RESECON 499C and 499D
SUSTAINABILITY IN TODAY'S ECONOMY
Department of Resource Economics

Fall 2018/Spring 2019
HONORS THESIS SEMINAR
Commonwealth Honors College

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Objectives:

(1) Familiarize students with issues related to sustainability and their impact on individuals, communities, and organizations

(2) Equip students with economic decision-making tools to evaluate sustainability projects

(3) Provide an environment for conducting independent research while engaging with peers from other disciplines

(4) Develop skills in self, peer, and group assessments

(5) Develop skills in information searching and retrieval using library and public domain sources

Overall Guidance for Your Honors Thesis

Students will work with the course instructor to define a research question related to sustainability and develop a research proposal in the fall semester. At the end of the spring semester students are expected to complete their Honors Thesis and submit their manuscripts to the Commonwealth Honors College. A thesis manuscript is typically 35-50 pages in length. Formatting requirements can be found at: https://www.honors.umass.edu/capstone/formatting. For additional guidance on the Honors Thesis see: https://www.honors.umass.edu/capstone-experience.

Course Text and Readings

Required textbook:

*Booth, W. C., Colomb, G. G., Williams, J. M., Bizup, J. & Williams, T.F. (2016). The Craft of Research (4th Edition). University of Chicago Press.

Optional references:

*Boardman, A.E., Greenberg,D.H., Vining, A.R., & Weimer, D.L. (2011). Cost-Benefit Analysis: Concepts and Practice (4th Edition). Pearson Education, Inc.

*Stiglitz, Joseph E. (1999).Economics of the Public Sector (3rd Edition). W.W. Norton&Co.

*Robertson, Margaret. (2017). Sustainability Principles and Practice (2nd Edition). Routledge.

Additional readings will be posted on the course website.

Absences and Late Work

Please provide documentation when asking for accommodation for missed classwork due to absence. Late work will be accepted with a penalty of 5% for every day past the deadline, up to one week. Homework submitted one week after the due date will not be accepted. This policy does not apply to the final Thesis Proposal and Thesis Manuscript, which must be submitted by the due date.

Academic Honesty Policy

Honesty and integrity are fundamental to good academic work. It is expected that the work you present will be your own and that of your group (if applicable). Violations will be pursued to the fullest extent possible under the procedures outlined in your *Undergraduate Rights and Responsibilities Handbook*:
http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/codeofconduct/.

Accommodation Policy

The University of Massachusetts Amherst is committed to providing an equal educational opportunity for all students. If you have a documented physical, psychological, or learning disability on file with Disability Services, you may be eligible for reasonable academic accommodations to help you succeed in this course. If you have a documented disability that requires an accommodation, please notify the Honors Professor within the first two weeks of the semester so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

RESECON 499C Fall 2018

Lecture: M, W 2:30-3:45 PM (202 Holdsworth Hall)
Course Website: Available on Moodle

Requirements

1. Submission of Honors Thesis proposal
2. Engagement in the campus discussion of sustainability through attending academic seminars and public lectures on related topics. The requirement is to attend two seminars and give a presentation in class for each seminar attended. [1]
3. Participation in class/group discussions and peer assessment activities

Grading

The final grade for RES-ECON 499C will be calculated as follows:
Thesis Proposal – 50%
Section drafts – 20%, Final proposal – 25%, Presentation – 5%
Class Presentations – 20%
Class Participation – 20% (attendance, participation in class discussions)
Homework and Exercises – 10%

Final grades will be on a numeric scale. Students scoring 93% to 100% will receive an A, scores between 90% and 92.9% will receive an A-, 87-89.9% = B+, 83-86.9% =B, 80-82.9%=B- and so on.

Important Dates for Fall 2018

Sep 7 - Last day to add or drop any class with no record
Oct 8 - Columbus Day holiday
Oct 9 - Monday schedule
Oct 15 - Last day to drop with 'DR'
Nov 12 - Veterans' Day holiday
Nov 14 - Monday shedule
Nov 18-25 - Thanksgiving recess
Dec 12 - Last day of classes
Jan 2 – Final grades due by Noon

Lecture Topics and Readings. * Required Reading

(Refer to Moodle for up-to-date class information and lecture schedule.)

1. Defining and Measuring Sustainability

Sustainability Principles and Practice Chapter 1
Sightline Institute. 2007. Cascadia Scorecard. Sightline Institute, Seattle, WA
**Kates, RW, Parris, TM, Leiserowitz, AA. 2005. What is Sustainable Development? Goals, Indicators, Values, and Practice. Environment: Science and Policy for Sustainable Development, Volume 47, Number 3, pages 8–21*

[1] A list of seminars will be available on the course website. In order to count toward the course requirement, you must attend a UMass or Five College-sponsored event. In addition, you should schedule a presentation date with the course instructor within a week of the event date.

2. History of Sustainability and Environmental Regulation
Sustainability Principles and Practice Chapter 2
**Silent Spring Chapters I.1-2 and II.*

3. Biosphere and the Human Impact
Sustainability Principles and Practice Chapter 3
**Silent Spring Chapters I.1-2 and II.*

4. Corporate Social Responsibility
**Corporate Social Responsibility Strategy. 2017. Available from the Sustainability Watch database through the UMass library website.*
**Triple Bottom Line. 2016. Available from the Sustainability Watch database through the UMass library website.*
**Friedman, Milton. The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase Its Profits*
The New York Times Magazine, September 13, 1970

5. Environmental Policy and Role of the Government
Review of Market Efficiency and Market Failure
Stiglitz, Chapters 3,4
Externalities and Public Goods
Stiglitz, Chapter 9
**Database for State Incentives for Renewable Energy available at WWW.DSIREUSA.ORG*
**"The Global Warming Wildcard" by Varun Sivaram. Scientific American May 2017*

Cost-Benefit Analysis as a Framework for Decision Making

6. Introduction to Cost-Benefit Analysis
Boardman et al., Chapter 1.
Stiglitz, Chapter 11
**Atkinson, G., & Mourato, S. (2008). Environmental cost-benefit analysis. Annual Review of Environment and Resources, 33, 317-344.*

7. Valuation Methods 1
Boardman et al., Chapter 14
Stiglitz, Chapter 11

8. Valuation Methods 2
Boardman et al., Chapters 14,15
**Haninger, K., Ma, L., & Timmins, C. (2017). The value of brownfield remediation. Journal of the Association of Environmental and Resource Economists, 4(1), 197-241.*
**Archsmith, J., Heyes, A., & Saberian, S. (2018). Air quality and error quantity: Pollution and performance in a high-skilled, quality-focused occupation. Journal of the Association of Environmental and Resource Economists, 5(4), 827-863.*
**Loomis, J., Kent, P., Strange, L., Fausch, K., & Covich, A. (2000). Measuring the total economic value of restoring ecosystem services in an impaired river basin: results from a contingent valuation survey. Ecological Economics, 33(1), 103-117.*