

Sustainable Development

Political Science 370

College of Charleston

Spring 2022

Day/Time: ONLINE
Course Website: OAKS

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Course Background

This course is designed as a foundational course for examining the concepts, principles and practices of sustainable development (SD). It focuses on the unsustainability problems of industrial countries (i.e., social disconnection, political fragmentation, aging of populations, sustainable consumption, etc.) as well as developing states and economies in transition (i.e., managing growth, social conflict, pressures of population change, etc.) within a global context. SD is a reformative approach to our current systems, one that attempts to understand problems and solutions through an interconnected, holistic lens that includes dimensions of the environment, economies and society. The focus is on how to achieve continual development—economically and socially while protecting the environment. We will examine the global trajectory of SD, and then how it can be applied effectively at scale. Students will have the opportunity to engage in case study research in applying these concepts and principles to provide specific insight and examples.

Course Format

The Course will be divided into three parts or modules:

Module 1: International Relations in Context – In this module, students will learn the socio-historical trajectory of primary human systems that have generated unsustainability. Students will examine both material and ideational factors while also engage both complexity and systems theories to enhance their understanding of the underlying problems.

Module 2: Intro to SD – In module 2, students will be introduced to the concepts of sustainability and sustainable development. They will examine poverty, environmental threats, and social fragmentation as part of exploring pathways to SD.

Module 3: SDG Case Study – In the module 3, students will engage in an analysis of a SDG and how it intersects with other SDGs in a specific case context. Students will prepare short ppt presentation on their SDG and its interconnections along with a short research paper on their SDG as a case study.

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes

In light of the course format, the goals and learning outcomes of this course are to:

1. Utilize systems and complexity theory to examine the current global problems that have led to poverty, social fragmentation, and environmental destruction.
2. Explore the theoretical literature on sustainable development as both a worldview and normative framework for exploring more sustainable future systems.
3. Utilize this literature to critically analyze ways to address the complex problems, which are largely defined as unsustainable.
4. Understand the interplay between social, environmental and economic aspects of sustainability, and the interrelationship between them.
5. Develop divergent and creative thinking that builds a synthesis of knowledge to promote pragmatic solutions to the problems identified in a SD context.
6. Research and design an in-depth exploratory paper on a salient topic of SD that explores the relationship between climate change and sustainability through a case study.
7. Engage complexity and systems theory to develop strategic ontology for greater insight into the dynamics of modern life and its problems.

CofC Honor Code and Academic Integrity

Lying, cheating, attempted cheating, and plagiarism are violations of our Honor Code that, when identified, are investigated. Each incident will be examined to determine the degree of deception involved.

Incidents where the instructor determines the student's actions are related more to a misunderstanding will be handled by the instructor. A written intervention designed to help prevent the student from repeating the error will be given to the student. The intervention, submitted by form and signed both by the instructor and the student, will be forwarded to the Dean of Students and placed in the student's file.

Cases of suspected academic dishonesty will be reported directly by the instructor and/or others having knowledge of the incident to the Dean of Students. A student found responsible by the Honor Board for academic dishonesty will receive a XF in the course, indicating failure of the course due to academic dishonesty. This grade will appear on the student's transcript for two years after which the student may petition for the X to be expunged. The student may also be placed on disciplinary probation, suspended (temporary removal) or expelled (permanent removal) from the College by the Honor Board.

Students should be aware that unauthorized collaboration--working together without permission-- is a form of cheating. **Unless the instructor specifies that students can work together on an assignment, quiz and/or test, no collaboration during the completion of the assignment is permitted.** Other forms of cheating include possessing or using an unauthorized study aid (which could include accessing information via a cell phone or computer), copying from others' exams, fabricating data, and giving unauthorized assistance.

Research conducted and/or papers written for other classes cannot be used in whole or in part for any assignment in this class without obtaining prior permission from the instructor.

Students can find the complete Honor Code and all related processes in the Student Handbook at: <http://studentaffairs.cofc.edu/honor-system/studenthandbook/index.php>.

Course Materials

All course materials will be found through OAKS course page for *POLI 379 Sustainable Development*.

1. Jeffery Sachs (2015), *The Age of Sustainable Development*, Columbia University Press.
2. United Nations (2019), *The Future is Now: Science for Achieving Sustainable Development*, Department of Social and Economic Affairs (online).
3. United Nations (2016), *Global Sustainable Development Report*, Department of Social and Economic Affairs (online).

Assessment

Grading

The following weight will be given to coursework in the determination of final grades:

Coursework	Value
Exams (2)	60%
SDG Presentation & Data Paper	~20%
Final Research Paper	~30%

Grading Scale: A 94-100; A- 90-93; B+ 87-89; B 83-86; B- 80-82; C+ 77-79; C 73-76; C- 70-72; D 65-69; F >65.

Online Course Format

Format: The course is broken into **3 modules**. Each module will have sub-modules based on topics. Each of these will be organized around readings, resources (e.g. video lectures), and possible chats. Check the “content” section on OAKS for this course for the course materials. At the end of each module, students will engage in an applied assignment to engage the material as a conclusion to the module.

Announcements: Check the “news” section of the course (in OAKS) regularly to ensure that you have the most up to date information. Use this in conjunction with the course schedule to determine important deadlines and required assignments.

Course Materials: All materials will be found on OAKS and videos accessed through the links provided. If you have any issues accessing a link, let me know via email.

Online Exams: This course will involve 2 exams. Both will be online through OAKS. They will be **open-book** exams. They will be timed. So, while it is open-book, you will not have time to simply look everything up. You will have to study. The exams will be comprised of multiple choice questions and one simplistic essay. Finally, these exams will be given during a 1-day window (to accommodate your various schedules); however, once that window closes, any student who hasn't taken the exam will be given an F. There will be no make-ups. First exam will be open **February 10** for the entire day; the second will be open on **March 24**.

Research Paper: The final paper will be due **Sunday, May 1, by Midnight**. Papers will need to be 6-10 pages (single-spaced). Graphs and charts are part of that page limit. Each paper should: i) How SD fits into the larger IR context; ii) provide some research on SDG on a specific case; iii) compile a data section; and iv) some analysis of the SDG in context with a v) conclusion. To guide the paper to completion there will be 3 pre-paper assignments with specific due dates.

Course Schedule

Class	Topic	Readings
	Module 1: IR in Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Complexity Chap 1 - 4 * SD Chap 3 History of Econ Development * SD Chap 2 An Unequal World * SD Chap 4 Countries Developed Faster
		EXAM (Feb 10)
	Module 2: Intro to Sustainable Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Complexity, Chap 10 & 11 * SD Chap 1 Intro to SD * SD Chap 5 Ending Poverty, pp. 139-158 * Global Sustainable Develop Report, Summary * SD Chap 6 Planetary Boundaries * SD Chap 7 Social Inclusion * SD Chap 14 SD Goals
		EXAM (Mar 24)
	Module 3: Case Study on SDG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Choose SDG and Research Q (April 1) * SDG Data Paper (April 8) * Present SDG Presentation (April 15)
	Final Research Project Due: May 1, Midnight	