

**SUST 200/SOCI 230 Introduction to Sustainable and Resilient Communities
Spring 2023 Syllabus**

Instructor: Neil Leary, PhD
Associate Provost and Director, Center for Sustainability Education
Office: Kaufman Hall, Room 195
Office tel. no.: 717-245-1954
E-mail: learyn@dickinson.edu
Preferred name and pronouns: Neil; he/him

Class Meetings: T & F, 1:30 – 2:45 pm
Classroom: Kaufman 178
Office Hours: M & W, 10:00 – 11:15 am and by appointment

Course Description: What are the goals and characteristics of sustainable and resilient communities? What strategies are pursued to make communities more sustainable? More resilient? How are communities responding to and preparing for climate change? What are the intersections between sustainable and resilient communities with inequality, social justice, racism, food security, human health, environmental health, consumerism, economic growth, and global climate change? We will explore these and other questions in the context of communities in the United States with a focus on Carlisle, PA.

Racism, inequality, health disparities, environmental degradation, community development, and climate change are examples of what have been called ‘wicked problems’ – problems that are complex, entwined with multiple interacting causes and consequences, understood and defined differently by different people, and contested. They defy simple or final solutions and are not solvable in a conventional sense. But actions that shift root causes and transform systems that hold wicked problems in place can drive progress toward more desirable conditions. In this course you will learn approaches and start to assemble a toolkit for responding to wicked problems and participating in moving society toward more positive conditions. The toolkit we will assemble will include sustainability and resilience principles, systems thinking, systems change, the community capitals framework, asset building for community development, and antiracism.

Graduation, Major, & Certificate Requirements: *Introduction to Sustainable and Resilient Communities* fulfills graduation requirements for sustainability, U.S. diversity, and social science. It also fulfills requirements as an elective for majors in Sociology, American Studies (Structures & Institutions), and Environmental Studies (Environmental Studies Specialization) and as an elective for the Social Innovation & Entrepreneurship certificate.

What we will learn: By actively engaging in course activities, you will gain abilities and confidence to

1. Define and explain in your own words key concepts relevant to sustainable and resilient communities and community development;
2. Explain how sustainable development seeks to integrate aspirations for social justice, economic opportunity, environmental resilience, and other societal goals;
3. Articulate connections between sustainability and community development with your fields of academic studies, potential future vocations, and civic responsibilities;
4. Apply systems thinking, sustainability principles, the community capitals framework, and community asset mapping to critically evaluate opportunities, challenges, and strategies for sustainable community development;
5. Develop well-reasoned recommendations for actions to advance sustainability goals in a community, support recommendations with clearly articulated arguments, and communicate recommendations effectively to community stakeholders; and
6. Collaborate with peers and community partners to benefit a community.

How we will learn: In this course we will work together to create a learning environment that is as inclusive, supportive, and effective as we can make it. I view **my role** as being a facilitator for your learning. That means I develop and communicate learning goals for the course, provide a structure and activities for your learning, select and guide you through relevant content and readings, give you feedback to help you make progress, and assess your learning. To serve different styles of learning, we will engage in a variety of learning activities designed to help you achieve course learning goals.

The course features a semester-long community action project that you will undertake as part of a student team and in partnership with a local community organization for the benefit of the partner organization and the wider community. Through this assignment, you will gain hands-on skills for collaborative community development work while performing a valuable service for the community. Other learning activities include being attentive to class lectures, actively listening and contributing to class discussions, reading articles, book chapters and reports, watching videos, responding in writing to Discussion Forum questions, and investigating selected Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations.

Your role as a student in the course is to take ownership of and responsibility for your learning. To derive the full benefits of the course, you should participate actively in the learning process, put forth the effort necessary to attain the course learning goals, ask questions, seek help when needed, and reflect periodically on what you are learning, where you may be having difficulties, what you can do to enhance your learning, and how your learning in this course relates to your personal and academic goals. I expect you to complete assigned work on time, perform your fair share of work on collaborative projects, adhere to a high standard of academic integrity, and assist in creating a learning environment that is inclusive, supportive, and effective. You are encouraged to ask questions, offer your perspectives, share your experiences, and respectfully challenge me and your peers to consider different points of view. If there are things happening on campus or the wider world that you think relevant to our learning, raise them in class for us to discuss.

Course Schedule: The course schedule with topics, readings and assignments for each class meeting is posted on Moodle. Full details of what we will do in each class session, and how you should prepare for each class, are on Moodle pages for each class meeting.

Readings & Videos: There are no books to purchase for the class. Assigned readings and videos are accessible via ebooks, hyperlinks to online materials, and PDFs uploaded to Moodle. The materials that you should read and watch for each class meeting are noted on the corresponding Moodle page. You should read and watch the assigned materials prior to the class session to which they pertain. Please test links to online materials a few days before they are to be read/viewed to allow time to solve any issues with links that do not work properly.

I have attempted to include diverse voices in the materials that we will read and watch for the course, but they are still disproportionately white and male. You are invited to suggest materials produced by Persons of Color, women, and LGBTQ+ people for our class to read or watch. I will consider substituting or adding materials that further diversify our readings and videos. Suggestions that are not adopted this term will help me to diversify materials assigned in future versions of the course.

We will read selected chapters from the following books, all but one of which are available as ebooks through Waidner-Spahr Library. The titles are hyperlinked to the ebooks, but you may have to login to your Dickinson account for the links to work. If that fails, use Jump Start on the library webpage to search for a book and click 'Available Online' to get to a link for the ebook.

- Boswell, M, A Greve, and T Seale, 2019, [*Climate Action Planning: A Guide to Creating Low-Carbon, Resilient Communities*](#), Island Press, Washington, DC.
- Green, G and A Haines, 2015, [*Asset Building and Community Development*](#), Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Mallach, A, 2018, [*The Divided City: Poverty and Prosperity in Urban America*](#), Island Press, Washington, DC.
- Nolet, V, 2016, [*Educating for Sustainability*](#), Routledge, New York.

- Roseland, M, 2012. [*Toward Sustainable Communities, Solutions for Citizens and their Governments*](#). 4th Edition. New Society Publishers, Gabriola Island, BC, Canada.
- Rothstein, R, 2017, *The Color of Law – A Forgotten History of How our Government Segregated America*, Liveright Publishing Corporation, New York. (Chapters uploaded to Moodle)
- Wheeler, S, 2013, [*Planning for Sustainability: Creating Livable, Equitable and Ecological Communities*](#), Taylor & Francis Group, New York.

Grading of Academic Performance: The assignments on which your academic performance will be graded are described briefly in the following section and in more detail on Moodle. There are no exams or quizzes. Point values for the assignments and weights in grade calculations are as follows:

Assignment	Points	Weight in Final Grade
Participation		
1st review	3	
2nd review	3	
3rd review	3	
4th review	3	
	12	12%
Discussion Forum		
1st review	5	
2nd review	5	
3rd review	5	
4th review	5	
	20	20%
Global Goals	5	5%
Climate Change Essay	3	3%
Community Action Project		
Project Workplan	8	
Assets Table and Map	5	
Literature Review	15	
Case Studies & Interviews	12	
Eval of Options & Recomm	12	
Final Report	8	
	60	60%
TOTAL	100	100%

Final course grades will be assigned using the following grading scale:

Grade	Percent	Points	Pass/Fail
A	≥ 93%	93 - 100	Pass
A-	90 – 92%	90 - 92	
B+	87 – 89%	87 - 89	
B	83 – 86%	83 - 86	
B-	80 – 82%	80 - 82	
C+	77 – 79%	77 - 79	
C	73 – 76%	73 - 76	Fail
C-	70 – 72%	70 - 72	
D+	67 – 69%	67 - 69	
D	63 – 66%	63 - 66	
D-	60 – 62%	60 - 62	
F	Below 60%	Below 60	

Assignments: Assignments are described briefly in this syllabus. More detailed instructions and rubrics outlining expectations and criteria for assessing your performance for each assignment are provided on Moodle. Due dates are noted in the schedule posted on Moodle. Refer to the schedule and assignment instructions regularly and look ahead at coming weeks to organize and pace your work. Ask questions if you are ever unsure about instructions or expectations.

Each assignment supports one or more of the six course learning goals, which are identified in the assignment descriptions. Estimates are provided of the amount of time needed to complete each assignment. But the estimates are rough and may differ, perhaps significantly, from the amount of time that you will need to perform assignments at a proficient or exemplary level.

Assignments should be submitted via Moodle prior to the start of class on their due date. See section of syllabus below on class policies for information about late submission of assignments.

Participation: A large part of your learning will take place in our class sessions by listening actively, asking questions, processing content in the moment, developing and verbally articulating your ideas, and hearing and seeking to understand others’ ideas – all of which are skills that are important for community development and other work. Our goal is to have robust class discussions in which all members of the class learn from each other and feel welcome to contribute their perspectives and to ask questions. Meeting this goal is a collective responsibility of all members of the class. See the class policy below and guidelines posted on Moodle for civil, respectful and inclusive dialogues. Participation supports all 6 learning goals of the course.

There are multiple ways that you can participate in our class: attending class; listening attentively; accessing, reading, and watching assigned course materials; speaking in class to ask or respond to questions; contributing to small group breakout conversations; reporting out to the class about breakout group conversations; posting replies to posts made by your classmates in our online Discussion Forum; attending events and activities related to the course and sharing information about them in class discussions or posts to the Discussion Forum; and meeting with me during office hours or other times to discuss the course or related topics. You should strive to participate in each of these ways.

Your participation will be assessed for four grading periods during the semester by applying the rubric posted on Moodle. Assessment will give emphasis to the quality of your participation over quantity. Characteristics of high quality participation include: preparing for class by reading and watching assigned materials, adhering to our ground rules for civil, respectful and inclusive dialogues, listening attentively, not interrupting others, not dominating the conversation, asking thoughtful questions, and making comments that build on the questions and comments of other members of the class, give evidence of reading and reflecting on assigned materials, and move the conversation in interesting directions. Also valued are observations of things that are happening on campus, in

other classes, and the wider world that connect to things that we are studying in this class. Note that Moodle creates a log of all your activities on the course Moodle site, which means that I can verify if and when you have accessed assigned readings and videos.

If you are uncomfortable speaking in class, meet with me outside of class to discuss strategies that can make it easier for you to speak in class, as well as alternative ways for you to participate in the class. Alternatives include, for example, making more than 2 posts per week to the class Discussion Forum, replying to classmates' posts to the online Discussion Forum, and coming to office hours to talk about the course.

Discussion Forum: Writing prompts will be posted in the Discussion Forum about readings and videos assigned for each class session. Responses should be posted to the Discussion Forum prior to the class to which a writing prompt pertains. Most responses should be a paragraph in length, roughly 250 words, but occasionally you should write longer posts. You should also read posts written by your classmates and reply occasionally to their posts in the Forum. I will look at your Discussion Forum posts for evidence that you have read and watched assigned materials and that you spent some time reflecting on their content. Your Discussion Forum posts will be graded four times during the semester. The dates of these reviews are in the course schedule posted on Moodle. See assignment instructions and rubric on Moodle for further details. This assignment supports all 6 course learning goals. Estimated time: 4 to 6 hours each week for 15 weeks. This includes the time needed to read, watch, and reflect on assigned materials as well as to write posts to the Discussion Forum.

Global Goals: Research and write a 2 to 3 page summary, single spaced, of one of the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations. Your summary should explain what the goal is, why it is important, note some of the targets that have been set for meeting the goal, progress made toward achieving the goal, implications of COVID-19 for the goal, and interconnections of the goal with 2 or more other Global Goals. Include in your summary one or more charts or maps of data for selected indicators of progress toward the goal. The charts and maps should be accompanied by written explanations and interpretations. This assignment supports course learning goals #2 and #3. Estimated time: 4 hours.

Climate Change Essay: Attend a session of the Climate & Justice Teach-In on April 24, or a session of the Let's Talk Climate series, reflect on the session you attend, and write a 400-word essay about the session. Programs for the Climate & Justice Teach-In and Let's Talk Climate series will be made available early in the semester. See assignment instructions and rubric for further details. This assignment supports course learning goals #2 and #3. Estimated time: 3 hours. This includes time to participate in one of the sessions, reflect on the experience, and write your essay.

Community Action Project: Working as part of a team of 3 to 5 students, you will undertake a semester-long community-based research project to address an issue of interest to a community organization and to benefit the community. Student teams will be assigned to work on one of several projects that were developed by the instructor in partnership with organizations in the Carlisle area. Prospectuses that briefly describe the projects are posted on Moodle. Your preferences for project topics and project partners will be invited, but you are not guaranteed to get your preferred choices.

The Community Action Project is composed of 6 discrete assignments: (1) project workplan, (2) community assets table and map, (3) literature review, (4) assessment of case studies and interviews, (5) evaluation of options and recommendations for action, and (6) final report. There is also an opportunity to earn extra-credit by presenting a poster for the project at the Civic Engagement Symposium in April. The final report will be composed of assignments 1 through 5, revised to address feedback from your community partner and the instructor, edited to present the best possible writing mechanics, and combined into a single final report document. See assignment instructions and rubrics for further details. The project supports course learning goals #4, #5 and #6. Estimated time: Approximately 60 hours to complete all 6 parts of the project, spread over the semester.

DICKINSON AND CLASS POLICIES

Accommodating Students with Disabilities: Dickinson values diverse types of learners and is committed to ensuring that each student is afforded equitable access to participate in all learning experiences. If you have (or think you may have) a learning difference or a disability – including a mental health, medical, or physical impairment – that would hinder your access to learning or demonstrating knowledge in this class, please contact Access and Disability Services (ADS). They will confidentially explain the accommodation request process and the type of documentation that Dean and Director Marni Jones will need to determine your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. To learn more about available supports, go to www.dickinson.edu/ADS, email access@dickinson.edu, call (717) 245-1734, or go to the ADS office in Room 005 of Old West, Lower Level (aka "the OWLL").

If you've already been granted accommodations at Dickinson, please follow the guidance at www.dickinson.edu/AccessPlan for disclosing the accommodations for which you are eligible and scheduling a meeting with me as soon as possible so that we can discuss your accommodations and finalize your Access Plan. If test proctoring will be needed from ADS, remember that we will need to complete your Access Plan in time to give them at least one week's advance notice.

Absences and Late Work: You should communicate with me in a timely manner about absences from class, work that is or will be submitted late, and factors that are affecting your academic performance in the class. If circumstances warrant, at my discretion, absences and late work may be excused and appropriate accommodations made. Good communication about absences and late work are critical for me to support your learning and make accommodations when appropriate. If a confidential matter that you do not wish to discuss with me prevents you from attending class or turning in work on time, you may have a college employee or other professional with relevant knowledge communicate to me their general assessment of your situation.

See Dickinson's [COVID-19 Dashboard](#) for guidance about masks, social distancing, and what to do if you experience COVID-19 symptoms or have been exposed to someone with COVID-19. You are expected and required to follow Dickinson's guidance on these matters. If you are feeling sick with COVID-like symptoms, you should not come to class. Up to two absences due to feeling ill will be excused without need for corroboration from a health professional, provided that you communicate with me about your absence. For more absences, I ask that you have a health care provider communicate with me about the reasons for your absences. Excused absences will not affect your grade. Unexcused absences will be factored into your grade for class participation.

Assignments that are submitted late that are not excused for late submission will be docked 1 point if submitted one class meeting late and 2 points if submitted two class meetings late. Assignments submitted more than two class meetings late that are unexcused will not be accepted.

Religious Holidays: If a class meeting or other course activity coincides with a religious holiday that you observe, and participation in the class meeting or activity would conflict with your observance of the holiday, please communicate this to me at the start of the semester. We will discuss options for accommodations that would enable you to practice your religious traditions while also performing academic work assigned for the course. Please be proactive at the start of the semester about identifying and bringing to my attention conflicts between our course schedule and religious holidays that you observe.

Inclusivity and Respectful Dialogue: Inclusivity is a value and characteristic of sustainable communities and is directly relevant to the subject and learning goals of this course. We each commit to working together to make this class a space that is welcoming and supportive of students of all gender identities, sexual orientations, races, religions, cultures, nationalities, ages, abilities, neurotypes, immigration status, socioeconomic status, and world views. We will be attentive to our personal biases, thoughtful in our language, and respectful, civil, and compassionate in our dealings with each other.

We will learn and talk about issues such as systemic racism, social justice, and other topics that are emotionally and intellectually difficult. Members of the class will have had different experiences with and different perspectives about such topics, and our conversations may be uncomfortable at times. Draft ground rules to help us have civil

and respectful dialogue are posted on Moodle. We will discuss, possibly modify, and agree our ground rules the first week of class. Review them periodically throughout the semester and strive to follow them. If at any time you feel that we have strayed from our ground rules, bring it to my attention and we can talk about how to return the class to conversing in ways that match our aspirations.

Each of us has a right to be addressed and referred to in accordance with how we choose to identify. I will ask you to communicate your preferred name, its proper pronunciation, and your pronouns. I will do my best to use your preferred name and the pronouns with which you identify. I ask that all members of the class do the same and ask that we gently remind each other if any of us mistakenly uses a wrong name or pronoun or mispronounces a name.