA citation style. There is no need **to use a cover page** for any written assignments.

Submission guidelines: All assignments must be handed in **hard copy in class** on the due date specified by the instructor.

Late assignments: Late assignments must also be placed in the dropbox on the 5th floor of Science Wing. Any work submitted after 4:30 PM will be counted as received on the following business day (including weekends).

Late penalties: Work submitted late will be accepted with a **5% daily penalty (including weekend days) up to seven days** after the due date. Extensions after the due date will not be granted, unless supported by a verifiable medical certificate is provided.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is a serious academic offence. Please read the faculty's guidelines on plagiarism. Do not hesitate to consult with your instructor or TA about strategies that you can use to avoid being accused of plagiarism.

Email contact, office hours, and communication: The course instructor will send out important course information by email. Therefore all students are required to have a valid UTSC email address. You are also responsible for ensuring that your UTSC email address is set up and properly entered in the ROSI system.

That said my preference is to meet with you in person. My designated office hours are a block of time in which I am available to discuss with you lecture material, the nature of the exams, the Environmental Science program at UTSC, graduate school, career interests, and/ or the state of the world in general. It is time set aside for you – please take advantage of it. My door is open.

You may also email me questions about course material. I will make an effort to respond to you within 24 hours during weekdays. My responses will take longer during weekends because I deliberately remain offline. **Email should not be a substitute to office hours.** Again, I encourage you to make use of the instructor's office hours.

Course website – Blackboard: ESTC34 uses Blackboard as its course website. To access the ESTC34 website go to the U of T portal login page at <http://portal.utoronto.ca>, and log in using your UTORid and password. Once you have logged in to the portal, look for your course modules where you'll find the link to the ESTC34 course website.

As a courtesy, I will be posting class notes on the course Blackboard site. Please note that I am under no obligation to do so, and that such notes are intended to assist you in, and not replace, your personal notes.

Class conduct: This is a small class. I remind you that cell phones and other communication devices must be turned off or in silent mode. A 10-minute break after the discussion sessions will be provided prior to each lecture period. Taking photos, audio and/or video recordings are not allowed unless permission from the instructor is granted.

Accessibility Statement: Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodation, please feel free to approach me and/or Accessibility Services Office as soon as possible. I will work with you and Accessibility Services to ensure you can achieve your learning goals in this course. Enquiries are confidential. The UTSC Accessibility Services staff (located in S302) is available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations [416-287-7560 or ability@utsc.utoronto.ca]

The Writing Centre: The Writing Centre is a free service that provides support for teaching and learning through writing for all UTSC students. The Writing Centre provides service such as one-on-one consultation, drop-in hours, English language development and writing clinics. They are located in AC 210, in the Academic Resource Centre.

Health and Wellness Clinic: The Health & Wellness Centre has trained health professionals to provide medical, nursing, counseling, health promotion, and education services to University of Toronto Scarborough students. Any student with a current student card and a valid health card can use our services. They are located in the Student Centre, UTSC, SL 270.