UVU UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY™

Master Course Syllabus

For additional course information, including prerequisites, corequisites, and course fees, please refer to the Catalog: https://catalog.uvu.edu/

Semester: Spring
Course Prefix: GEOG
Course Title: Sustainability and Environment

Year: 2025
Course and Section #: 2000-001
Credits: 3

Course Description

This course explores the relationships of human and natural systems, how cultural groups experience nature, and global sustainability. Throughout the course, we will examine different ways of perceiving nature, resources, the environment, and society. As a class, we will critically analyze links between social, economic, political, historical, cultural, and environmental processes. The class will also discuss environmental problems and ways to build more sustainable futures, including participation in local sustainability issues.

Course Attributes

This course has the following attributes:
☐ General Education Requirements
☐ Global/Intercultural Graduation Requirements
☐ Writing Enriched Graduation Requirements
☐ Discipline Core Requirements in Program
☐ Elective Core Requirements in Program
☒ Open Elective
Other:

Instructor Information

Instructor Name: Sarah Rasmussen Bateman

Student Learning Outcomes

- Understand the basic concepts and principles of sustainability
- Demonstrate understanding of the environmental, economic, cultural, and social issues related to sustainability across societies.
- Understand and analyze the intersections of human and natural systems and human impacts on the environment.
- Engage in and reflect citizenship behavior, self-assessment, and self-reflection.
- Compare ways that the environment is viewed across cultures and societies.
- Evaluate environmental problems and their possible solutions.

Course Materials and Texts

Environment and Society: A Critical Introduction, 3rd Edition
Robbins, P., Hintz, J., & Moore, S. A. (2022). Environment and society: A critical introduction. Wiley Blackwell.

Course Requirements

Course Assignments, Assessments, and Grading Policy

Participation: 20% of grade

Attendance and participation are vital components of this course. This portion of your grade will be determined by your attendance and participation in class periods as well as your completion of discussion reflection assignments.

Assignments and discussion boards: 40% of grade

There will be 2 writing assignments this semester, along with one group presentation, and a discussion board most weeks.

Local sustainability investigation project: 20% of grade

Each student will complete a semester-long investigation into local sustainability issues. This final project is designed to provide an experience for students to explore viable sustainable solutions for an environmental problem. Students should choose a project agreed upon with the instructor. You will give a 10–15-minute presentation in addition to a high-quality write-up (6-10 pages – does not include reference or title page!) for your project. I am available to read your project report drafts before submission, provided you give it to me 1 week before the due date.

The project report should include:

- description of the identified environmental problem / challenge, provide relevant literature to justify the desire.
- description of the data source, methodology / procedures followed to address the problem, analysis, and assessment.
- recommended sustainable planning or policy concepts and approaches to tackle the stipulated challenges.

Essay exams: 20% of grade

There will be two essay exams in class. The tests will ask you to think deeply about sustainability problems and solutions.

Grading
94-100%= A Demonstrates a mastery of the learning objectives
90-93.9%= A-
87-89.9%= B+
84-86.9%= B Demonstrates a functional level of the learning objectives
80-83.9%= B-
77-79.9%= C+
74-76.9%= C Demonstrates basic achievement of learning objectives
70-73.9%= C-
67-69.9%= D+

64-66.9%= D Met some learning objectives, has significant deficits
60-63.9%= D-
0-60%= E Failure to demonstrate an understanding of learning objectives
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Required or Recommended Reading Assignments

Reading assignments are primarily from the course textbook. Additional articles may be included in the Canvas course modules.

General Description of the Subject Matter of Each Lecture or Discussion

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Week 1	What is sustainability? and Chapter 1 Introduction: "The View from a Human-Made Wild"
Week 2	Approaches and Perspectives: Basics of Climate Change and Chapter 8 "Social Constructions of Nature"
Week 3	Approaches and Perspectives: Chapter 2 "Population and Scarcity"
Week 4	Approaches and Perspectives: Chapter 3 "Markets and Commodities" and Chapter 4 "Institutions and 'The Commons'"
Week 5	Approaches and Perspectives: Chapter 5 "Environmental Ethics" and Chapter 6 "Risks and Technology"
Week 6	Approaches and Perspectives: Chapter 7 "Political Economy" and Sustainable Economies
Week 7	Approaches and Perspectives: Chapter 10 "Racialized Environments"
Week 8	Approaches and Perspectives: Chapter 9 "Feminism and the Environment" and Mid-Term
Week 9	Chapter 11 "Carbon Dioxide" and Chapter 12 "Trees"
Week 10	SPRING BREAK
Week 11	Chapter 13 "Wolves" and Chapter 14 "Uranium"
Week 12	Chapter 15 "Tuna" and Chapter 16 "Lawns"
Week 13	Chapter 17 "Bottled Water" and Project Advisory Panel
Week 14	Chapter 18 "French Fries" and Regenerative Agriculture
Week 15	Chapter 19 "E-Waste"
Week 16	Research Project Presentations
Week 17	Final Test

Required Course Syllabus Statements

Generative AI

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AI programs are not a replacement for your human creativity, originality, and critical thinking. Writing, thinking, and researching are crafts that you must develop over time to develop your own individual voice. At the same time, you should learn how to use AI and in what instances AI can be helpful to you.

The use of generative AI tools (e.g. ChatGPT, Google Gemini, etc.) is permitted in this course for the following activities:

- Brainstorming and refining your ideas;

- Fine tuning your research questions;
- Finding information on your topic;
- Drafting an outline to organize your thoughts; and
- Checking grammar and style.

The use of generative AI tools is not permitted in this course for the following activities:

- Impersonating you in classroom contexts, such as by using the tool to compose discussion board prompts/responses assigned to you or content that you put into a Teams/Canvas chat.
- Completing group work that your group has assigned to you, unless it is mutually agreed upon that you may utilize the tool.
- Writing a draft of a writing assignment.
- Writing entire sentences, paragraphs or papers to complete class assignments.

You are responsible for the information you submit based on an AI query (for instance, that it does not violate intellectual property laws, or contain misinformation or unethical content). Your use of AI tools must be properly documented and cited in order to stay within university policies on academic honesty.

Any student work submitted using AI tools should clearly indicate what work is the student's work and what part is generated by the AI. In such cases, no more than 25% of the student work should be generated by AI. If any part of this is confusing or uncertain, please reach out to me for a conversation before submitting your work.

Using Remote Testing Software

☒ This course does not use remote testing software.

☐ This course uses remote testing software. Remote test-takers may choose their remote testing locations. Please note, however, that the testing software used for this may conduct a brief scan of remote test-takers' immediate surroundings, may require use of a webcam while taking an exam, may require the microphone be on while taking an exam, or may require other practices to confirm academic honesty. Test-takers therefore shall have no expectation of privacy in their test-taking location during, or immediately preceding, remote testing. If a student strongly objects to using test-taking software, the student should contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester to determine whether alternative testing arrangements are feasible. Alternatives are not guaranteed.

Required University Syllabus Statements

Accommodations/Students with Disabilities

Students needing accommodations due to a permanent or temporary disability, pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions may contact UVU Accessibility Services at accessibilityservices@uvu.edu or 801-863-8747.

Accessibility Services is located on the Orem Campus in BA 110.

Deaf/Hard of Hearing students requesting ASL interpreters or transcribers can contact Accessibility Services to set up accommodations. Deaf/Hard of Hearing services can be contacted at DHHservices@uvu.edu

DHH is located on the Orem Campus in BA 112.

Academic Integrity

At Utah Valley University, faculty and students operate in an atmosphere of mutual trust. Maintaining an atmosphere of academic integrity allows for free exchange of ideas and enables all members of the community to achieve their highest potential. Our goal is to foster an intellectual atmosphere that produces scholars of integrity and imaginative thought. In all academic work, the ideas and contributions of others must be appropriately acknowledged and UVU students are expected to produce their own original academic work.

Faculty and students share the responsibility of ensuring the honesty and fairness of the intellectual environment at UVU. Students have a responsibility to promote academic integrity at the university by not participating in or facilitating others' participation in any act of academic dishonesty. As members of the academic community, students must become familiar with their rights and responsibilities. In each course, they are responsible for knowing the requirements and restrictions regarding research and writing, assessments, collaborative work, the use of study aids, the appropriateness of assistance, and other issues. Likewise, instructors are responsible to clearly state expectations and model best practices.

Further information on what constitutes academic dishonesty is detailed in UVU Policy 541: *Student Code of Conduct*.

Equity and Title IX

Utah Valley University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age (40 and over), disability, veteran status, pregnancy, childbirth, or pregnancy-related conditions, citizenship, genetic information, or other basis protected by applicable law, including Title IX and 34 C.F.R. Part 106, in employment, treatment, admission, access to educational programs and activities, or other University benefits or services. Inquiries about nondiscrimination at UVU may be directed to the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights or UVU's Title IX Coordinator at 801-863-7999 – TitleIX@uvu.edu – 800 W University Pkwy, Orem, 84058, Suite BA 203.

Religious Accommodation

UVU values and acknowledges the array of worldviews, faiths, and religions represented in our student body, and as such provides supportive accommodations for students. Religious belief or conscience broadly includes religious, non-religious, theistic, or non-theistic moral or ethical beliefs as well as participation in religious holidays, observances, or activities. Accommodations may include scheduling or due-date modifications or make-up assignments for missed class work.
To seek a religious accommodation, a student must provide written notice to the instructor and the Director of Accessibility Services at accessibilityservices@uvu.edu. If the accommodation relates to a scheduling conflict, the notice should include the date, time, and brief description of the difficulty posed by the conflict. Such requests should be made as soon as the student is aware of the prospective scheduling conflict.

While religious expression is welcome throughout campus, UVU also has a specially dedicated space for meditation, prayer, reflection, or other forms of religious expression.