

Course Information

Instructor: Cassandra L. Thiel, clt5@nyu.edu

Office Location: Puck 3071

Office Hours (variable): by appointment (please email to schedule)

Administrative Assistant: Harry Boadu, hb1024@nyu.edu

Class Date: Mondays, 4:55-6:35pm (starting 26 March)

Class Location: 45 West 4th St, Rm B02

Course Description and Objectives

This 7-week short course provides a general introduction to environmental sustainability and touches on the science, concepts, and strategies used to “green” businesses, organizations, and individuals’ lifestyles. Modern consumers are demanding sustainability from organizations where they utilize or buy goods and services and in which they invest. Modern management and policy leaders, then, need to know what environmental sustainability is and which tools are available to improve the footprint of their organizations and businesses.

By the end of this course, students will be able to think critically about the environmental, societal, and economic impacts of human activities and systems. Students will be familiar with emissions quantification methods and sustainability reporting tools, including certification programs for individuals and businesses. Students will also learn various strategies for service organizations to decrease their environmental footprint and to market those activities to meet the demands of an emerging consumer base.

This course will cover the following topics:

1. The Environmental Movement & the Services Provided by Nature
2. Specific Environmental Concerns of Today
 - Climate change
 - Air pollution
 - Water pollution
 - Waste
 - Human health
 - Diversity of life
3. Human Infrastructure Systems and their Impacts
4. Sustainability Measurement and Reporting Tools
 - ISO standards
 - Life Cycle Assessments and Environmental Product Declarations
 - Certification programs for your organization and you
5. Cross-Disciplinary Considerations
 - Environmental justice
 - Global supply chains
 - Misaligned/Misguided environmental policies
6. Strategies for Environmental Sustainability in Organizations
7. Sustainability in Policy

There are NO PREREQUISITE courses for this course.

Course Text and Materials

There is NO REQUIRED TEXTBOOK for this course. The required readings will come from the following two sources:

- **NYU Classes** will be used to post readings and assignments throughout the semester. Students are encouraged to check it frequently. Many of the readings listed in this syllabus can be found online. In such cases, links can be found on NYU Classes.

The course materials will be drawn from the following books, which are NOT REQUIRED but may be of interest to students who wish to dive further into specific topics:

- Thinking in Systems: A Primer. Meadows, D. 2008. Chelsea Green Publishing.
- The Sustainability Edge – how to drive top-line growth with triple-bottom-line thinking. Apte & Sheth. 2016. University of Toronto Press.
- Fostering Sustainable Behavior- an introduction to community-based social marketing. McKenzie-Mohr. 2015. New Society Publishers.
- The Responsible Company – what we've learned from Patagonia's first 40 years. Chouinard & Stanley. 2012. Patagonia Books.

Course Grading and Requirements

In this course, we will develop an understanding of environmental sustainability through lectures, readings, assignments, and case studies. Final grades are determined by the following course components:

- **Assignments (80%)** **Individual or Team**
There will be four assignments, each worth 20% of your grade. Each assignment will be submitted electronically through NYU Classes either individually or as an assigned team (see details with each assignment). Regardless of submission requirements, students are encouraged to interact and consult with each other on assignments and readings.
- **Classroom Participation (20%)** **Individual**
Interaction with the material and your peers is crucial to engaging in the tough issues of sustainability. You are expected not only to attend class, but to be an **active** participant! This means being engaged, asking questions, bringing critical discussion, and enjoying it. :)

Course Policies

Assignment Submission. All homework answers should be submitted electronically through NYU Classes, unless otherwise noted in class. ***Each should be properly labeled with your name (teammates' names), the course number, the assignment number, and the date.***

Attendance. You should arrive to class on time with all pre-requisite readings or assignments completed. Any absence must be explained and justified beforehand.

Late assignments. Extensions will be granted only in case of an emergency, out of respect for those who abide by deadlines despite hectic schedules. Late submissions without prior permission will be penalized by 10% of the grade per day (so if you are 1 day late and would have scored 100%, your grade is 90%).

Students with disabilities. Any students requiring accommodation should contact me to make proper arrangements. Please be prepared to share your documentation from the NYU Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (<https://www.nyu.edu/life/safety-health-wellness/studentswith-disabilities.html>).

NYU/Wagner grading policy: <http://wagner.nyu.edu/students/policies/grading>

NYU/Wagner academic integrity policy: <http://wagner.nyu.edu/portal/students/policies/code>

Course Calendar (Schedule at a Glance)

| # | Date | Description | Assignments (Due at Start of Class) |
|---|-----------------------|--|--|
| 1 | 3/26 | The Natural World and the Value of Ecological Systems | |
| 2 | 4/2 | Environmental Emissions | 1: Your Moment in Nature |
| 3 | 4/9 | Impacts from Human Systems | |
| 4 | 4/16 | Measurement and Reporting Tools | 2: Infographic on environmental problem |
| 5 | 4/23 | Cross-Cutting Issues: Sustainable Development and Environmental Ethics | |
| 6 | 4/30 | Sustainability in your Business: Sustainability Strategy and Marketing | 3: Quantification Techniques: Environmental Footprinting |
| 7 | 5/14 (Finals Week) | Sustainability in Policy: Encouraging Behavioral Changes | 4: Sustainability Strategies |