

# SUNY Global Commons: Syllabus International Perspectives on Sustainable Cities and Communities(SDG 11)

SUNY New Paltz  
3 Credits,

## COURSE FACILITATOR:

## COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have been called the roadmap to a sustainable future by addressing complex challenges facing countries and people around the world. This course will introduce students to the history and development of the SDGs while exploring important themes and issues of a particular goal. Students will apply the insights gained to a collaborative project focused on SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities with an international community-based, non-profit organization (NGO).

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Create a personal definition of sustainability and cite examples that support it
- Analyze the usefulness of the SDGs as a framework for action towards a more sustainable and equitable world from both a local and global perspective
- Explore and critically examine the issues and themes of SDG#11, Sustainable Cities and Communities
- Develop, implement and contextualize a storytelling based project in collaboration with an international community-based or nonprofit organization whose work addresses SDG #11

## ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING:

There are three main components to this course:

1. SDG 11 related assignments—some will be universal across lenses, most will be specific to the chosen lens
2. Participation in discussions with students in your section and with your international community-based partner

3. Your final project with your NGO partner.

## Assignment Percentage of Final Grade

Five Discussions 25% of grade (5% each), throughout course • Icebreaker

- Module 2 discussion
- Lens-specific discussion, pressing issues
- Project planning and research discussion
- Project feedback and reflection discussion

SDG-focused assignments 20% of grade (5% each), July 16-25th • Module 1, Lesson

2 video assignment

- Lens assignment 1
- Lens assignment 2
- Lens assignment 3

Project Proposal 15% of grade Submit Wed, July 29th • Evidence of preparatory research

- Identified role within group
- Collection of questions
- Communication with NGO

Project Submission 40% of grade Submit Mon, Aug 10<sup>th</sup> • Demonstrates incorporation of SDG 11 course concepts

- Finalized, “clean” product (not draft form)
- Satisfies the identified needs of the NGO
- Individual contribution to group effort

You will plan, develop, and carry out a project with other students in collaboration with our international NGO partner. Your final project will be conducted in small groups and will include the story of that NGO along with the product they request. Students will work together, along with the NGO partner and facilitator to define the scope of the project, assign roles to students, and check progress on the project. More details on project development will be available in Blackboard.

Please note that for most of the discussion forums, you will be asked to create a discussion post and comment on postings from your peers. Check Blackboard Course

content areas and/or the “ask my professor” area for discussion topics and due dates, and be sure to follow the directions in the discussion prompts. Remember that a graded discussion in an academic forum is different from a comment section on a website. You may wish to draft your reply, and review it for content, critical thinking, tone, spelling, and so on. Please be sure to review the “netiquette” guidelines below.

## Online Environment “netiquette”

You are expected to interact with your instructor and peers in a respectful and professional manner during on-campus class sessions.

You should also adhere to the following expectations when communicating in an online environment:

Do...

- Ask questions and engage in conversations as often as possible.
- Be patient and respectful of others and their ideas they post online.
- Be prepared to wait for a response -you may not receive an immediate response.
- Contact the instructor to report inappropriate or offensive communications.

Do NOT...

- Use inappropriate language—this includes, but is not limited to, the use of curse words and offensive terms.
- Post inappropriate materials—this includes, but is not limited to, sharing nude, offensive, and graphic images.
- Post in ALL CAPS, as this is perceived as shouting, and avoid abbreviations and informal language (ex. "C U L8R").
- Send or respond to heated messages.
- Send an email to the entire class, unless it requires a response from all classmates.

## COURSE ORGANIZATION

Course content is organized in modules or folders. One folder gives an overview of the SDGs, and others correspond to a particular lens on the SDG. In each of these folders, you will find units that frame issues related to SDG 11 as seen through that lens. The purpose of studying issues through a particular lens is to give you an idea of the variety and complexity of the SDG, while highlighting strategies and approaches to addressing these issues.

You will participate in graded discussions that will allow you to interact with your peers who may be looking at the SDG through another lens. This multiplicity of views provides you an overview of the breadth of issues in our SDG and how they can be addressed. You will need to select one lens and work through the content in that folder. You will have access to all of the folders, and you are welcome to study multiple lenses, however, you are responsible for selecting one lens and completing the content in that folder. You will need to sign up for that medium by completing the final project sign-up sheet by noon on Friday, July 17. If you do not sign up by 11:59 pm on Friday, you will be assigned a lens to study.

Sign up here: <https://bit.ly/SDG3lens>

Within each folder, you can expect daily learning activities or discussions. The learning activities and/or reflection exercises associated with each unit folder are there to support your understanding and help you apply the knowledge you gain.

## SCHEDULE OF COURSE ACTIVITIES

### Schedule of Course Activities

#### July 16-18

Readings and activities for module 1, begin activities in your selected

lens • **July 16<sup>th</sup>**: Initial Icebreaker post due

- Select your lens no later than noon, **July 17<sup>th</sup>**
- **July 18<sup>th</sup>** Respond to Icebreaker introductions
- **July 18<sup>th</sup>** Module 1, Lesson 2 Video assignment due

#### July 20-27

Readings and activities: As listed for your selected Lens

- **July 20<sup>th</sup>**--Module 2 discussion board assignment due (responses are not required in this discussion thread)
- **July 21**--“Pressing Issues” discussion: Initial post due. (recommended to have reviewed some of the lens-specific content before creating your first post) • **July 23**-- Lens assignment 1 and 2 due
- **July 24**--at least two responses to your peers’ “Pressing Issues” posts are due. AND “NGO” Discussion Initial post due. Questions and Discussion with your peers will continue to prepare your project proposal ongoing through July 31.
- **July 27<sup>th</sup>**-- Lens assignment 3 due, continue NGO discussions

#### July 27-31

### **Project planning and information gathering with your NGO partner.**

*Note:* Your group will be planning and developing this project together. Your particular role will be decided as the project is planned. You are expected to participate in meetings with your partner NGO, with other students in your group, and with your facilitator, and to be an active participant in discussions in the project folder. Summary notes from conversations with your

partner should be posted in the project folder and will be counted towards your proposal grade.  
**Assignment:** Project proposal. Details will be available on Blackboard. You will submit a copy to your Intercultural Storytelling facilitator for feedback.

August 3-7

**Project work.**

You will be working on your project with other students and with your NGO partner. Your final project will need to be submitted and uploaded by August 10.

August 10-14

**August 10** Final project submitted and uploaded by  
Discussion Activity: Reflection on SDG 11.

## LENSES

### Introductory modules for both Lenses

1. Introduction to Sustainability, Systems Thinking and the SDGs
  - a. What is Sustainable Development?
  - b. Systems Thinking
  - c. History and development of the UN Sustainable Development Goals
2. The Importance of Sustainable Cities and Communities
  - a. Cities: Definitions and Trends
  - b. Why Study Cities?
  - c. Understanding Urban Systems

### Lens: Conservation of Cultural and Natural Heritage

1. Land Use Considerations, Focus on Urban Planning
  - a. Urban sprawl and encroachment on heritage
  - b. Impacts on local ecosystems
2. Defining Heritage
  - a. Distinguishing between Natural Heritage and Cultural Heritage
  - b. Defining and studying culture
  - c. Living and nonliving components of Natural Heritage
  - d. Who has domain over heritage
3. Challenges to the conservation of cultural and natural heritage
  - a. Conserving fragile relics
  - b. Building, construction and conservation
  - c. Weather and natural disasters
  - d. Threats to material and intangible cultural heritage
  - e. Threats to living and nonliving natural heritage
4. Addressing challenges
  - a. Case studies on the conservation of cultural heritage
    - i. Mesa Verde
    - ii. Venice
    - iii. Jordan

- b. Case studies on the conservation of natural heritage
  - i. Portland, Oregon
  - ii. Singapore
  - iii. Everglades
  - iv. Gorongosa National Park, Mozambique
  - v. Amazon Rio Negro

### **Lens: Sustainable Design and Green Building**

1. Land Use Considerations, Focus on Urban Planning
  - a. Greenhouse gas production
  - b. Stormwater runoff
  - c. Public spaces
  - d. Protecting natural resources and communities
2. Design for Sustainability
  - a. Hannover Principles
  - b. Cities as sustainable ecosystems
  - c. Fair trade and fair trade certifications
  - d. Ecological footprint concept
    - i. Calculating your own ecological footprint
  - e. New Urbanism
    - i. Transportation & walkable cities
    - ii. Purpose built neighborhoods
    - iii. Green spaces and cities
3. Consequences of Design Choices
  - a. Interdependence of nature and humanity
  - b. Natural energy flows
  - c. Biomimicry
  - d. Integrated design process
  - e. LEED certification
  - f. Carbon emissions and offsetting
  - g. Climate resilient cities

## **AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT**

Reasonable accommodation of individuals with disabilities: Students needing classroom and/or testing accommodations related to a disability should contact the Disability Resource Center (Student Union, Room 210, 845-257-3020) as close as possible to the beginning of the semester. The DRC will then provide students' instructors with an Accommodation Memo verifying the need for accommodations. Specific questions about services and accommodations may be directed to Deanna Knapp, Assistant Director ([knappd@newpaltz.edu](mailto:knappd@newpaltz.edu)).

## **Academic Honesty**

Academic integrity: Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of honesty in their college

work. Cheating, forgery, and plagiarism are serious offenses, and students found guilty of any form of academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary action. New Paltz's policy on academic integrity is found at [http://www.newpaltz.edu/ugc/policies/policies\\_integrity.html](http://www.newpaltz.edu/ugc/policies/policies_integrity.html) and several excellent resources to help with avoiding plagiarism are available on the Sojourner Truth Library's website: <http://lib.newpaltz.edu/assistance/plag.html>.