

**Instructor:** Nick Babin, Ph.D. ([nbabin@sierranevada.edu](mailto:nbabin@sierranevada.edu)), Phone: 775-831-1314 x7423

**Office Hours:** T, W 2-4:00pm; other times by appointment, PL 205 (Library Mezzanine)

**Class Times:** Tuesdays 10am-12:45pm, TCES 206 (Course CRN 80282)

### Course Catalog Description:

The term “sustainable” is being used all over our media, but what does it really mean? The most widely accepted definition states that sustainability meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. This course is an overview of the environmental, economic, and social issues we have around the world and the challenges, opportunities and solutions we have available to us to improve our lives and move our food, water and energy systems towards sustainability.

**Course Goals:** At the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Use social and natural sciences to understand societal resource concerns and environmental issues.
  - Understand the links between human population, resource consumption and the environment.
  - Understand the links between ecosystems, agriculture, energy, pollution and climate.
  - Effectively communicate and interpret environmental issues through a scientific lens.
- Apply questions about stewardship and sustainability to your personal lives.
  - Develop a deeper understanding of the sustainability of earth’s natural resources.
  - Evaluate consumption choices in light of a scientific and ethical understanding of the environment, human resource issues and sustainability.

### Texts:

There is one required text: Caradonna, J. L. (2014). *Sustainability: A history*. Oxford University Press.

Other required readings will be made available on the course Moodle site.

### Course Organization, Evaluation Methods and Grading:

Class-time will be divided into lectures, discussions, films, group work, field trips and activities. There will be a total of 1000 points allocated from the following evaluation methods:

Mid-term examination	200
Earth autobiography	150
Home sustainability assessment	300
In-class assignments/ projects	170
Reading responses/ participation	180
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1000</b>

93 – 100	A	73 – 76	C
90 – 92	A-	70 – 72	C-
87 – 89	B+	67 – 69	D+
83 – 86	B	63 – 66	D
80 – 82	B-	60 – 62	D-
77 – 79	C+	59 or ↓	F

### Evaluation Methods Explained:

Mid-term examination (200 points): The exam will feature essay questions. Content will come from lectures, field trips, class discussions as well as the assigned readings. One page front only (8.5 by 11) of hand written notes will be allowed.

Earth autobiography (150 points): 6-page, double spaced reflective essay.

Home sustainability assessment (300 points): In this final research report and presentation, you will become an informed and persuasive voice related to the policy and practice of food, water and/ or energy sustainability and conduct a resource sustainability assessment of your home.

In-class assignments/ projects (170 points): In-class assignments and projects should be neatly written or typed.

Reading responses/ participation (180 points)

In order to prepare for our discussion of the assigned readings a minimum 1 page (12 point font, double spaced) written analytical response is due for each class meeting with a required reading (9 total). The response is due on Moodle by 11:55 pm on the Sunday before the assigned reading is discussed. These analytical responses are not meant to be comprehensive but should point out the more important ideas/ themes/ questions that arise in the reading. The weekly response consists of three elements:

- (1) Summary: Briefly identify and summarize the key arguments or main points of the day's assigned readings. Ask yourself what each author is trying to convince you of and how. It is not meant to be exhaustive: pick out one or two of the more important key arguments or main points, and briefly explain them.
- (2) Integration: Pick one or two ways in which the authors' arguments relate to in-class discussions, lectures, field trips, personal experiences, current events or concepts and ideas from other courses, and elaborate on these connections. How, for example, do the day's readings challenge complement, complicate or in some other way relate to other readings, in-class discussions or extra-class materials? Look for points of similarity or difference, and generate connections, contrasts or comparisons between them.
- (3) Questions/Reactions: This is a crucial component of the response. **Identify at least 3 questions or reactions the readings instigate in you that we can discuss in class.** Think of discussion questions that you would like to explore as a group. Also, if you are having difficulties with a particular reading assignment, this is the place to put your specific questions about which parts did not make sense. In addition, this is the section in which you can raise objections (to content, style, politics, methods, etc.), agreement, praise, or any other reactions you have to a reading. Feel free to add unconventional insights and controversial opinions as they will help make for a spirited discussion. The following are some example prompts for this section:
  - a. I disagree/agree with the following part of the reading because:
  - b. The author is missing something:
  - c. How would (another reader, someone from discipline x) respond?
  - d. This reading reminds me of (personal experience, current events, history, etc.)
  - e. This reading challenged me to think about the following in a new way
  - f. My emotional reaction to this reading is:

You will be expected to share components of your responses during Tuesday class discussions. Each response is worth 20 points. Responses will be graded according to the conciseness and preciseness of your summary, the insightfulness of your integration, the quality of your questions/ reactions, and the level of your participation in associated class discussions. **Late responses will be penalized at 20% per-day.**

**All other late assignments will be penalized at 10% per-day.**

**Course Moodle:** The course Moodle will be used to turn in your responses, post announcements, course materials, presentations, assignments, some readings, etc.

**Sanctions for Cheating and/or Plagiarism:**

The Honor Code The faculty of SNC believes students must be held to high standards of integrity in all aspects of college life in order to promote the educational mission of the College and to encourage respect for the rights of others. Each student brings to the SNC community unique skills, talents, values and experiences which, when expressed within the community, contribute to the quality of the educational environment and the growth and development of the individual. Students share with members of the faculty, administration and staff the responsibility for creating and maintaining an environment conducive to learning and personal development, where actions are guided by mutual respect, integrity, responsibility and trust. The faculty and students alike must make diligent efforts to ensure high standards are upheld by their colleagues and peers as well as themselves. Therefore faculty and students accept responsibility for maintaining these standards at Sierra Nevada College and are obligated to comply with its regulations and procedures, which they are expected to read and understand.

**Consequences of Violating the Student Honor Code:**

SNC students and faculty share the responsibility for maintaining an environment of academic honesty. Thus, all are responsible for knowing and abiding by the SNC Faculty/Student Honor Code published in the current SNC Catalog. Faculty are responsible for presenting the Honor Code and the consequences of violating it to students at the start of their classes AND for reporting all incidences of academic dishonesty to the Provost. Students are responsible for knowing what constitutes CHEATING, PLAGIARISM and FABRICATION and for refraining from these and other forms of academic dishonesty. Violations of the Honor Code become part of a student's academic record.

1st Offense: Student receives a zero for assignment/exam and counseling with faculty on the honor code, consequences for violating the honor code, and the value of academic honesty in learning.

2nd Offense: Student fails course and receives counseling with faculty on the honor code, consequences for violating the honor code, and the value of academic honesty in learning.

3rd Offense: Student is expelled.

**Academic Integrity:**

Definition of Plagiarism: In an instructional setting, plagiarism occurs when a person presents or turns in work that includes someone else's ideas, language, or other (not common-knowledge) material without giving appropriate credit to the source. Plagiarism will not be tolerated and may result in failing this course, and may also result in further consequences.

Academic dishonesty A student violates academic integrity when he or she claims credit for any work not his or her own (*words, ideas, answers, data, program codes, music, etc.*) or when a student misrepresents any academic performance. Work deemed a product of academic dishonesty will receive a zero and points equivalent to the value of the assignment will be subtracted from those already earned in the course.

**Attendance and absences:**

Excused absences are allowed only in cases of SNC athletics, documented illness, approved College events, job or graduate school interviews and serious family emergency. Each unexcused absence in excess of two for the semester will result in a final grade reduction of 5 percentage points.

Because this class meets only once a week and some of the class activities and assignments are especially difficult to makeup, your instructor requests that excused absences be avoided. If you must miss class for an excused reason you will not be penalized for assignments missed, however, you will still be held responsible for completing them and learning the material covered during your absence.

**Athletics Excused Absences:**

The Athletic Director notifies faculty members of student athletes with excused absences for training and competition. This email excuses the student athlete from class attendance, but not from doing the assigned work. It is the student athlete's responsibility to meet with me prior to the excused absence for missed work and/or alternate assignments. If a student athlete fails to meet with me prior to the absence, make-up work is not available.

**ADA Accommodations:**

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, students with a documented disability are eligible for support services and accommodations. If a student wishes to request an accommodation, please contact the Director of Academic Support Services, Henry Conover, at (775) 831-1314 x7534, [hconover@sierranevada.edu](mailto:hconover@sierranevada.edu) or go to the OASIS offices on the third floor of Prim Library within the first week of the semester.

**The SNC Email System:**

The SNC email system is the official communication vehicle among students, faculty members and administrative staff and is designed to protect the confidentiality of student information as required by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 Act (FERPA). Students should check their college email accounts daily during the school year. Students have a right to forward their SNC e-mail to another e-mail account (for example, @hotmail or @gmail). However, confidentiality of student information protected by FERPA cannot be guaranteed for SNC e-mail forwarded to an outside vendor. Having email redirected does not absolve a student from the responsibilities associated with official communication sent to his or her SNC email account.

**The Mission Statement:**

Sierra Nevada College graduates will be educated to be scholars of and contributors to a sustainable world. Sierra Nevada College combines the liberal arts and professional preparedness through an interdisciplinary curriculum that emphasizes entrepreneurial thinking and environmental, social, economic and educational sustainability.

**The Core Themes:**

Liberal Arts  
Professional Preparedness  
Entrepreneurial Thinking  
Sustainability

<i>Fall 2017 Schedule*</i>			
Week	Date	Topic <i>(ASSIGNMENTS DUE)</i>	Required Readings Recommended Readings
1	22-Aug	Course Overview and Introductions	None
2	29-Aug	Systems and Sustainability <i>(RR1)</i>	CD Intro, Ch. 1
3	5-Sep	Energy Systems: Field Trip Frank A. Tracy Power Plant, Reno	None
4	12-Sep	Human Population <i>(RR2)</i>	CD Ch. 2
5	19-Sep	Consumption <i>(RR3)</i>	CD Ch. 3
6	26-Sep	Climate Change <i>(RR4) (EARTH AUTOBIOGRAPHY)</i>	IPCC 2014
7	3-Oct	Economics and Sustainability <i>(RR5)</i>	CD Ch. 4
8	10-Oct	Waste Systems: Field Trip Cabin Creek MRF	None
9	17-Oct	MIDTERM	None
10	24-Oct	Food Systems: Industrial and Ecological <i>(RR6)</i>	Gliessman, Pollan
11	31-Oct	Food Systems Field Work	None
12	7-Nov	Water Systems: Field Trip IVGID Wastewater Treatment Plant <i>(RR7)</i>	CD Ch. 5
13	14-Nov	Policy and Sustainability <i>(RR8)</i>	CD Ch. 6
14	21-Nov	THANKSGIVING BREAK NO CLASS	
15	28-Nov	Social Sustainability <i>(RR9) (HOME ASSESSMENT GROUP 1)</i>	CD Ch. 7
16	5-Dec	Course Wrap up <i>(HOME ASSESSMENT GROUP 2)</i>	None
17		FINAL EXAM WEEK	

\* Schedule is tentative. Any updates will be announced in class and on Moodle at least 1 week prior to scheduled change.