

**PROPOSAL FOR SERVICE-LEARNING COURSE DESIGNATION APPROVAL**  
Service-Learning (S)

Department: Earth and Planetary Sciences, and Geography

Course Number and Title: GEOG/GEOL 206 – Sustainability: Reducing our impact on planet Earth

Credit Hours: 3

Course Description:

This course is an introduction to theories and practices in sustainability and the rapidly growing field of sustainable, or green living. Students will begin the semester exploring the interrelationships between environmental, social, and economic systems at local, regional, and global scales. Concepts discussed include: populations, global change, energy, agriculture, water, pollution, environmental footprints, and green technologies. Then we will transition to learning about green living and ethical consumption and emphasize reducing the environmental footprint of individuals and cultures. Select topics on green living include: green buildings and sites, livable cities, food, sustainable tourism, green products, and waste and recycling.

Prerequisites: None

Credit Restrictions (*if any*):

Frequency of Course Offering: Spring Semester

Course Capacity per Semester: (*per course & total if multiple sections*) 50

Contact Name, Phone, Email: Mike McKinney [mmckinne@utk.edu](mailto:mmckinne@utk.edu) or Melissa Hinten, 4-5353, [mhinten@utk.edu](mailto:mhinten@utk.edu)

**Service-Learning (S) Standards:** Service-learning is a course-based experiential learning strategy that engages students in meaningful and relevant service with a community partner while employing ongoing reflection to draw connections between the service and course content. When implemented according to the below standards of best practice, service-learning can enhance academic learning, promote civic responsiveness, and strengthen communities. Find information about planning and implementing a service-learning course at UT on the Office of Service-Learning website at <http://servicelearning.utk.edu>.

The “S” designation is intended to identify courses in which service-learning is implemented in accordance with the below standards.

1. *The course includes one or more academic learning outcomes that will be enhanced by the service.<sup>1</sup>*
2. *The course includes one or more civic learning outcomes that will be enhanced by the service.<sup>2</sup>*
3. *The instructor and one or more community partners<sup>3</sup> will collaboratively design a service project or experience that advances the above mentioned student learning outcomes while meeting one or more needs identified by the community partner/s organization.<sup>4</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> Enhanced academic learning refers to the added value the service experience brings to the students’ learning. Generally there are two ways that the integration of service can enhance learning: 1) through complementing more traditional classroom- and book-based pedagogies (e.g. students improving Spanish speaking abilities by serving in a Latino/a community organization), or 2) through enabling learning possibilities precluded in more traditional pedagogies (e.g. the same students learning about Latino/a culture as a complement to their language learning). The instructor should be purposeful to design the service experience and accompanying coursework in a way that enhances the students’ academic learning in one or both of these ways. The instructor should communicate these provisions to the community partner during the planning stage.

<sup>2</sup> Civic learning involves the personalizing of the learning experience in light of the student’s role as a citizen, scholar, or professional. The civic knowledge, skills, values, or propensities to be advanced through the service-learning should be determined by the instructor, and should be reflected in the student learning outcomes and content of the course. Civic learning can range in its level of intensity from a general focus on responsible citizenship (e.g. democratic preparedness or professional ethics) to an emphasis on change-making (e.g. political or social action).

<sup>3</sup> A service-learning community partner can be 1) any nonprofit or public sector organization, agency, or institution, or 2) a private sector business or establishment that is underserved in the traditional market economy. In cases such as university-operated legal or veterinary clinics, the community partner can also be the client.

<sup>4</sup> The service project or experience should 1) clearly contribute to the community partner organization’s ability to fulfill their mission or charge, and 2) clearly advance one or more academic and civic student learning outcomes from the course. The instructor and the community partner should work together to define an appropriate service project or experience in line with these goals. This entails the instructor sharing the anticipated student learning outcomes with the community partner, and the community partner sharing information about the organization’s mission and needs.

4. *The course includes structured reflection upon the service project/experience by the students in light of intended academic and civic learning outcomes.*<sup>5</sup>

What are the academic and civic learning outcome/s that will be enhanced by the service project or experience? See Standards #1 and #2 above.

Academic students learning outcomes that will be enhanced through service-learning projects include:

- *Engage in and explore methods used to analyze sustainability issues and evaluate solutions to those issues*
- *Apply methods to address sustainability issues, and evaluate these methods*

Civic students learning outcomes that will be enhanced through service-learning projects include:

- *Explore the student's role in creating sustainable societies and environments*
- *Develop confidence to engage and communicate with peers about sustainability issues*

How will the department ensure that the course establishes and maintains Standard #3 above? Please describe, if applicable, how the department would address a change of instructor or other potential disruption while maintaining the integrity of this standard.

*The instructor oversees the service learning project to ensure that student learning outcomes are complementary to the community partner's needs.*

*This course is co-taught by faculty from both the Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences and the Department of Geography. The commitment of two academic departments to this course ensures that the service-learning outcomes will be maintained. This course is a requirement for the Sustainability major, which ensures continued support for this course and maintained enrollment numbers.*

*Service-learning projects that will help students attain these outcomes include:*

- *Implementing recycling and composting plans on UTK campus in conjunction with the Office of Sustainability and UT recycling*
- *Practicing sustainable farming methods and exploring problems associated with community food access at Beardsley Community Farm*
- *Explore and engage in sustainable living activities at Narrow Ridge Earth Literacy Center.*
- *Engage in environmental management practices, and explore urban community access to nature and outdoor recreation at Ijams Nature Center.*

The service-learning projects provide students with the opportunities to see explicit change happening in their communities. After engaging in collaborative service-learning projects students will develop confidence to engage and communication with peers. Each student is responsible for the deliverables of project reflections, creating a portfolio, and presenting the service-learning project and portfolio.

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<sup>5</sup> Reflection is the purposeful consideration of the service project or experience by students in light of intended academic and civic learning outcomes. For example, a reflection assignment may include examining some aspect of the service project/experience in light of a theory or framework observed within the discipline. Through ongoing reflection, the service should continually inform the learning and the learning should continually inform the service so that each adds value to the other. Reflection activities can include guided discussion, structured journals, blog entries, oral presentations, or written papers. Reflection questions should be rooted in course content, and should prompt students to consider their roles and responsibilities as citizens, academics, and professionals in a complex and diverse society.

- How will the course utilize structured reflection to prompt students to consider the service project or experience in light of the intended academic and civic learning outcomes?

*Students will develop and maintain a service-learning portfolio throughout the semester. Portfolio items include written reflections, course assignments, journal article reviews all in support of the central service-learning project. Reflection activities are designed to provide students the opportunity to make meaningful connections between service learning experiences and course content. Please see the attached course syllabus and sustainability portfolio instructions for more information.*

- Please attach a representative course syllabus (including course description, prerequisites, clear indication that the course is a Service-Learning course, and course objectives that include academic and civic learning outcomes that will be enhanced by the service). If available, please attach one or more samples of student work produced in conjunction with a service-learning project or experience from this course.

See attached documents of course syllabus, sustainability portfolio instructions, and student samples.

- Courses that receive the “S” designation will become eligible to receive support through the campus’s Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), Experience Learning. Please indicate if the department would like to learn more about support available to this course through the QEP.

The departments supporting this course and the instructors – Drs. Michael McKinney and Melissa Hinten would like to learn more about support available to this course through the QEP.

- Please attach documentation of approval of proposed course changes at the department and college levels, including signatures of approvers at department and/or college levels.

Please e-mail the completed form, syllabus, and other requested materials to Molly Sullivan at [msulli27@utk.edu](mailto:msulli27@utk.edu) as a Microsoft Word or PDF file.

## GEOG/GEOL 206: Sustainability – Reducing our Impact on Planet Earth

T, TH 2:10 – 3:25

Instructor: Michael McKinney  
Office:  
Office Hours: by appointment  
Email: mmckinne@utk.edu

Instructor: Melissa Hinten  
Office: BGB 207  
Office Hours:  
Email: mhinten@utk.edu

**Course Description:** This course is an introduction to theories and practices in sustainability and the rapidly growing field of sustainable, or green, living. Students will begin the semester exploring the interrelationships between environmental, social, and economic systems at local, regional, and global scales. These topics will be discussed in the context of green living and ethical consumption and emphasize reducing the environmental footprint of individuals and cultures. Select topics on green living include: green buildings and sites, livable cities, food, sustainable tourism, green products, and waste and recycling, green politics, and sustainability education and literacy.

This course is designed to foster experiential learning of sustainability concepts and methodologies through service learning projects and reflections, class discussions, assignments and exams.

Student learning outcomes met through the above activities include:

- Explore student's role in a creating sustainable societies and environments.
- Develop confidence to engage and communicate sustainability concepts and methodologies with peers.
- Gain an understanding of social and physical systems and their interrelationships, to predict, access, and analyze the effects of human activities on those systems.
- Explore and critically analyze the environmental, social, and economic dimensions of sustainability.
- Evaluate and reflect on sustainability theories at local, regional, and global scales.
- Engage in and explore methodologies used to research and analyze sustainability issues, and evaluate solutions to sustainability issues.

### Texts:

### Grading:

3 Exams	50%
Service-learning proposal, portfolio, and presentation	30%
Assignments	10%
Quizzes and Attendance	10%

**Grade scale:** A (100-93%), A- (92-90%), B+ (89-87%), B (86-83%), B- (82-80%), C+ (79-77%), C (76-73%) C-(72-70%), D+ (69-67%), D (66-63%), D- (62-60%) and F (< 60%)

**Exams:** Three exams are administered throughout the semester (see **course schedule**), and will assess all concepts associated with in-class discussion and lectures. Concepts assessed can also come from readings, in class assignments and guest lectures. There are **no make-up exams** given, but if you must miss you need to contact us prior to the exam if you have a valid university excuse.

**Assignments:** Most assignments will be completed at home and uploaded to Canvas prior to the due date, we will discuss these assignments in class. Please see the Canvas weekly Modules for assignment due dates. Experiential learning opportunities that arise, like campus lectures, volunteer opportunities, and campus activities may also be included as course assignments, please see the course calendar in Canvas for these opportunities.

**Quizzes and Attendance:** Throughout the semester we may assess your reading and in-class discussion participation with short quizzes or assignments. These assessments may also be used to take attendance. There are **no make-ups** for quizzes or in-class assignments.

**Service-learning:** Service-learning is a form of experiential learning that engages students in activities that address environmental, human, and community needs together with structured opportunities for reflection designed to achieve the student learning outcomes.

**Service-Learning Opportunities:** We will work with you and your group to set up service-learning partnerships at the beginning of the semester. Examples of these partnerships might include on campus recycling, composting (UT Recycling), energy audits, and waste audits (UT Sustainability), and off campus opportunities, such as trail work at nature preserves (Ijams Nature Center), preparing and maintaining community gardens (Beardsley Community Farm), teaching sustainability concepts at an afterschool program (Great Schools Partnership), assisting urban housing construction (Habitat for Humanity)

A minimum of **30 service-hours** needs to be completed this semester, these hours include on-site participation in the service project, meeting with service learning partners, preparing service project presentations, and additionally can include completion of a sustainability research project, or completion of a sustainability workshop or lesson. All service hours will be recorded in a service log sheet, and verified.

### Group work

- Students will work in groups of three to plan and participate in a service-learning project throughout the semester. The service-learning project proposal and presentation will be submitted as a group in Canvas. Other work, such as the service-learning hours log sheet and reflections, will be submitted individually.
- At the beginning of the semester your group will write up a service-learning proposal, discuss the service-learning project with your instructor, and complete the service learning contract.
- Your group will give a 5-minute presentation to the class at the end of the semester over your service-learning project.

### Individual work

- A sustainability portfolio is a compilation of the service-learning work you complete. It is a way to organize and document the service-learning you complete this semester.
- Artifacts to include in your portfolio are: service-learning log, (3) critical reflections, and pictures or other documentation to accompany the log. Each student will turn in his/her own sustainability portfolio at the end of the semester. Please see the rubric for artifacts to include in portfolio.
- Critical reflections will be completed at the beginning, middle, and end of the semester. These reflections (approximately 250 words) are to analyze, reconsider, and question one's service-learning experiences within the broad context of issues and content knowledge we will discuss this semester. Prompts for the reflections will be provided.

**Canvas:** All communication will be conducted via UTK email; announcements and course materials will be posted in Canvas. Most assignments will be posted and turned in via Canvas <https://utk.instructure.com>  
Tentative Course Schedule – this schedule is subject to change; please see the weekly Modules in Canvas for any changes.

Dates	Day	Topics and Activities	Readings	Assignments, etc.
12-Jan	Thursday	What is Sustainability?	Theis and Tomkin, Ch 3	
17-Jan	Tuesday	Introduction to Sustainability: Humanity and Environment	Theis and Tomkin, Ch 3	Top 10 Sustainability Myths (due 1/16 @ 11:59 pm)
19-Jan	Thursday	Sustainability ethics, culture, and history	Theis and Tomkin, Ch 12	
24-Jan	Tuesday	Sustainability ethics, culture, and history	<i>The Gospel of Consumption</i> by Jeffery Kaplan	Read and answer questions over Gospel of Consumption (due 1/23 @ 11:59 pm)
26-Jan	Thursday	The Evolution of Environmental Policy in the U.S.*	Theis and Tomkin, Ch 4	
31-Jan	Tuesday	Environmental Policy Cont., and Service-learning Discussion	Theis and Tomkin, Ch 4	
2-Feb	Thursday	Problem-Solving, Metrics, and Tools for Sustainability	Theis and Tomkin, Ch 11.2	
7-Feb	Tuesday	Environmental Footprints*	Theis and Tomkin, Ch 11.3.2-3	Footprint Calculations (due 2/6 @ 11:59 pm)
9-Feb	Thursday	<b>Exam 1</b>		
14-Feb	Tuesday	Environmental and Resource Economics	Theis and Tomkin, Ch 8	
16-Feb	Thursday	Systems Theory*	Theis and Tomkin, Ch 12.4	
21-Feb	Tuesday	Modern Environmental Waste Management and Guest Speaker from UT Recycling	Theis and Tomkin, Ch 9.1-9.3	Group Project Proposal (Due 2/21 @ 11:59 pm)
23-Feb	Thursday	Household waste: garbage,* recycling, and composting	Theis and Tomkin, Ch 9.1-9.3	
28-Feb	Tuesday	Sustainable foods: organic, vegetarianism, etc.*		
2-Mar	Thursday	Sustainable foods: organic, vegetarianism, etc.	Theis and Tomkin, Ch 11.3.4	Waste Audit (due 3/2 @ 1:00 pm)
7-Mar	Tuesday	Green products certification, and labeling		
9-Mar	Thursday	Cosmetics, cleaning products, clothing etc.,	<i>Sustainability : How the Cosmetics Industry is Greening Up</i> ; Ch 6.	Sustainable Products and Design (due 3/9 @ 1:00 pm)
Mar 13 - 17		<b>Spring Break</b>		
21-Mar	Tuesday	Sustainable Tourism and Service-learning reflection	<i>Ecotourism: The Promise and Perils of Environmentally Oriented Travel</i> by Heather E. Lindsey	Read and answer questions over Ecotourism (due 3/21 @ 1:00 pm)
23-Mar	Thursday	<b>Exam 2</b>		
28-Mar	Tuesday	The Sustainable City and Guest Speaker from City of Knoxville Office of Sustainability	Theis and Tomkin, Ch 13	
30-Mar	Thursday	Green Buildings, Landscapes, and Infrastructure*	Theis and Tomkin, Ch 13	
4-Apr	Tuesday	Sustainable Transportation*		

6-Apr	Thursday	Green Politics and Social Movements*		Green Politics and Social Movements (Due 4/6 @ 1:00 pm)
11-Apr	Tuesday	Sustainability Jobs		
13-Apr	Thursday	Sustainability Education and Literacy		
18-Apr	Tuesday	Campus Sustainability* and Guest Speaker from UT Office of Sustainability		Campus Sustainability (Due 4/18 @ 1:00pm)
20-Apr	Thursday	<b>Exam 3</b>		
25-Apr	Tuesday	Service learning project presentations and peer review		
27-Apr	Thursday	Service learning project presentations and peer review		
4-May	Thursday	<b>Sustainability Portfolio Due @ 11:59pm</b>		

\*Represent days Dr. McKinney will lead lecture

**PROPOSAL FOR SERVICE-LEARNING COURSE DESIGNATION APPROVAL**  
Service-Learning (S)

Department: Philosophy

Course Number and Title: P255 Sustainability Ethics

Credit Hours: 5.0

Course Description:

*Sustainability Ethics* is an *experience learning* course designed to give students the opportunity to learn about the ethical issues involved in the goal of sustainability, by working with local environmentally-oriented change organizations here in the Greater Knoxville area. Each student will be placed alongside a group of other students in a local partner organization, and will be required to commit 4-5 hours per week, outside of normal class-related time, to work with that organization for the period of the course. Experience learning at the community partner organization will be parallel to, and in conjunction with, deep and sustained reflection on both their experiences and the philosophical works on the conceptual and ethical issues raised by the goal of a sustainable culture. The goal of the course will be to contextualize the philosophical material students are exposed to through the experience learning component of the course, enabling students both to better understand the reality of the issues raised by the philosophical literature, as well as to be better able to articulate and defend their own views about sustainability, thus developing a deeper and more thoughtful environmental citizenship.

Prerequisites: None

Credit Restrictions (*if any*): None

Frequency of Course Offering: 1-2 sections per semester

Course Capacity per Semester: (*per course & total if multiple sections*): 25/section; 50/semester

Contact Name, Phone, Email: Clerk Shaw, 974-3255, jshaw15@utk.edu

- What are the academic and civic learning outcome/s that will be enhanced by the service project or experience? See Standards #1 and #2 above.

The experience learning project will engage the students in working with community partners whose purpose is to address issues related to sustainability broadly understood. These projects will be designed to

- i) enhance students understanding of the nature of moral decision-making, by make students aware of the variety of the ethical dimensions of sustainability as they are faced by the community, as well as the difficulties in making changes to the relevant social behaviors,
- ii) deepen and enrich their understanding of course content, by showing them how the moral concepts, principles, and frameworks operate in the community. By engaging in real-world problem solving, students will be forced to draw on the moral theories discussed in class, and to practice the moral thinking skills being taught,
- iii) increase students sense of their own moral identities, by requiring them to interact with community members whose moral views may not match their own, and
- iii) deepen their commitment to making their world a better place, by showing them that, despite the difficulties, there are concrete steps that can be taken to make our practices more sustainable, and that

- How will the department ensure that the course establishes and maintains Standard #3 above? Please describe, if applicable, how the department would address a change of instructor or other potential disruption while maintaining the integrity of this standard.

Each instructor will develop a "Partner Contract" that will establish the expectations relating to Standard

#3. It will require the Instructor to meet with the Community Partner in advance of the semester, so that they can collaborate on the design and implementation of a service project for the students. The “partner contract” will require that the instructor and community partner i) identify a specific need of the community partner, ii) specify the task to be undertaken, iii) the responsibilities of the various stakeholders, and iv) the expected learning outcomes. UT’s Office of Service Learning has forms that can be used as templates. All instructors teaching P256S would be required to complete the form (or a version of it) for EACH community partner they engage (and for each group of students, if the partner is hosting more than one). Additionally, instructors will either use forms available from the Office of Service Learning, or design their own forms, for the evaluation of the students, instructor, and community partner, as a means of both accountability as well as improving the university-community partnership.

- How will the course utilize structured reflection to prompt students to consider the service project or experience in light of the intended academic and civic learning outcomes?

Best practices in service learning clearly indicate that reflection is an essential component of any service learning course. As such, some form of reflection is a requirement for any section of P256S, just as with the minimum word count or oral communication requirements for the WC and OC courses in the General Education curriculum. In this class, the instructor will be using a combination of structured and unstructured reflection activities beginning even before the students have their first meeting with their community partner, and continuing throughout the semester. Assignment prompts will increasingly require integration of personal reflection on the students’ experiences in their service activities with the course material, from considering how the community partner is defining ‘sustainability’ to the ways in which moral values are reflected in their project, to (potentially) a critique of some aspect of the community partner’s mission or project.

Example #1: In talking with the members of your Community Partner, identify the central problem they are attempting to solve. What are the moral issues raised by that problem? How does that problem link to the material we have considered so far in the class?

Example #2: In the documentary “Green Fire” one of the ranchers who follows Leopold’s Land Ethic says that solving land use problems “always comes down to the people”. How does your community partner foster relationships with the broader community to support their goals?

- Please attach a representative course syllabus (including course description, prerequisites, clear indication that the course is a Service-Learning course, and course objectives that include academic and civic learning outcomes that will be enhanced by the service). If available, please attach one or more samples of student work produced in conjunction with a service-learning project or experience from this course.

A sample syllabus is attached. This is a new course, to be piloted in the Spring 2017 semester under the P200: Special Topics heading. The syllabus attached has been modified to reflect the actual course number/title, but some material still refers to the Spring 2017 version of the course.

- Courses that receive the “S” designation will become eligible to receive support through the campus’s Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), Experience Learning. Please indicate if the department would like to learn more about support available to this course through the QEP.

The department would be interested in learning more about what support is available through the QEP.

- Please attach documentation of approval of proposed course changes at the department

and college levels, including signatures of approvers at department and/or college levels.

Please e-mail the completed form, syllabus, and other requested materials to Molly Sullivan at [msulli27@utk.edu](mailto:msulli27@utk.edu) as a Microsoft Word or PDF file.



**COURSE SYLLABUS**  
**Philosophy 255S:**  
**Sustainability Ethics**  
**FALL 2017**

**Course Section:**

**Time and Place:**

**Course Credit Hours:            5.0**

**I. FACULTY CONTACT INFORMATION**

<b>Professor</b>	Matthew Pamental	<b>E-mail (best contact)</b>	pamental@utk.edu
<b>Office</b>	809A McClung Tower	<b>Office Phone</b>	974-7183 (no voicemail)
<b>Office Hours</b>	Tuesday/Thursday 11-12 and by appointment	<b>Philosophy Office Phone</b>	974-3255 (to leave a message in my snail-mailbox)

**II. TEXTS**

All Texts are REQUIRED, but used copies are fine:

1. Charles J. Kibert, Martha C. Monroe, Anna L. Peterson, Richard R. Plate, and Leslie Paul Thiele. Working Toward Sustainability: Ethical Decision-Making in a Technological World (Wiley, 2011). ISBN 978-0-470-53972-9. Also available as an ebook for Kindle, Nook, Kobo, and other e-readers or on apps for your smartphone or tablet.
2. Paul Thompson. The Agrarian Vision. (University Press of Kentucky, 2010). ISBN 978-0-813-13980-7. Also available as an ebook for Kindle, Nook, and Kobo e-readers.
3. A.P. Martinich. Philosophical Writing: An Introduction, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Wiley, 2016). ISBN 978-1-119-01003-6. Also available as an ebook for Kindle, Nook, and Kobo e-readers.

COURSE WEBSITE: Blackboard (<https://bblearn.utk.edu>)

The course will be thoroughly integrated with Blackboard, so familiarize yourself with the site as soon as you can. Questions about the location of any course materials can be directed to the Logistics discussion board. Please check this syllabus and the discussion boards for answers to your questions before emailing me directly.

**\*\*Other readings will be announced and distributed via Blackboard as necessary. See the**

**schedule for additional texts in the syllabus, and check the announcements regularly!!!\*\***

### III. COURSE DESCRIPTION AND VALUE STATEMENT

COURSE DESCRIPTION: *Sustainability Ethics* is an *experience learning* course designed to give students the opportunity to learn about the ethical issues involved in the goal of sustainability, by working with local environmentally-oriented change organizations here in the Greater Knoxville area. Each student will be placed alongside a group of other students in a local partner organization, and will be required to commit 4-5 hours per week, outside of normal class-related time, to work with that organization for the period of the course. Experience learning at the community partner organization will be parallel to, and in conjunction with, deep and sustained reflection on both their experiences and the philosophical works on the conceptual and ethical issues raised by the goal of a sustainable culture. The goal of the course will be to contextualize the philosophical material students are exposed to through the experience learning component of the course, enabling students both to better understand the reality of the issues raised by the philosophical literature, as well as to be better able to articulate and defend their own views about sustainability, thus developing a richer, more thoughtful, more engaged environmental citizenship.

*Note for Philosophy Majors and those interested in pursuing philosophy, from the Philosophy Department Undergraduate Advisor:*

Please visit the Philosophy Department's UT website ([philosophy.utk.edu](http://philosophy.utk.edu)), Facebook site, and Blackboard site ([online.utk.edu](http://online.utk.edu); access limited to current majors) for a variety of resources helpful to those studying Philosophy as well as information about our degree programs (including two new major concentrations: Legal & Political Philosophy, Philosophy of Science & Medicine) and other opportunities for undergraduates—including our scholarships, annual essay contest, and Philosophy Club.

VALUE PROPOSITION: Philosophical examination of sustainability ethics has several practical benefits. Aristotle said it best when he said that we all seek happiness. EVERYONE will be confronted with many of the problems we discuss in this class. Having thought deeply about these issues in an academic setting will enable you to approach those problems in a richer, more meaningful way. Second, as environmental issues are likely to be the most significant moral challenges of your life, the class can put you on the road to a responsible environmental citizenship. Third, your experiences with your host organization will both reinforce and deepen your understanding of class material, as well as sharpening your ability to make use of that understanding in real-world situations. Finally, recent studies show that students with backgrounds in philosophy are among the top scorers in all of the graduate entrance exams. Being able to THINK clearly and logically about things is an advantage in both your personal and professional lives. ALL of these advantages are connected to living a happy life (something for which I will argue during the course).

### IV. COURSE GOALS AND STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

COURSE GOALS: The goal of this course is to make students into better moral thinkers and citizens, with specific reference to issues in sustainability and ethics. To do so, it aims to familiarize students with the various components of moral thinking. This includes developing familiarity with the basics of critical thinking, the elements of ethical thinking (including classical and contemporary ethical

## P256 Sustainability Ethics Syllabus

theories). It also includes developing an understanding of some of the central concerns about sustainability raised by our current way of living. Finally, it involves practicing applying all of the above to the solution of specific moral dilemmas, practicing moral thinking both individually through both formal and informal written assignments and collectively through classroom discussion.

**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:** By the end of the course, students should be able to demonstrate:

1. familiarity with the basic elements of philosophy and logic
2. familiarity with a number of ethical frameworks, including both general ethical theories and more specifically environmental ethical theories
3. the ability to articulate and defend their moral views in both writing and discussion.
4. an improved awareness of sustainability as a complex set of interconnected problems, and of the ways in which communities are attempting to grapple with those issues
5. the ability to see the connections between moral theory and moral practice.
6. the ability to use online web resources (Blackboard, email, library and other search engines) to complete assignments
7. an understanding of the relevance and application of developments in the natural and social sciences to moral reasoning about sustainability ethics.
8. an appreciation for moral views other than their own and a reflective attitude toward their own decisions and actions.

## V. GRADES

Grades will be determined based on the following assignments:

Exam	150 points
Paper 1	100 points
Paper 2	200 points
Group Service Project	200 points
Reflection Journal	200 points
<u>Participation</u>	<u>150 points</u>
Total: 1000 points	

- **Midterm Exam:** The midterm will test your knowledge of the basics of philosophy, the concept of sustainability, and the four basic ethical frameworks. The exam will ensure that we are all on the same page when we move on to explore different problems of sustainability and their potential solutions. The exam will take place
- **Paper 1:** The first paper will ask you to summarize your conception of “sustainability” explaining not only *what it means*, but also *why you chose that definition* (i.e., what advantages does your view have over other possible definitions). Papers should be approximately 4-5 pages (1250 words) long, typed, double-spaced, and in a 12-point font, with names and page numbers in the document header. Papers will be due during the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of classes.
- **Paper 2:** The second paper will ask you to take a stand, based on a sustainability ethic of your choice, on one of the main issues in sustainability, for example food&agriculture, consumption, energy, climate change, or species/habitat preservation. Papers should be approximately 5-7 pages (~1500 words) long, typed, double-spaced, and in a 12-point font,

with names and page numbers in the document header. Papers will be due during exam week at the end of the semester.

- **Group Projects:** In the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of class, you will be placed with 3-4 of your classmates with a pre-selected host organization (you will have some choice) in the Knoxville community (e.g., Ijams Nature Center or Beardsley Community Farm). Each week you will work with your host organization for 3-5 service hours on a project relating to sustainability and ethics. At the end of the semester you will prepare a report and presentation on your project to be submitted to the host organization and given in class. The presentation will summarize the problem your host organization is attempting to solve (how it evolved, the empirical nature of the problem, and what you did), connecting that problem to the normative issues we have dealt with in class. Individual work on the project will be evaluated both by group as well as the instructor, so keep a good record of what you and your group members each have done as you go along. Presentations will be given during the final two weeks of class (see the Course Schedule).
- **Reflection Journals:** Regularly (on average once per week) over the course of the semester, you will be asked to reflect on your experiences with your host organization, considering some aspect of what you/your group were doing, the problem you were addressing, how things went, and so on, and/or relating those experiences back to course materials. Journals will be completed on-line using Blackboard's Journal page. Journals are an informal form of writing, but they will be structured by specific questions that will be laid out in the assignment. Late assignments will be allowed, subject to my late policy.
- **Participation:** Participation in course activities is essential to learning to do philosophy and to get the most out of the class. Individual Participation will be graded on two elements: attendance and discussion, each of which should be EASY to complete, so that your participation grade is meant to be an easy "A".
  - a. Attendance is thus necessary but not sufficient for a good participation grade. I give 2 "free" absences, after which a student will have to provide me with a documented, legitimate reason for missing class, or else their participation grade will drop by 1/3 of a letter grade (6 points) per absence.
  - b. Discussion/Participation: To truly learn anything, let alone philosophy, you need to discuss it. Speaking your thoughts aloud helps you to understand what you actually think, subjects you to the scrutiny of your peers and the standards of rational discussion (and it allows me to gauge class understanding). So, to get a good Participation grade, you'll need to be prepared to speak in class. Be ready to ask questions, answer questions, pose problems, come up with examples or counter-examples to problems, and the like. This is the more subjective of the participation elements, but my bar is set low, so even asking good questions is enough to get you minimum credit for a day's Participation. In general, to get an 'A' for participation, you need to be both present AND discuss nearly every day. The more days you're present but don't speak, the lower your grade will be.

## VI. CLASS EXPECTATIONS

Like any college course, much of your learning will take place outside of the classroom—in your readings and writing assignments, as well as your service learning project. Often even short reading assignments can take an hour or more to complete thoroughly, so you should expect to spend more time outside of class than you do inside the classroom on this course (I would budget 2 hours outside for every 1 hour inside—so given that we meet for 2.5 hours per week, you should expect to spend at least

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5 hours/week on reading, writing, and thinking about our class. In general,

Students are expected to:

1. Be prepared for class by having read assigned materials thoroughly and critically, bringing all necessary materials, and completing the assigned preparation work for the day
2. Check your UT email & Blackboard regularly for announcements.
3. Be familiar with the Blackboard site and ask questions as necessary to complete your work
4. Complete all assignments and tasks by the assigned deadlines.
5. Come to class ready to engage in the discussion.
6. Represent the University to the highest standards of responsibility you can when interacting with your host organization and/or the public.

As the instructor, I am expected to:

1. Be fully prepared for class
2. Communicate about any changes to the syllabus, assignments, or class in a timely manner
3. Respond to student calls or emails within 48 hours.
4. Provide constructive feedback on assignments within 14 days of their submission.
5. Act as a liaison between you and the host organization, helping you to embed with that organization and assisting with any difficulties you may encounter in fulfilling your service project.

## VII. UNIVERSITY AND COURSE POLICIES

**Attendance and Late Work:** According to the Undergraduate Catalog, “Academic success is built upon regular class attendance. At the University of Tennessee, students are expected to attend all of their scheduled classes.” With or without documentation, students are allowed up to 2 'free' absences, for which no excuse is necessary. Beginning with the 3rd absence, each unexcused absence will result in a penalty on their participation grade. All exams and assignments are due on the date listed on Blackboard and the assignment sheet. It is the student's responsibility to notify the instructor when they know they will or have missed an assignment, and to provide the necessary documentation. Missed exams with an excuse can be made up, but the makeup may be more difficult than the original. Unexcused late assignments will be accepted up to 48 hours following the due date and penalized 25% of their point value. After 48 hours, assignments will not be accepted.

**Disabilities:** “Any student who feels he or she may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 865-974-6087 in 2227 Dunford Hall to document their eligibility for services. ODS will work with students and faculty to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.” (<http://ods.utk.edu>)

**Civility:** “Civility is genuine respect and regard for others: politeness, consideration, tact, good manners, graciousness, cordiality, affability, amiability and courteousness. Civility enhances academic freedom and integrity, and is a prerequisite to the free exchange of ideas and knowledge in the learning community. Our community consists of students, faculty, staff, alumni, and campus visitors. Community members affect each other’s well-being and have a shared interest in creating and sustaining an environment where all community members and their points of view are valued and respected. Affirming the value of each member of the university community, the campus asks that all

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its members adhere to the principles of civility and community adopted by the campus:  
<http://civility.utk.edu/>.”

**Integrity:** “An essential feature of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville is a commitment to maintaining an atmosphere of intellectual integrity and academic honesty. As a student of the university, I pledge that I will neither knowingly give nor receive any inappropriate assistance in academic work, thus affirming my own personal commitment to honor and integrity.” (Hilltopics 2015-2016, p. 73. Available online at <http://dos.utk.edu/files/Hilltopics2015-16.pdf> )

### VIII. IMPORTANT DATES

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (no classes)	January 16
Last Day to Add, Change, or Drop Classes without a “W”	???
Spring Break (no classes)	March 13-17
Spring Recess	April 14
Last Day to Drop Course with a “W”	???
Last Day of Classes	April 28
Study Day	May 1
Final Exams	May 2-5,8-9

THE INSTRUCTOR RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REVISE, ALTER AND/OR AMEND THIS SYLLABUS, AS NECESSARY. STUDENTS WILL BE NOTIFIED IN PERSON, ON BLACKBOARD AND/OR BY EMAIL OF ANY SUCH REVISIONS, ALTERATIONS AND/OR AMENDMENTS.