

Course Description

ENVS 2340 is an integrated science course emphasizing social sciences in addressing 21st Century resource challenges affecting humans and ecosystems. We will explore environmental, economic, and social frameworks within which human uses of natural resources contribute to environmental problems and their solutions in American and other cultures.

Topics for Presentation/Posters

Is Renewable Energy Green?

Does Excessive Endangered Species Act Litigation Threaten Species Recovery, Job Creation, and Economic Growth?

Can Sustainable Agriculture Feed the World?

Can Our Marine Resources Be Sustainably Managed?

Is Sustainability a Realistic Objective for Society?

Is Shale Gas the Solution to Our Energy Woes?

Is Hydrofracking a Safe Practice?

Should We Be Pricing Ecosystem Services?

Should We Require Labeling for Genetically Modified Food?

ENVS 2340 (BSS) Environment and Society



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Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course students will be able to:

- Explain how the nature, history, theories and methods of the social sciences can contribute to sustainable use of natural resources.
- Evaluate debates about the relational, cultural, historical, and natural contexts that shape the human experience in relation to sustainable use of natural resources.
- Compare and evaluate differences among people's attitudes toward and understanding of the environmental, economic, and social relationships contributing to sustainable use of natural resources.
- Clearly state your own positions on issues related to the sustainability of natural resources use, and give empirically based arguments in support of your positions.
- Work effectively in a group setting and demonstrate that you make contributions that other group members value.

Sp 18 ENVS 2340 Group # _____

USU Student Code of Conduct, Article VI, Section VI-1 states that each student agrees to the following Honor Pledge: "I pledge, on my honor, to conduct myself with the foremost level of academic integrity."

By signing below, you affirm that you were **actively engaged** in your group's discussions today:

NAME: _____ AF: _____
 NAME: _____ AF: _____
 NAME: _____ AF: _____
 NAME: _____ AF: _____

Context:
 The Precautionary Principle: Where there are threats of serious or irreversible environmental damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation. (Brundtland Commission)

Type I Error: Leads one to conclude that a supposed effect or relationship exists when in fact it doesn't. Examples of type I errors include a test that shows a patient to have a disease when in fact the patient does not have the disease, a fire alarm going on indicating a fire when in fact there is no fire, or an experiment indicating that a medical treatment should cure a disease when in fact it does not. (Modified from Wikipedia)

Type II Error: Leads one to conclude that a supposed effect of relationship does not exist when in fact it does. Examples of type II errors would be a blood test failing to detect the disease it was designed to detect, in a patient who really has the disease, a fire breaking out and the fire alarm does not ring, or a clinical trial of a medical treatment failing to show that the treatment works when really it does. (Modified from Wikipedia)

1. Your group must **come to a consensus and give a well-reasoned rationale** for which of the following two futures you prefer you and your family to live in:

Future A: People will be allowed to do whatever they want to unless someone can prove that it will cause harm to other people.
 Future B: People will not be allowed to do whatever they want to unless they can prove that it won't cause harm to other people.

2. Explain how your choice of future is preferable to the other in terms of increasing our opportunity to become sustainable environmentally, socially, and economically.

Figure 4 (above) :
Sample for for Guardian Sustainability Newsletter Article Analyses

Dr. Frazer (right) is very excited about teaching ENVS 2340!



Course Activities

- Assigned lectures, videos, and readings
- Presentations/Posters: Groups of five students will prepare and deliver a formal presentation on the "pro" or "con" side of selected topics (see "Topics for Presentation/Posters"). For their topic, if they present on the pro side, then their poster will be on the con side, and vice versa.
- Group Work: Students groups will discuss 10 assigned topics on various aspects of sustainability and turn in reports on the forms provided (Fig. 4).
- Individual students will analyze pro and con papers on selected topics related to sustainability (see "Topics for NRSIA and Fig. 5).
- Individual students will choose one of the following activities for 20% of their grade:
 - Attend the Restoring the West Conference and write a paper on what they learned that is relevant to sustainable management of natural resources in the Western US
 - Write analyses of 10 articles from The Guardian Sustainable Business Newsletter (see Fig. 3)
 - Write an analysis of a book (from a list of approved books), telling how the work improves our understanding of sustainable use of natural resources
 - Take 10 graded pop quizzes on information covered in lectures, videos, and readings.

Topics for NRSIA

Do We Need the Precautionary Principle?

Do We Have a Population Problem?

Can Species Preservation Be Successfully Managed?

Should We Continue to Rely on Fossil Fuels?

Should Water Be Privatized?

Does the World Need High-tech Agriculture?

Does Sustainable Urban Development Require More Policy Innovation and Planning?

Are There Limits to Growth?

Are Western Values, Ethics, and Dominant Paradigms Compatible With Sustainability?

Guardian Sustainable Business Article Analysis

Name: _____ AF: _____

Article Title: _____

Day and Date (eg., Friday, Aug. 26): _____

1. (4 points) Briefly state the issue or problem that was addressed in your article.

2. (10 points) Explain how this issue or problem relates to the relationship between society and natural resources in terms of our pursuit of sustainability.

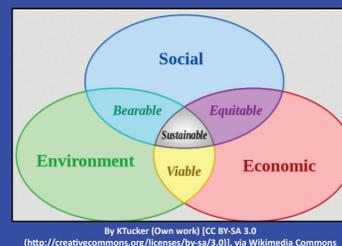
3. (8 points) Do you think that the proposed solution will be effective? Why or why not?

4. (4 points) What is information pertinent to this issue discussed in Society and the Environment and what did you learn from it? Note: You must provide chapter AND page number AND also numbers to receive credit; if using e-text, give location number(s).

5. (10 points) Identify **two** new positions on this issue/problem. What empirical evidence would convince you to change your position?

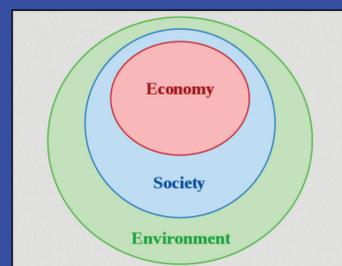
6. (4 points) List and define any new terms you learned when reading this article. OR if you didn't learn any new terms, briefly describe something else that you learned.

Figure 3 (above) :
Sample for for Guardian Sustainability Newsletter Article Analyses



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Fig. 1 (left): Venn Diagram depicting the overlap of the "three pillars" (of the "triple bottom line") of Sustainability



By original: Johann Dréo (talk - contribs)translation: Pro bug catcher (talk - contribs) - Own workinspired from Développement durable.jpgTranslated from Développement durable.svg, CC BY-SA 3.0. <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=1587372>

Fig. 2 (left): Concentric model of Sustainability showing the Economy as a subset of Society and both Society and the Economy as subsets of (and depend upon) the Environment

Natural Resources and Society Issue Analysis Form

Name: _____ AF: _____

Topic: _____

1. (8 points) Explain TWO (2) main areas of disagreement between the YES and NO arguments. Do NOT simply give their two sides of the same area of disagreement!

A. First Area of disagreement explained

B. Second (Different) Area of Disagreement explained

2. (4 points) What did Caruban say in Society and the Environment that is relevant to this issue and why do you think it is relevant? You must provide chapter AND page number AND also tell me what he said and why you think it is relevant to receive full credit! Hint: It may come from a part of the book you haven't read. It might be a good idea to check the index!

3. (5 points) Explain your position on this issue (DO NOT merely say which side you agree with). This will be what empirical evidence would be required to change your mind.

4. (5 points) Explain how the papers you read for this topic are relevant to the pursuit of sustainability.

Figure 5: (above):
Sample Form for Natural Resources and Society Article Analyses