

**ENVI 202**  
**SUSTAINABILITY AND THE CAMPUS**

Macalester College, Fall 2017  
3:00-4:30 Tuesdays, Markim 201

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Office Hours: By appointment\*

**Course Description**

This interdisciplinary class will make direct connections between global environmental issues, such as climate change, and life on an urban campus. With Macalester College as our case study, we will explore how the daily activities on a campus (energy use, food, transportation, water use, etc) translate into issues such as greenhouse gas emissions, solid waste, and urban stormwater. We will examine campus resource and energy flows and have the opportunity to combine theory with application through a real-world campus sustainability project. No prerequisites required; all interdisciplinary perspectives are needed and welcome.

The class will begin with an introduction to sustainability and sustainability issues at Macalester College. Next we will explore specific sustainability topics such as: climate change, food, health, biodiversity, waste, water, and energy. In groups, you will work on a campus sustainability project. You can conduct a sustainability audit for a campus department or work on a campus sustainability project, analyze its most important issues, recommend actions, and present your findings.

**Course Objectives**

- Demonstrate an understanding of the social, environmental, and economic systems within sustainability
- Connect local action and global impacts of sustainability issues
- Develop an understanding of the connection between campus energy and resource flows and the college culture
- Develop a “sense of place” for Macalester
- Audit a department for sustainability and develop recommendations for improvements, or propose a sustainability project on campus.
- Gain group project skills and develop critical, creative, and practical thinking skills

**Grading**

Your grade for the course will be calculated as follows:

Group Project (55 pts total)	60%
-presentation (15 pts)	
-report (40 pts)	
Final Essay	10%
Participation (21 pts)	15%
Event summary, reading responses, native plant description	15%

*Participation* is vital to this course. Your ideas, contributions in class discussion, enthusiasm, and hard work will all count towards this part of your grade.

### **Required Texts**

James Farrell, The Nature of College: How a new understanding of campus life can change the world, Milkweed Editions, 2010.

Margaret Robertson, Sustainability Principles and Practices, Routledge, 2014.

University of Minnesota Extension Service, Big Woods, Big Rivers Linneaus List.

### **\*Office Hours**

Please use google calendar to schedule appointments. Here's how: 1) Log in to your **Macalester** email account. 2) Go to your calendar page 3) Put shansen2 in the left "other calendars" box 4) Click on a time when you and I are free and create an "event" 5) Edit the event details 6) "Invite" me to the meeting by adding my email to the box on the right. My google calendar should be up to date, but do give me some lead time when you schedule meetings to make sure I get your notice. Please note that I typically telecommute on Fridays. I am virtually available, but typically not in person.

### **Accommodation Statement**

I am committed to providing assistance to help you be successful in this course. Accommodations are available for students with documented disabilities. Contact the Associate Dean of Students, Lisa Landreman, at 696-6220 to make an appointment. It is important to meet early in the semester to ensure your accommodations are approved to ensure you begin the semester successfully.

### **Classroom Behaviors**

Students and instructors each have an important role in maintaining a classroom environment optimal for learning, and are expected to treat each other with respect during class, using thoughtful dialogue, and keeping disruptive behaviors to a minimum. Class discussions are interactive and diverse opinions will be shared; please be thoughtful in sharing your perspectives and responses with others. Examples of behaviors that can be disruptive include chatting and whispering during class, the use of electronic equipment, reading the paper during class, interrupting others, preparing to leave before class is over, and consistently arriving late to class. Please keep these disruptions to a minimum. Inappropriate behavior in the classroom may result in a request to leave the class and/or a referral to the Office of Student Affairs.

### **Descriptions of Projects**

Below are descriptions of major projects and class assignments. Additional details will be posted on Moodle and handed out in class.

#### **Sustainability Group Project**

The purpose of this project is to have you apply your sustainability knowledge to a real-world project. Each of you will work on a campus project in groups. This can be working with a campus department to 1) find out about current efforts and document what has already happened 2) find out their most pressing sustainability issues 3) research how the department can improve 4) recommend actions for the department. In some cases, you may be able to assist in implementing the recommendations. You can also work on a campus sustainability feasibility study, pilot project, or project analysis. All of the projects will have common themes:

In order to complete this project, you will:

- Develop questions to ask (your department or stakeholders)
- Research options for your department or stakeholders
- Recommend actions
- Present your findings in a report and oral presentation

## **Reading Responses**

The readings will highlight the interdisciplinary-nature of sustainability topics and also assist in illuminating the ties between local actions and larger-scale sustainability issues.

Prior to each class, please write a reading response and post on Moodle. Please limit your reading responses to 250 words. The general format for reading responses is:

- As succinctly as possible, and in your own words, what is the main point of the reading?
- What surprised you?
- What confused you?
- Suggest a better question than “What is the main point of this reading?” for discussion.

Some readings will have additional or different questions and will be announced in class and posted on Moodle.

## **Native Plant/Animal on Campus Due 10/24**

Find one plant or animal that is listed on the Linnaeus List and write up a short piece about it. Take a photo. What did you see? Where? Find out an interesting fact about it. We may add these observations to the urban sustainability website: <https://www.macalester.edu/sustainability/living-laboratory/urban-sustainability/>

## **Sustainability Event Review Due 10/24**

The purpose of the sustainability event review is for you to have an opportunity to take advantage of the additional sustainability opportunities on campus and within the Twin Cities. This event may help you to tie lessons from class to larger sustainability issues and also understand how economic, social, and environmental facets of an issue are intertwined.

I recommend attending one of the International Roundtable events or EnviroThursday.

Please complete **one event review** over the term. Keep it to one page or less. Include these headings:

*Event description:* include title, date, and short description

*Review:* Analyze the event. Was it effective?

*Reflection:* What did you learn? How does this event connect to what you have learned in class or already knew about sustainability?