

WEB DRAFT ONLY! THE DETAILED COURSE OUTLINE WILL BE AVAILABLE ON THE COURSE WEBSITE THE FIRST DAY OF CLASSES – NOTE THAT THE CONTENTS AND REQUIREMENTS MAY BE ADJUSTED BEFORE TERM COMMENCES



*Environment and Resources
Studies*

University of Waterloo

*The Politics of Sustainable
Communities: ERS 253*

WINTER 2013 EV3 4408

Date and Time: Thursdays 12:30-02:20 Office hours: 3:00-4:30Th

The Politics of Sustainable Communities is a course that considers a variety of contemporary issues and challenges focusing on the Region of Waterloo. Topics include local environmental politics, public participation, governance and agency, political accountability, and the quest for a healthy community. You will not be able to interview or survey anyone because you would need to go through a longer research ethics process. Instead, this is a course that emphasizes good secondary research and observational skills.

Through your course work, you will consider the practical application of such concepts as environmental ethics, social justice, participatory democracy, rights vs. responsibilities, and sustainable community development.

This is a self-reflective, experiential course. Your work is not confined to the classroom or computer but will involve going into your community to

I will not be responding to email messages about material already discussed in the syllabus or the course website. Also please read the syllabus thoroughly before you begin the course. University policy requires that official email correspondence is to be addressed to UW userids. Emails from accounts such as Hotmail or Gmail are frequently treated as spam and never reach the recipient.

consider lessons learned from the course material. Ground-truthing and grounded research will be employed to see what emerges from the community itself. Frequently, what you experience in your

Important Note:

This is a blended course using the UW Learn website which means that instruction will be online as well as in the class.

The course requires careful reading of all requirements and material placed on the website including this syllabus. If you are not prepared to read and to actively engage in the class and in the community around you, this is not the course for you.

Users can login to LEARN via:
<http://learn.uwaterloo.ca>

Use your WatIAM/Quest username and password.

community setting will diverge from what theory and literature might tell you. This course is recognized as a PACS Content Course that fulfills requirements in the interdisciplinary Peace and Conflict Studies plan.

The Course Structure is conceptually divided into three parts.

- What is a healthy community? (Design your own perspectives drawing on the course material.)
- What are the barriers and opportunities for getting there (political, social, cultural, economic, bio-physical)?
- What are the strategies for achieving a healthy community and overcoming the barriers?

By the end of this course you will know, understand and explain

- Different perspectives and approaches to achieving sustainable communities and to develop your own perspectives
- Basic political decision-making processes and structures as well as the social, economic and physical factors that influence sustainable communities
- How to develop defensible strategies and approaches to achieving more sustainable communities
- How to contribute actively to your community in an informed, effective manner

Each of the modules contains information about the course and expectations for the week. You should use the website as your primary source of information regarding requirements and expectations for this course.

Course Requirements: See [Appendix 1](#) or the course website for a detailed description of assignment requirements and expectations.

The paper is an edited synthesis and analysis of summaries of readings posted throughout the term	40%
City of Waterloo, Kitchener or Region of Waterloo Council meeting analysis	20%
Working Centre Field Trip (or some other voluntary initiative) drawing on readings from Module 5	15%
Final In-Class Test Date: Thursday, April 4 - Using all the course material including lectures, videos and readings.	25%

*note all assignments are to be submitted through the LEARN drop boxes

Additional Important Information and University Requirements

Plagiarism detection software (Turnitin) will be used to screen assignments on this course. This is being done to verify use of all material and sources in assignments is documented. In the first lecture of the Term, details will be provided about the arrangements for the use of Turnitin. **NOTE:**

Students may request an alternative to Turnitin, which is to prepare an annotated bibliography for each assignment. For advice on how to prepare an annotated bibliography, see: <http://www.lib.sfu.ca/help/writing/annotated-bibliography>

Unclaimed assignments: Unclaimed assignments will be retained until one month after term grades become official in quest. After that time, they will be destroyed in compliance with UW's confidential shredding procedures.

Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/ **Students who are unsure what constitutes an academic offence are requested to visit the on-line tutorial at <http://www.lib.uwaterloo.ca/ait/>**

Note for students with disabilities: The Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD), located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the OPD at the beginning of each academic term.

Religious Observances: Please inform the instructor at the beginning of term if special accommodation needs to be made for religious observances that are not otherwise accounted for in the scheduling of classes and assignments.

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm. When in doubt please contact your Undergraduate Advisor for details.

Discipline (as noted above under 2a): A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offence, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offense, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offenses (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about "rules" for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71, Student Discipline, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm. For typical penalties, check Guidelines for Assessment of Penalties, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/guidelines/penaltyguidelines.htm

Appeals: A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or Policy 71 – (Student Discipline) may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to Policy 72 (Student Appeals) www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm

ABBREVIATED SUMMARY OF COURSE – DRAFT VERSION

Module 1: What is a Sustainable Community?

Weeks one and two: Jan. 10 and Jan. 17

- Course introduction
- Introduction to community sustainability
- What is a community? What is sustainability?
- How can communities become more sustainable?
- What is a healthy Community?

Objectives

- Learn how to conceptualize and define sustainability in the context of local communities
- Learn how to apply sustainability criteria to assess sustainability in a community
- Gain an understanding about some of the initiatives taken locally and internationally to foster sustainability and resilience in local communities
- To gain some comparative understanding about how well local governments and communities are doing with respect to fostering sustainability initiatives

Module 2: Governance and Sustainable Communities

Weeks three and four: Jan. 24 and Jan. 31

- Democracy: a contested concept
- The evolution of local governance
- Avenues of participation in local governance
- Public and private spaces: Speaker's Corner, Gated Communities, Shopping Centres
- Intergovernmental Relations

Objectives

- Understand that there are different definitions of democracy and that there are competing ideas about what this concept should entail and how it should be applied at the local level of governance
- Recognize that democracy and sustainability are mutually dependent
- Learn about the political, structural and institutional barriers to achieving local democracy in Canadian communities
- Consider the degree to which we govern ourselves democratically in Canadian communities

Module 3: Decision-making Institutions

Weeks five and six: Feb. 7 and Feb. 14

- Local public administration and management
- The business of government: finance

Objectives

- Acquire a basic understanding of the structure and function of local governments in Canada
- Understand some of the challenges of effectively administering local governments
- Learn about the role finance and budgeting plays in local governance
- Critically assess the political role played by municipal staff
- Consider who influence and who benefits from local decision-processes
- Become aware of the challenges of holding local governments accountable

Note: No class on Thursday, Feb. 21 (Reading Week)

Module 4: The Physical Environment, Green Infrastructure

Weeks seven and eight: Feb. 28 and Mar. 7

- Planning for a sustainable community
- Environmental challenges
- Urban Agriculture
- Smart Cities
- Smart Grid

Objectives

- Learn about various initiatives to overcome challenges to sustainability
- Consider how 'Smart' initiatives are being used to try to plan more efficient use of physical resources and reduce urban sprawl
- Learn about how some initiatives such as urban agriculture are fostered in order to foster sustainability.

Module 5: Sense of Place and Community capacity-building

Weeks nine and ten: Mar. 14 and Mar. 21

March 14: Field Trip to the Working Centre

Look at the Working Centre's website and the Waterloo School for Community Development.

http://www.theworkingcentre.org/wscd/wscd_main.htmlResources for Learning

Objectives

- Explore how all members of communities have assets to contribute for the collective good
- Understand the relationship between sense of place, green spaces and healthy communities
- Consider some of social and ecological values that have been lost to rapid development
- Contemplate how those values might be restored and fostered in the 21st century
- Think how certain groups are marginalized and excluded from many communities of interest and how that might be turned around

Module 6: Fast ‘Intelligent’ Cities and Information Technology

Week eleven: Mar. 28

- Communities and information technology
- Fast Cities
- Intelligent Waterloo

Objectives

- Understand the differences between Slow and Fast Cities and consider the implications of both for healthy communities
- Consider the implications of the growth of ‘virtual’ online communities and social networking for ‘real’ communities and cities.

Final in-class Test (25%) on Thursday April 4 (see details in “course requirements”)