**SUS 115 Economic and Political Foundations of Sustainability**

**Fall 2013**

Professor: Lisa Glidden Office: Mahar 439  
Email: lisa.glidden@oswego.edu Office Hrs: M 10-11,  
Class Website: via Angel T/Th 11 – 12, and by appt.  
Class Meetings: MWF 11:30 – 12:25 in Mahar 111

**Course Description**

The purpose of this class is to provide students with a working vocabulary and understanding of the multidisciplinary, difficult to define concept, sustainability. Too often “discussions” about sustainability are pointless exercises in people talking past one another. Students in this class will develop the tools to knowledgably engage in debates about sustainability and related issues.

**Required Texts**

1) Thiele, Leslie Paul (2013) *Sustainability* Cambridge: Polity Press

2) additional readings are posted on Angel

3) Egan, Timothy *The Worst Hard Time*

**Recommended:** *A manual for writers of research papers, theses, and dissertations*, 8th ed., by Kate L. Turabian [University of Chicago Press]

**Course Expectations:**

Weexpect that you fulfill the following responsibilities. Attend all sections. While we are aware that obligations may cause some sections to be missed, the material we will examine can be complex, and many absences or the failure to keep up with the reading will adversely affect your ability to accomplish the goals of this course. Be prepared for each class by carefully reading all assignments. Prepared students will be able to ask informed questions, contribute to discussions and perform well on the papers.

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

* Understand the concepts of sustainability and sustainable development.
* Understand how political decisions are made.
* Understand how economic processes guide resource allocation decisions
* Apply social science methodology to analyze sustainability issues.
* Understand the relative importance and interaction between economic and political processes in sustainable development.
* Identify the political and economic constraints towards adopting sustainable technologies both domestically and on an international basis.
* Articulate a position on sustainable development for a given country or group of countries.

**Grading** for the class is as follows:

Exams (2) 40%

Final exam 20%

Participation 20%

Article summaries and Discussion Questions (2) 20%

Make-up exams will only be given if I am notified BEFORE you miss the exam (circumstances permitting).

Late papers will lose ½ a grade every day it is late, including if it is handed in late on the due date.

**Academic Honesty**

You can make sure that you **don’t plagiarize** either by checking out this link: <http://www.oswego.edu/library/instruction/plagtut/index.html>

As noted by the [Committee on Intellectual Integrity](http://www.oswego.edu/administration/provost/integrity/index.html), "Intellectual integrity on the part of all students is basic to individual growth and development through college course work. When academic dishonesty occurs, the teaching/learning climate is seriously undermined and student growth and development are impeded." With this in mind, you're expected to be(come) familiar with the [College Policy on Intellectual Integrity](http://www.oswego.edu/administration/registrar/policy_text.html#cpii). Your submission of written work for this class will be taken as your formal indication that you fully understand this policy, including relevant definitions and consequences of academic dishonesty.

**Campus Resources:**

There are many resources on campus to help you to succeed in this class.

***Library***

With your Oswego ID you have access through the Penfield Library to e-journals and databases, which should be helpful in research projects. Please contact a reference librarian if you have any questions.

***Office Hours***

I hold office hours every week. Please feel free to come by to talk about the class, or if you want to further understand a concept, etc.

***Disabled Student Services***

The Office of Disability Services is available to assist students who have a legally documented disability or students who suspect that they may have a disability. If you have a disabling condition that may interfere with your ability to successfully complete this course, please contact the office of Disability Services. Also, please see me to let me know how we may be of assistance. Alternative testing for students with learning disabilities is available.

Phone: (315) 312-3358

email: dss@oswego.edu <mailto:dss@oswego.edu

web: www.oswego.edu/dis\_svc

visit /mail: 183 Campus Center, SUNY Oswego, NY 13126

**Course Schedule**

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| **Week 1** | **Introduction** |
| Mon, 8/26 | Introduction to the course |
| Wed, 8/28 | Defining Sustainability   * Thiele: Introduction * Thiele: Conclusion |
| Fri, 8/30 | Who, what, when, where, and how of sustainability   * No reading |
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| **Week 2** | **Politics and Sustainability** |
| Mon, 9/2 | Labor Day – no classes |
| Wed, 9/4 | * Angel > Davidson, “Social Sustainability: a potential for politics?” |
| Fri, 9/6 | Mechanisms and obstacles for sustainability   * Egan: *The Worst Hard Time*, Introduction |
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| **Week 3** | **Culture and Sustainability** |
| Mon, 9/9 | * Angel > “Fijian Water”   **Extra credit event: 7 – 9:30pm *Tapped*** 132 Campus Center  *Tapped* examines the role of the bottled water industry and its effects on our health, climate change, pollution, and our reliance on oil. Produced by Atlas Films.  Film followed by talkback with Prof. Judith Belt, Technology Department, SUNY Oswego. |
| Wed, 9/11 | * Egan: *The Worst Hard Time,* Part I – The Promise (to page 59) |
| Fri, 9/13 | * Egan: *The Worst Hard Time,* Part I – The Promise (to end) |
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| **Week 4** | **Case Study – The US and the Dust Bowl** |
| Mon, 9/16 | * Egan: *The Worst Hard Time*, Part II – Betrayal |
| Wed, 9/18 | * Egan: *The Worst Hard Time*, Part III – Blowup (to page 193) |
| Fri, 9/20 | * Egan: *The Worst Hard Time*, Part III – Blowup (to page 242) |
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| **Week 5** | **Case Study – The US and the Dust Bowl, cont’d** |
| Mon, 9/23 | * Egan: *The Worst Hard Time*, Part III – Blowup (to page 293) |
| Wed, 9/25 | * Egan: *The Worst Hard Time*, Part III – Blowup and Epilogue   Extra credit event: Tim Egan, author of *The Worst Hard Time*  7pm in Hewitt Ballroom |
| Fri, 9/27 | The Dust Bowl—lessons learned?   * No reading |
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| **Week 6** | **Economics and Sustainability** |
| Mon, 9/30 | Exam #1 |
| Wed, 10/2 | Economics and Sustainability   * No reading |
| Fri, 10/4 | Environmental Economics   * Angel > “Environmental Economics 101” |
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| **Week 7** | **Economics and Sustainability, cont’d** |
| Mon, 10/7 | * Angel > Harris, “Environmental Economics” |
| Wed, 10/9 | **No class today, but go to talk tonight**  **Required Event:** 7 – 8:30pmCC 201 Eban Goodstein (Bard College) presents: "Will Miami Drown and What Does it Mean to Me? Fatalism, Activism and a Leadership Career for a Hotter World" |
| Fri, 10/11 | * Angel > “Discount rate” |
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| **Week 8** | **Valuing Natural Resources** |
| Mon, 10/14 | * Thiele: Chapter 1: Sustainability and Time |
| Wed, 10/16 | Ecosystem Services   * Angel > “Should a Price Be Put on the Goods and Services Provided by the World’s Ecosystems?” * “What is a Tree Worth?” |
| Fri, 10/18 | * Thiele: Chapter 3: Ecological Resilience and Environmental Health |
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| **Week 9** | **Valuing Natural Resources, cont’d** |
| Mon, 10/21 | * Angel > “Is Monetizing Ecosystem Services Essential for Sustainability?” |
| Wed, 10/23 | Catch up and review |
| Fri 10/25 | Exam #2 |
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| **Week 10** | **The Global Commons** |
| Mon, 10/28 | The Precautionary Principle   * Angel > Precautionary principle |
| Wed, 10/30 | The Tragedy of the Commons   * Angel > Hardin “The Tragedy of the Commons” summary |
| Fri, 11/1 | * Thiele: Chapter 2: The Geography of Sustainability |
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| **Week 11** | **The Global Commons, cont’d** |
| Mon, 11/4 | Sustainability and the global commons   * Angel > Our Common Future 1 |
| Wed, 11/6 | Sustainable Development   * Angel > Our Common Future 2 |
| Fri, 11/8 | Critiquing *Our Common Future*   * Angel > Our Common Future 3 |
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| **Week 12** | **The Global Commons, cont’d** |
| Mon, 11/11 | * Angel > Economics and Global Climate Change |
| Wed, 11/13 | * Angel > Agenda 21, selections |
| Fri, 11/15 | * Angel > Princen, “The Politics of Urgent Transition” |
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| **Week 13** | **Technology and Sustainability** |
| Mon, 11/18 | * Thiele: Chapter 4: Technological Solutions and their Challenges |
| Wed, 11/20 | * Angel > “Form and Fungus” |
| Thurs., 11/21 | **12:45pm** 114 Campus Center  Pete Rand (Wild Salmon Center) presents:  “How "sustainable" is that salmon on your dinner plate?”  **4 – 6pm** in Meteorology Observation Lounge in 4th Floor Shineman  Meet the Speaker: Pete Rand of the Wild Salmon Center will meet with students to talk about working for an international non-profit, and answer other questions. Please drop by. |
| Fri, 11/22 | * Angel > “Media Literacy and Sustainability” |
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| **Week 14** |  |
| Mon, 11/25 | * Thiele, Chapter 5: The Political and Legal Challenge |
| Wed, 11/27 | Thanksgiving Break – no class |
| Fri, 11/29 | Thanksgiving Break – no class |
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| **Week 15** |  |
| Mon, 12/2 | * Thiele, Chapter 6: Sustaining Economies |
| Wed, 12/4 | * Thiele, Chapter 7: Culture and Change |
| Fri, 12/6 | Conclusions   * Thiele, Conclusion |
| **Wed, 12/11** | **Final Exam 10:30 – 12:30pm** |
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