

GES520 Issues in Global Environmental Sustainability

Spring 2025 (online)

Course Information

- **Class meeting:** Online and Asynchronous (no "live" meetings are required)
- **Credits:** 3
- **Instructor:** Renée Harmon, Ph.D.
- **Email:** renee.harmon@colostate.edu
- **Office Hours:** by appointment
- **Required Writing Style:** This course uses [APA7 Formatting Style](#)

Course Description

This course introduces the concept of sustainability, its various definitions, and its current societal influences. Students explore how sustainability affects different disciplines and understand the connections of sustainability within their chosen field. Students achieve a holistic understanding of environmental, social, and economic sustainability through individual research work and interdisciplinary collaboration, an essential part of the successful integration of sustainability.

Course Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

- **Demonstrate** comprehension of the definition and significant dimensions of sustainability
- **Write** about the historical and cultural foundations of sustainability
- **Practice** systems thinking using the triple bottom-line framework to address sustainability challenges
- **Apply** leadership theories to enhance sustainability practices
- **Illustrate** sustainability impacts on community stakeholders
- **Collaborate** in a multidisciplinary group to analyze problems and create sustainable solutions
- **Produce** a report that connects their program of study or research with the dimensions of sustainability

Course Topics

- Foundations of Sustainability

- Triple Bottom Line Framework
- UNs' Sustainable Development Goals
- Indigenous Sustainability Knowledge
- History of Sustainability as a National and Global Agenda
- Energy
- Water
- Agriculture & Food
- Environmental Justice (Eco-justice)
- Refugee Resettlement and Climate Change Refugees
- Sustainability in Business
- Sustainability in Education
- Professional Learning and Networking
- Sustainability Research
- Community Education and Outreach

Required Books

- Broker, I. (1983). *Night flying woman : an Ojibway narrative*. Minnesota Historical Society Press.
 - This book is available at the [Minnesota Historical Society](#)[Links to an external site.](#) and other book retailers.
- Theis, T., Tomkin, J. (eds). (2015). *Sustainability: A comprehensive foundation*. OpenStax CNX. <https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/textbooks/96>
 - This book is a free open educational resource (OER) textbook. The link above leads to the online e-book.
- Weder, F. & Eriksen, M. (2023). *CSR communication and cultures of sustainability*. Pressbooks. <https://uq.pressbooks.pub/stratcommsustainability/Links to an external site.>
 - This book is a free open educational resource (OER) textbook. The link above leads to the online e-book.

Online Class Participation

Students must log in to class weekly and regularly check course email and announcements. Students are expected to participate in all class discussions, contribute to a class collaboration project, and submit all assignments.

Readings

Along with the books listed above, various readings are assigned and linked in Canvas.

Videos

Videos are posted in Canvas that address various sustainability-related topics.

Grading

Feedback and grades will be posted within one week after the original due date, excluding late work.

Letter grades are assigned based on the percentage of points earned as follows:

- A+ 97-100%
- A 93-96.9%
- 89-92.9%
- B+ 87-88.9%
- B 83-86.9%
- 79-82.9%
- C+ 77-78.9%
- C 72-76.9%
- 69-71.9%
- D 60--68.9%
- F <60%

Grading Table

Activity	Percentage of Course Grade	Points Possible
Sustainability Quiz	10%	2x50 points=100
Discussions	15%	3x50 points=150
Homework Activities	25%	5x50 points=250
Critical Analysis Paper of Broker (1983)	20%	200
Case Study Research Project		

Case Study "PechaKucha"-style Presentation	15%	150
Case Study Research Paper	15%	150
Total Percentage and Points	100%	1000

Assignment Descriptions

Sustainability Quiz

Students complete identical sustainability quizzes at the beginning and end of the course to assess pre- and post- course knowledge. This is a low-stakes quiz, and students are allowed three attempts and can use outside sources for the second and third attempts.

Discussions

Students share their thoughts on various topics, referring to course materials and other scholarly sources to support their ideas.

Homework Activities

There are five (5) homework assignments throughout the semester, which relate to the major course assignments, including a worksheet, podcast, newsletter, concept map, and blog post.

Critical Analysis Paper

Students read *Night Flying Woman: An Ojibway Narrative* (1983) by Ignatia Broker. After reading the book, students write a critical analysis paper on the book, using the triple bottom line as the framework for analysis. Class time will be devoted to discussing the book. The book is available through the Minnesota Historical Society and other book retailers.

Case Study Project

Students conduct a semester-long case study research project on a topic of their choice. The project must address an economic, environmental, and/or social sustainability challenge.

After selecting a topic that aligns with the *United Nation's 17 Sustainable Development Goals*, students investigate their chosen topic through a scholarly literature review, conduct qualitative data collection and analysis, and disseminate their results and findings through an engaging 'PechaKucha-style' narrated presentation and an APA-formatted, scholarly research paper.

Pedagogical Approach

Students complete a sustainability quiz at the beginning and end of the course to identify pre- and post- course knowledge.

Discussions

Students share their thoughts on various topics, referring to course materials and other scholarly sources to support their ideas.

Critical Analysis Paper

Students read *Night Flying Woman: An Ojibway Narrative* (1983) by Ignatia Broker. After reading the book, students write a critical analysis paper on the book, using the triple bottom line as the framework for analysis. The book is available through the Minnesota Historical Society and other book retailers.

Case Study "PechaKucha"-style Presentation

Students conduct a semester-long case study research project on a topic of their choice. The project will address an economic, environmental, and/or social sustainability challenge.

After selecting a topic that aligns with the *United Nation's 17 Sustainable Development Goals*, students investigate their chosen topic through a scholarly literature review, conduct qualitative data collection and analysis, and disseminate their results and findings through a scholarly blog and engaging 'PechaKucha-style' presentation.

Pedagogical Approach

This course provides students with the information and skills needed to understand the comprehensiveness of sustainability, the myriad of environmental and social conditions that sustainability can address, and how to collaborate for sustainable solutions.

As an instructor, I follow a *mastery* teaching and learning approach. I provide opportunities for students to revise assignments to improve grades. I encourage students to reach out to me if additional instruction on any topic covered/assignment in this course is needed.

Extra Credit

There is one extra credit opportunity:

- Attend CSU International Symposium and write an abstract summarizing the experience. Virtual attendance is an option. (25 points)

Policies & Resources

Late Work Policy

Late work is accepted upon approval from the instructor via email.

Grading Concerns & Questions

Contact the instructor via email to ask questions or discuss concerns about grading.

CSU Principles of Community

- **Inclusion:** We create and nurture inclusive environments and welcome, value, and affirm community members, including their various identities, skills, ideas, talents, and contributions.
- **Integrity:** We are accountable for our actions and will act ethically and honestly in all our interactions.
- **Respect:** We honor the inherent dignity of all people within an environment where we are committed to freedom of expression, critical discourse, and the advancement of knowledge.
- **Service:** We are responsible, individually and collectively, to give of our time, talents, and resources to promote the well-being of each other and the development of our local, regional, and global communities.
- **Social Justice:** We have the right to be treated and the responsibility to treat others with fairness and equity, the duty to challenge prejudice, and to uphold the laws, policies, and procedures that promote justice in all respects.

Netiquette

[Ground Rules for Online Discussions](#)

Syllabus Resources and Policies

Please visit [Syllabus Resources and Policies](#) to learn about more policies relevant to your courses and resources to help with various challenges you may encounter.

COVID Information & Resources

For information about COVID-19, please refer to [Covid Information & Resources](#).

Student Accommodations

Report an access barrier through the [CSU Student Disability Center](#).

Mental Health and Wellness

CSU is a community that cares. You are not alone. CSU Health Network Counseling Services has trained professionals who can help. Your student fees provide access to a wide range of support services.

Call Counseling Services at (970) 491-6053, and they will work together to determine which services are right for you.

- [CSU counseling services](#)
- [Student mental health and well-being resources](#)

If you are concerned about a friend or peer, use **Tell Someone** by calling (970) 491-1350 or visiting <https://supportandsafety.colostate.edu/tell-someone/> to share your concerns with a professional who can discreetly connect the distressed individual with the proper resources.

Rams Take Care of Rams. Ask for help if you or someone you know is struggling.

Academic Integrity and Honor Code

Students must follow CSU [Academic Honesty and Integrity](#) policies and avoid [Academic Misconduct](#).

Review [Student Academic Integrity Resources](#).

As students of CSU, you are held to a high standard of integrity. The university developed a Student Honor Code that all students need to adhere to:

- ***"I have not given, received, or used any unauthorized assistance."***
 - CSU students are held accountable for academic misconduct.

Violations include, but are not limited to:

- Cheating
- Plagiarism
- Falsification
- Unauthorized possession or disposition of academic materials
- Facilitation of academic misconduct for others

Any act of academic dishonesty will result in one or more actions determined by the instructor, which

Changes to the Syllabus

The syllabus is subject to change based on need, and the instructor will communicate any changes with students through Canvas Announcements.

- The instructor reserves the right to make changes to this syllabus.