

Course website: [Moodle](#)

Units: 3

Prerequisites: RES EC 102/ECON 103

Instructor: Jamie Mullins

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 10am-11:15am

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This course and many of the associated materials are adaptations from courses taught by Jeffery Sachs of Columbia University, Shanthi Manian of Washington State University, and Prashant Bharadwaj of the University of California San Diego. I am grateful to each for their work in developing their course materials and to the others on whom each of these three relied upon.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces students to a holistic framework for understanding the relationships between global inequality, economic development, and environmental degradation. A range of practical pathways toward more sustainable global development are discussed and evaluated from economic, societal, and environmental perspectives. Topics include: the development gap; climate change; food security; population growth and distribution; approaches to addressing extreme poverty; biodiversity and ecosystem services; health, education, agriculture, and political institutions in the context of economic development; global carrying capacity and environmental load.

LECTURES AND ATTENDANCE POLICY

Pre-recorded lectures and associated materials will be posted twice weekly, loosely mirroring the schedule for the course had it been in person.

You are still strongly encouraged to take notes by hand as this helps with maintaining attention and internalizing the communicated material.

Viewing of posted materials will be monitored, and your level of engagement may be factored into your final grade.

TEXTBOOK

The Age of Sustainable Development. Jeffery Sachs, 2015. Available [via Amazon](#).

In addition to the textbooks, supplementary reading suggestions may be provided via Moodle.

REQUIRED ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Grading scale: Final grades will be based on a curve, but the strictest possible grade thresholds will be: A:90%, B:80%, C:70%, and D:60%. Plus and minus grades may be given. Letter grades may be adjusted (curved) upward, but will not be adjusted downward. You will earn your grade for the course based on the following assignments:

- Class attendance and participation (20%) – assessed via viewing statistics on Echo360.
- Weekly quizzes (20%): Due Friday nights at 11:59pm for which readings are assigned.
 - Beginning in week 1!
 - Assigned and taken on Moodle
 - Multiple choice and calculations
 - No time limit
 - One attempt allowed
 - I will drop the **three** lowest quiz scores. The average of the remaining quizzes will have 20% weight in your overall grade for the course
- Weekly writing assignments (20%): Due Sunday nights at 11:59pm following the relevant week
 - Beginning week 1!
 - The first assignment is a simple self-introduction
 - Subsequent assignments will focus on applying topics and concepts from the week to a student’s chosen country
 - Details and Submission via Moodle Assignment
- Peer Grading of Writing Assignments (20%)
 - Conducted using rubric via Moodle Workshop
- Final Country Report (20%)
 - At the end of the semester, students will merge their weekly writing assignments into a single comprehensive report on their country of choice

OUTLINE OF COURSE

WEEK	TOPIC
1-2	Introduction, Sustainable Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present background concepts of economic growth and development. Consider the measurement and distribution of poverty coupled with discussion of the interrelationship with the environment. Consider business as usual vs. sustainable development alternative futures.
2	Economic Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin to think about global incomes, what they can tell us and how they are distributed. Examine inequality within countries (urban/rural and otherwise), consider alternative measures of well-being, and address whether such measures are converging or diverging between countries.
3	History of Economic Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First there was equality, in poverty, then the Industrial Revolution came to England in the 1700s and spread from there. Rapid technological change has occurred in chapters since that time and following WWII, a new level of global interconnection has further contributed development. Review history, timeline, and explanations of development around the world.
4	Understanding Global Poverty <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider how physical geography, culture, and politics contributed to the distribution of wealth in the world today. Also, poverty traps and the resource curse.
5	Ending Extreme Poverty <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why it is possible, strategies for progress, potential pitfalls, and the lessons of the Millennium Development Goals

6	Economic Growth and the Boundaries of our Planet <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lay out physical constraints of Earth as they relate to continued economic growth and development. Focus specifically on the cases of energy, food, and population.
7	Human Rights <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss the ethics of wealth, poverty, and distributional inequality. Lay out international perspective and approaches to addressing these issues. Study current situation and trends in inequality. Special attention to gender inequalities will be paid.
8	Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lay out the life-cycle framework to human development with special focus on early childhood. Discuss the increasing returns to education including the common supply response and contributions to social mobility. Consider the role of higher education in the achievement of sustainable development goals.
9	Health and Health Care <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss the idea of health as a human right and the connection between poverty and poor health. Consider the design of health care provision systems and study implementation issues in both poor and rich contexts.
10	Food and Hunger <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Malnutrition as an issue for health and development. Consider food systems, food security and the two-way relationship to local and global environments. What could a sustainable global food system look like?
11	Cities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand recent and current trends and patterns of urbanization around the world. Discuss the implications of cities for the environment with special consideration of smart infrastructure, resilience, and planning for sustainability.
12	Climate Change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin with a basic discussion of the science and implications of climate change, then lay out the dimensions of human response including mitigation and adaptation.
13	Biodiversity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the causes and consequences of biodiversity loss, segueing into discussion of potential approaches for preservation going forward.
14	New Goals for Sustainable Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draw together concepts and issues from throughout the course to discuss the proposed Sustainable Development Goals put forth at Rio+20 summit.

Note: some topics may be omitted for time. Students are encouraged to refer to the [academic calendar](#) to be aware of critical deadlines throughout the semester.

COURSE POLICIES

Accommodation Statement

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 (DS), 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 me within the first two weeks of the semester so that we may make appropriate arrangements.

Academic Honesty Statement

Since the integrity of the academic enterprise of any institution of higher education requires honesty in scholarship and research, academic honesty is required of all students at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Academic dishonesty is prohibited in all programs of the University. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to: cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and facilitating dishonesty. Appropriate sanctions may be imposed on any student who has committed an act of academic dishonesty. Instructors should take reasonable steps to address academic misconduct. Any person who has reason to believe that a student has committed academic dishonesty should bring such information to the attention of the appropriate course instructor as soon as possible. Instances of academic dishonesty not related to a specific course should be brought to the attention of the appropriate department Head or Chair. Since students are expected to be familiar with this policy and the commonly accepted standards of academic integrity, ignorance of such standards is not normally sufficient evidence of lack of intent (http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/codeofconduct/acadhonesty/).

Finally, I hope you enjoy the class. Please remain in touch and engaged. We will be learning together!