

SUST 1134.002 – INTRODUCTION TO SUSTAINABILITY STUDIES

Fall 2021 Syllabus

UNM Land Acknowledgement: Founded in 1889, the University of New Mexico sits on the traditional homelands of the Pueblo of Sandia. The original peoples of New Mexico – Pueblo, Navajo, and Apache – since time immemorial, have deep connections to the land and have made significant contributions to the broader community statewide. We honor the land itself and those who remain stewards of this land throughout the generations, and also acknowledge our committed relationship to Indigenous peoples. We gratefully recognize our history.

Citizenship and/or Immigration Status: All students are welcome in this class regardless of citizenship, residency, or immigration status. I will respect your privacy if you choose to disclose your status. UNM as an institution has made a core commitment to the success of all our students, including members of our undocumented community. The Administration’s welcome can be found [here](#).

Anti-Racism Commitment: The Sustainability Studies Program is committed to anti-racist education and we stand united with our university community to create safe, respectful, and critically-engaged learning environments for all. We are committed to undoing systems of oppression and challenging racism in our work, our studies, and our lives.

A note about recent events: Over the past year and a half, the U.S. has experienced both the emergence of the global COVID-19 pandemic and the painful consequences of long-endured violence against the Black community as well as Indigenous and other people of color in the United States. These events have caused, and continue to cause, fear, stress, and pain for many members of our community, and will continue to impact each of us in various ways throughout this term. Under these circumstances, it is completely normal to feel overwhelmed or anxious, and to have difficulty concentrating. I have designed this course with these challenges in mind, and am committed to continuing to work with all of you to create a positive and supportive learning environment throughout the term. If your health, well-being, or schoolwork are being impacted by recent events, I encourage you to make use of the resources UNM provides, which I have included at the end of this syllabus.

Instructor: Jessica Rowland (*she/her*), Senior Lecturer II

Email: jrowland@unm.edu

Phone: Cell - 505.506.6612 (texts work well too!)

Office: Castetter Hall 163B, UNM Main Campus

Drop-in Hours: Monday 1:00pm-3:00pm, and by appointment (Zoom meetings also possible)

Website: [UNM Sustainability Studies Program](#)

Class Time: Tues/Thurs 9:30-10:45am

Location: Mitchell Hall 218

Materials: Available on [UNM Learn](#)

Course Credits: 3

About your Instructor:

I was raised on a small farm in the Pacific Northwest, and have always felt a deep connection to nature and the outdoors. I became interested in the intersection of environment and society as an undergraduate, choosing to pursue degrees in both earth science and anthropology. There were times, however, when I questioned how these fields would overlap, and felt torn between the scientific and humanities approaches to my studies. I wondered if I really fit in either discipline! As I began to take introductory courses that had field and lab components, I had a lot of anxiety about successfully designing and completing meaningful hands-on projects. However, the support of a few key instructors and fellow classmates helped me realize that we all face challenges and that it is normal to navigate some level of doubt about our abilities. After receiving feedback on assignments and gaining more experience in project-based courses, my confidence grew and I became excited about the opportunity to pursue my own interdisciplinary interests within the context of my coursework. I eventually went on to grad school to study paleoclimatology (focusing on reconstructing past changes in climate from the chemical signatures of ancient animal teeth excavated from Paleolithic cave deposits in Eurasia). I now hope to share my passion for human-environment interactions in particular - and sustainability more broadly - with you. I’m excited to work with you to apply what we learn in the classroom to real-world challenges!

Student Drop-In Hours: I care about the success of each student in this course. My student drop-in hours are Mondays from 1:00-3:00pm in Castetter 163B. If you cannot make it to my regularly scheduled drop-in hours, email me to set up a different time that works for us both. (I am also happy to connect over Zoom.) Come to student drop-in hours when you have questions about the course material, questions about the subject more broadly, concerns to discuss, accommodations you need, or thoughts you want to share. Remember that it is normal to be challenged by course material, assignments, and/or life in general at some point in the semester; please reach out when this happens so that we can discuss and identify resources to help you succeed in the class.

Contacting me by email: At some points in the term, my inbox gets quite full, but I do want to hear from you. If you email me and don't hear back from me within two business days, please send a follow up email or a brief text. I will appreciate the gentle reminder.

To discuss or declare the Sustainability Studies minor, set up a virtual meeting with Academic Advisor Maggie Sumruld (geographyadvise@unm.edu).

COURSE OVERVIEW

Course Description: This course provides a broad survey of various aspects of sustainability. We will explore topics such as climate change, renewable energy, water, agriculture, waste, green building, socially responsible business, ecosystem valuation, microlending, environmental justice, and alternative progress indicators, among others. The course will focus on how to create a sustainable future that supports environmental health, social equity and economic vitality (often referred to as the *triple bottom line*). We will examine challenges and examples of integrated, creative strategies on local, national and global levels.

Course Objectives:

Students will:

- Explain the facts and context of a variety of current sustainability-related topics and issues
- Use scholarly literature in sustainability writing, presentations and outreach
- Demonstrate problem solving by proposing creative, balanced solutions to sustainability challenges
- Apply the principles of sustainability to their everyday lives
- Engage in activities that promote sustainability on campus and/or in the community

Assessment: Your grade will be determined from the following:

Attendance & Participation	10%
Community Engagement	15%
Ecological Footprint Reduction Proposal	25%
Midterm & Final Exams	25%
Short Essays	25%

A+ > 99%	B+ 87-89.9%	C+ 77-79.9%	D+ 67-69.9%	F < 60%
A 93-99%	B 83-87%	C 73-77%	D 63-67%	
A- 90-93%	B- 80-83%	C- 70-73%	D- 60-63%	

Credit-Hour Statement: This is a three credit-hour course. Class meets for two 75-minute sessions of direct instruction for fifteen weeks during the Fall 2021 semester. Students are expected to complete a *minimum* of six hours of out-of-class work (homework, study, assignment completion, and class preparation) each week.

COURSE ELEMENTS

Attendance & Participation (10%): Our class benefits from everyone's active participation and teamwork, so it is encouraged that you show up on time and participate fully in discussions and activities. Your perspectives, knowledge, and enthusiasm are valuable and necessary to make the class a good experience for all involved. Please be prepared to be a part of discussions about assigned readings. The readings are available on *UNM Learn*, and are organized in folders that correspond to the topics on the syllabus. Worksheets and quizzes will count toward your participation grade and may be given throughout the

semester to ensure that you keep up with the material. Additionally during the semester, each student will present one current event/news item relevant to the day's topic and lead a 5-10 minute discussion with the class.

All assigned materials will be available on *UNM Learn*, organized in folders that correspond to the topics on the course schedule. *Note that supplemental readings and resources will be available in each topical folder. These materials are not required for the course, but are available to students who want to deepen their understanding of the week's topic, or explore alternative approaches or viewpoints.*

Community Engagement (15%): An important component of this class is your participation in sustainability-related activities in your community to gain hands-on experience and build connections with local organizations and experts. You will identify your major interests and design a plan of action to engage in activities related to these interests. Completion of ten (10) hours will satisfy this requirement. This semester - due to the ongoing pandemic safety measures - your engagement activities can take place on campus (including lectures, film screenings, workshops, and sustainability-oriented committee or organization meetings) or online (i.e., sustainability-related webinars, virtual tours, interviews, advocacy work, trainings, certifications, etc.). You are welcome to expand the definition of "community" beyond your immediate geographic vicinity and into the larger virtual sphere. *Note: If you prefer to engage in community-focused activities in your neighborhood (e.g., local farming, mutual aid work, marches/protests, etc), I urge you to use your best judgment. If deemed safe, I may be able to organize a few class field trips.*

Complete the Community Sustainability Experience form on *UNM Learn* to document your community engagement, and submit your entries within two weeks of participating in each activity. Throughout the semester, you will share brief check-ins on your community engagement with the class. You will also craft a brief reflection essay at the end of the term that details your experience.

Ecological Footprint Reduction Proposal (25%): You will begin by assessing your household's ecological footprint, using the Global Footprint Network spreadsheet calculator for the US. You will then determine a suitable course of action that could enable your household to reduce its ecological footprint by 20% in the future, and write a proposal that describes the reduction methodology and details the anticipated changes. Choose the footprint area(s) that interest you most, and that your household can feasibly reduce. For example, behavioral shifts may include changing your mode of transportation, your method of food selection, your buying practices, your energy usage, etc. (You may find that the current pandemic imposes certain constraints or opportunities for future footprint reduction – be sure to discuss and reflect on these!) At the end of the semester, you will turn in the final proposal and present a five- to ten-minute overview of your reduction strategy to the class.

Midterm & Final Exams (25%): Exams will be mainly in short-essay format, with some fill-in-the-blank and/or matching questions. Exams will cover material from readings, lectures, videos and class discussions.

Short Essays (25%): During the semester, you will turn in three written works that are unique to this class and 3-4 pages in length. I will provide prompts that are designed to guide your writing; you are welcome to integrate relevant data, examples, and case studies – as well as personal reflection. To ensure that you receive full credit, a hardcopy of the essay is due in class or can be uploaded to *UNM Learn* (as a .docx, .odt, or .pdf) by 9:30am the day it is due. *Late papers will be accepted for one week after the due date and will be graded down by 10%.*

STUDENT EXPERIENCE PROJECT

This course is a part of the [Student Experience Project](#) (SEP), an initiative that is committed to transforming the college student experience and creating equitable learning environments through innovative, evidence-based practices that increase degree attainment. By focusing on *building community* and a *sense of belonging* on campus and in the classroom, SEP aims to build equitable learning environments where all students are supported to succeed.

Ascend is a data-driven professional learning program that will enable me to learn how you are experiencing this course, and what I can do to make those experiences more equitable, engaging, and supportive of your success. Three times during the semester you will be asked to respond in class to a short (5-10 minute) Ascend survey that measures these factors. Extra credit will be awarded for completion of the surveys. I will use your feedback to improve the learning environment of the course. Note that the same questions will be asked multiple times in order to see if the changes I implement are working or not. All responses are anonymous. I will see if you have completed the survey, but I will *not* see your individual results. I will debrief the results with the class and be transparent about what is working and what can be improved. Thank you for being a part of this transformative project!

COURSE POLICIES

Grading policy: I provide numerous opportunities for students to receive feedback on their performance throughout the course, on both low-stakes and high-stakes assessments. This gives you opportunities to see how you are doing so you can identify places to apply more effort or new strategies along the way, seek help if you are struggling, and improve throughout the semester. My hope is that all students will develop the knowledge they need to do well in this course and that all students will improve and expand their knowledge and skills through interaction with course materials, in-class discussion, research, writing and presentations. Do note that there will be some limited opportunities to receive extra credit to improve your course standing.

Note: In previous years, some students have told me that they had times during the course when they felt that they were not doing well and became uncertain about whether they belonged in this class. Sometimes students feel initially overwhelmed by the ecological footprint and/or community engagement projects. I advise students that this is normal, and invite them to meet with me during drop-in hours to talk through their concerns. Together we can make a plan to tackle small components of the projects one at a time. A number of these students have contacted me later in the semester to tell me that, now that some time had passed and they had taken some positive steps, they did feel like they belonged in the class and were less intimidated (in fact, excited) by the prospect of applying sustainable practices to their lives and connecting with community organizations and experts. For recommendations for resources available to help you succeed in this course, please see the Academic Supports section of the syllabus below.

Preferred Names: If your preferred name is not the same as the name that appears on the university provided roster for the course, please let me know so that I can use your preferred name.

Course Conduct: I am committed to creating a learning environment where diverse perspectives are recognized and valued as a source of strength. I request that all students work with me to create a class culture based on open communication, mutual respect, and inclusion. As a class we will approach all discussions with respect and civility. Disagreements and debates in academic discourse are expected and welcome, but personal attacks are never okay, and will not be tolerated. I strive to ensure an open and welcoming classroom for all students. If I ever miss the mark, please don't hesitate to address the issue in class and/or come talk to me. We are all learning – and unlearning – together.

Guidelines for Community Standards: We can establish a productive and respectful learning environment in this course by co-constructing a set of community agreements during the first week of the semester. Students will work in small groups and create a list of 5-7 suggestions that they will then present to the whole class. This is your opportunity to influence the atmosphere in the course. The instructor will collate all the guidelines and tailor them into a document that will become part of the course syllabus.

Caregiver Responsibilities Policy: I have great respect for students who are balancing their pursuit of education with the responsibilities of caring for children or other family members. If you run into challenges that require you to miss a class, or if your caregiving responsibilities are interfering with your ability to engage in learning. There may be some instances of flexibility I can offer to support your learning.

School-Life Conflict: Many students face obstacles to their education because of work or family obligations or unforeseen personal difficulties. If you are experiencing challenges throughout the term that are impacting

your ability to succeed in this course, or in your undergraduate career more broadly, please reach out to me so that we can work together to form a plan for your academic success. If you are unable to attend my student drop-in hours, please email to set up a time that works for you or arrange a meeting by Zoom.

Academic Integrity: At UNM, honesty is considered one of the cornerstones of academic development. There are policies in place to protect you and the academic community in *doing the right thing*; these are available in the [Student Pathfinder](#) as well as in the Faculty Handbook. These include policies on student grievances [D175](#) (undergraduates), academic dishonesty ([D100](#)), and respectful campus ([CO9](#)). Please ask for help in understanding and avoiding plagiarism (passing the work or words of others off as your own work or words) or other forms academic dishonesty. Doing something dishonest in a class or on an assignment can lead to serious academic consequences. Come talk with me about your concerns or needs for academic flexibility or talk with support staff at one of our [student resource centers](#) before you do something that may endanger your career.

Internet & Email Responsibility: I encourage you to visit the *UNM Learn* course website regularly to stay up to date with course material. Check your UNM email account, as I will use this account to keep in touch regarding course requirements, field trips, or other updates. If you regularly use another email address, please forward your UNM mail to that account. As a courtesy to the instructor, please observe proper [netiquette](#). You can expect a response to your email within about 48 hours of receipt.

ACADEMIC SUPPORTS

Support in Receiving Help: Students who ask for help are successful students. I encourage students to be familiar with services and policies that can help them navigate UNM successfully. Many services exist to help you succeed academically. There are plenty of ways to find your place and your pack at UNM: see the “student guide” tab on [my.unm](#), the “life help” link on [students.unm.edu](#), the list of [student services departments](#), or ask me for information about the right resource center or person to contact.

Campus Resources: UNM is committed to providing courses that are inclusive and accessible for all participants. Extensive academic supports are there to assist students in achieving the academic success of which they are truly capable. Most students access these supports at some point in pursuit of their degree.

As your instructor, it is my objective to facilitate an accessible classroom setting, in which students have full access and opportunity. If you are experiencing any physical or academic barriers, or concerns related to mental health, physical health and/or COVID-19, please consult with me via email/phone or during student drop-in hours and I can direct you to the appropriate [campus resources and services](#). I have also listed some commonly used resources below.

Accommodations: In accordance with University Policy 2310 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), academic accommodations may be made for any student who notifies the instructor of the need for an accommodation. It is imperative that you take the initiative to bring such needs to my attention, as I am not legally permitted to inquire. Students who may require assistance in emergency evacuations should contact the instructor as to the most appropriate procedures to follow. Contact [Accessibility Resource Center](#) at 505-277-3506 or [arcsrvs@unm.edu](#) for additional information.

Peer Tutoring: [Center for Academic Program Support \(CAPS\)](#) is an award-winning learning assistance program available to all UNM students enrolled in undergraduate classes. CAPS offers peer tutoring and academic support services for over 800 classes each semester. Students who work with CAPS typically do better in their coursework and graduate faster.

Mental Health and Counseling Services: All of us need a support system, and many students benefit from the use of counseling services. Numerous [mental health resources](#) exist on campus for students, including [Student Health & Counseling \(SHAC\)](#), which works with students to identify and address issues related to personal growth, self-confidence, anxiety, depression, eating disorders, academic difficulties, and career indecision. [UNM Career Services](#) can also provide assistance to students who are developing, evaluating, and/or implementing career, education, and employment decisions.

Hardship: Recent research shows that many students at UNM do not always have adequate food and housing (see the [UNM Basic Needs Project website](#) and report). These hardships create barriers to academic success, as well as physical and mental wellbeing. There are resources available on campus that can help, including the [UNM Lobo Food Pantry](#), currently open by appointment as they move to their new location in the SUB; the [Mobile Lobo Food Pantry](#), available on Tuesdays at 9:00am at EXPO NM (300 San Pedro Dr NE); UNM Federal [CARES Act funds](#); and assistance with applying for SNAP benefits available through the [Women’s Resource Center \(WRC\)](#), available for all students, regardless of gender. These resources tend to be underutilized, so do not hesitate to take advantage of them and help raise awareness about them across campus. If financial or housing stress in any way prevents you from attending class or otherwise completing your work, please see me and I will work with you to help find ways to support you.

Title IX: Our classroom and our university should always be spaces of mutual respect, kindness, and support, without fear of discrimination, harassment, or violence. Should you ever need assistance or have concerns about incidents that violate this principle, please access the [LoboRESPECT Advocacy Center](#) and the support services listed on its website. Please note that, because UNM faculty, Teaching Assistants, and Graduate Assistants are considered “responsible employees” by the Department of Education, any disclosure of gender discrimination (including sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, and sexual violence) made to a faculty member, TA, or GA must be reported to the university's Title IX coordinator at the [Office of Compliance, Ethics, and Equal Opportunity](#). For more information, see the [campus policy](#) regarding sexual misconduct.

COVID POLICIES

UNM Administrative Mandate on Required Vaccinations: All students, staff, and instructors are required by [UNM Administrative Mandate on Required Vaccinations](#) to be fully vaccinated for COVID-19 as soon as possible, but no later than September 30, 2021, and must provide proof of vaccination or of a UNM validated limited exemption or exemption no later than September 30, 2021 to the [UNM vaccination verification site](#). Students seeking medical exemption from the vaccination policy must submit a request to the [UNM verification site](#) for review by the UNM [Accessibility Resource Center](#). Students seeking religious exemption from the vaccination policy must submit a request for reasonable accommodation to the [UNM verification site](#) for review by the [Compliance, Ethics, and Equal Opportunity Office](#). For further information on the requirement and on limited exemptions and exemptions, see the [UNM Administrative Mandate on Required Vaccinations](#).

UNM Requirement on Masking in Indoor Spaces: All students, staff, and instructors are required to wear face masks in indoor classes, labs, studios, and meetings on UNM campuses (see [masking requirement](#)). Vaccinated and unvaccinated instructors teaching in classrooms must wear a mask when entering and leaving the classroom and when moving around the room. Students who do not wear a mask indoors on UNM campuses can expect to be asked to leave the classroom and to be dropped from a class if failure to wear a mask occurs more than once in that class. Students and employees who do not wear a mask in classrooms and other indoor public spaces on UNM campuses are subject to disciplinary actions. UNM will periodically evaluate and update the mask policy relative to public health conditions.

Potential for Change in Modality: The President and Provost of UNM may direct that classes move to remote delivery at any time to preserve the health and safety of the students, instructor and community. Please check your preferred email and *UNM Learn* course announcements for updates about our class, and consult [Bringing Back the Pack](#) for general UNM updates about COVID-19 and the health of our community.

Schedule

Class	Date	Topic	Read & Discuss	Assignment Due
I. The Context of Sustainability				
1	T 8/24	Introduction	-Syllabus	Read the syllabus and explore our website
2	R 8/26	What is Sustainability?	-WCED, 1987 -UNCED, 1992 -Drexhage, 2010	Essay #1: What is sustainability?
3	T 8/31	Human Population Growth & Consumption	-Population Reference Bureau, 2021 -Bradshaw, 2014	
4	R 9/1	The Ecological Footprint	-Living Planet Report, 2020, ch.#1&2 -Perkins, 2017	Community engagement: Initial plan of action
5	T 9/7	A Resilient Planet	-Living Planet Report, 2016, ch.#4 -UN, 2019	
II. The Environment (Planet)				
6	R 9/9	Climate Change & Human Alteration of Ecosystems	-USGCRP, 2017 -Ripple, 2017	
7	T 9/14	Climate Impacts, Mitigation & Adaptation	-Gramling, 2018 -USGCRP, 2018	Community engagement: Final plan of action
8	R 9/16	Global Energy Usage	-Energy Information Administration, 2019 -Inman, 2013	
9	T 9/21	Renewable Energy: Solar	-Wald, 2009 -BCSE, 2021 -US Solar Market Insight Report, 2021	
10	R 9/23	Renewable Energy: Biomass & Biofuel	-US DOE Bioenergy website -US RFS website	Ecological footprint proposal: Baseline footprint calculation
11	T 9/28	Water Consumption & Conservation	-Gleick, 2010 -Rogers, 2008 -Meyer, 2016	
12	R 9/30	The Industrial Food System; Food Access & Food Waste	-CSS, 2020 -NRDC, 2017	
13	T 10/5	Sustainable Agriculture & Permaculture	-Foley, 2011 -SARE, 2010 -Harland, 2009	
14	R 10/7	Global Waste: Trash, Recycling & Composting	-EPA, 2020 -UNEP, 2015	Ecological footprint proposal: Revised footprint reduction
15	T 10/12	Green Architecture	-Valiño, 2017 -Barth, 2018	Essay #2: Case study - climate change, energy, water, food
X	R 10/14	FALL BREAK – no class		
16	T 10/19	MIDTERM EXAM		Midterm Exam

**This reading list is subject to modifications at the discretion of the instructor.*

Schedule:

Class	Date	Topic	Read & Discuss	Assignment Due
III. The Economy (Profit)				
17	R 10/21	Growthmania & the American Economy	-Daly, 1973 -Korten, 2007	Community engagement: 5 hours completed
18	T 10/26	Green Economics: Biomimicry & Cradle to Cradle Design	-Benyus, 2010 -Cline, 2020 -Goleman, 2009	Ecological footprint proposal: Brainstorm footprint reduction
19	R 10/28	Green & Socially Responsible Business	-Kelly, 2015 -Walmart, 2021	
20	T 11/2	Ecosystem Valuation: The Land Ethic & Natural Capitalism	-Leopold, 1949 -Lovins, 2007 -Economist, 2012	
21	R 11/4	Environmental Challenges, Economic Solutions	-Conniff, 2009 -CCL, 2020 -Meyer, 2015	
22	T 11/9	Microlending & the Microcredit Revolution	-Yunus, 2007 -Karlan, 2015	
IV. Social Equity (People)				
23	R 11/11	Environmental Justice	-POCELS, 1991 -Melosi, 2012 -Shephard & Ring, 2010 -JCPEs, 2012 -Gottlieb, 2009	
24	T 11/16	Smart Growth: Transportation & Urban Design	-Smart Growth Network, 2006 -Arcadis, 2018	
25	R 11/18	A Case Study of Curitiba, Brazil	-Adler, 2016	Community engagement: 10 hours completed
26	T 11/23	Sustainable Communities: Ecovillages & Transition Towns	-Litfin, 2013 -Hopkins, 2008	Essay #3: Reflection on community engagement
X	R 11/25	UNIVERSITY HOLIDAY – no class		
27	T 11/30	Gross National Happiness & Alternative Progress Indicators	-Wahl, 2017 -World Economic Forum, 2016	
V. Presentations & Course Wrap-Up				
28	R 12/2	Ecological Footprint Presentations		Ecological footprint proposal: Final report
29	T 12/7	Ecological Footprint Presentations Continued		
30	R 12/9	Final Exam Review & Course Wrap-Up	-Lappé, 2013 -Climate Justice Alliance, 2020 -Asafu-Adjaye, 2015	
31	T 12/14	FINAL EXAM, 7:30am – 9:30am		Final Exam

**This reading list is subject to modifications at the discretion of the instructor.*