

PA 5531: Global Sustainable Development in Practice

SPRING 2024

Instructor: Dr. Heather Randell
Assistant Professor of Global Policy, Humphrey School of Public Affairs
E-mail: hrandell@umn.edu
Office hours: Thursdays 2:30-4:00pm or by appointment

Course Description

The world today is confronting an extensive set of interlinked challenges including climate change; environmental degradation; social, health, and economic inequalities; and political instability. The sustainable development agenda seeks to address these challenges, with the ultimate goal of simultaneously eradicating poverty, fostering social inclusion and equity, and protecting the planet for future generations. The pathway to sustainability, however, is complex and requires significant global cooperation and financial investments. This course provides an introduction to the concept of sustainable development, with a particular focus on the systems and institutions supporting and implementing the sustainable development agenda and the barriers to achieving positive development outcomes. The class will cover the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other key development indicators; explore historical and theoretical concepts underpinning sustainable development; discuss how progress towards sustainable development is implemented and measured; provide critical insight into the institutions engaging in sustainable development including governments, large NGOs, and multilateral organizations like the World Bank and the United Nations; and consider how sustainable development practice could be made more effective.

Readings and Videos

All assigned readings are either posted as a PDF on the course Canvas page or a link to the webpage is provided in the course schedule below and on the Canvas page. Videos will be assigned to watch during some weeks. Please watch them before class and be prepared to discuss. Links to videos are in the course schedule below and on the Canvas page.

Assignments

Preparation, attendance, and participation (15% of grade)

Preparation, attendance, and participation are essential to succeed in this class. Readings and videos for the course are listed in the schedule below. You are required to complete them before class, and to be prepared to actively participate in discussions. To be adequately prepared, you will not only have to read the assigned texts but also think critically about the content. Many class meetings will involve discussion, so your preparation is necessary for our meetings to be productive and fun.

Reflection essays (40% of grade)

Four times during the semester, you will write a 300–400-word essay about a particular class period's assigned readings/video. The essays should be substantive: reacting to thoughts and/or challenging arguments in the material, and/or applying concepts to issues you have observed in your own life experiences. The essays should NOT simply summarize the content of the material. The essays should end with 2-3 questions to inspire discussion in class. At the beginning of the semester, you will sign up for four class days for which you will submit a reflection essay. The reflection essays will be due by midnight the night before the associated class period. Each reflection essay will be worth 10% of your final grade, for a total of 40%.

Final paper abstract (5% of grade)

You will submit a 1-page (double-spaced) abstract that outlines the topic of your final paper and highlights the key points you plan to address. The abstract should include a brief bibliography with at least 5 relevant peer-reviewed articles and/or other reputable sources. The abstract is due on Friday, March 22nd by midnight. The abstract will be worth 5% of your final grade.

Final presentation (10% of grade)

On the last two days of class, April 24th and 29th, each student will make a 10-minute PowerPoint presentation about their final paper. Detailed instructions will be provided during the semester. The presentation will be worth 10% of your final grade.

Final paper (30% of grade)

You will be required to write a final paper (15-20 pages double-spaced) that focuses on one Sustainable Development Goal (SDG). In the paper, you should describe the SDG, discuss the state of progress towards achieving the SDG, note how progress varies across places and populations, and explore how four different stakeholders are working to achieve the SDG. You will end by providing recommendations for improving progress toward the SDG and better integrating progress on your chosen SDG with progress on other SDGs. Detailed instructions will be provided during the semester. Final papers will be due on or before 11:59pm on Monday, May 6th. The final paper will be worth 30% of your final grade.

Grading

The following scale will be used to assign letter grades:

A	94-100	C+	76-79
A-	90-93	C	70-75
B+	86-89	D	60-69
B	83-85	F	0-59
B-	80-82		

Due Dates and Late Submissions

Due dates for every assignment are provided on the course syllabus and posted on Canvas. For any late assignments, you will lose 5 percentage points for each day late (e.g., an assignment submitted 2 days late will lose 10 percentage points and thus be eligible for a maximum score of 90%). If you experience extenuating circumstances that prohibit you from submitting an assignment on time, email me **before the assignment due date** to request an extension. I will evaluate these instances on a case-by-case basis.

Land Acknowledgment

The University of Minnesota-Twin Cities respectfully acknowledges that the land we are on today is the traditional and ancestral homeland of the Daḳota people. The University of Minnesota is founded as a land-grant institution, and we recognize that our founding came at a dire cost to the Daḳota people. The Daḳota were forced to cede their lands in return for goods and services, but the government did not uphold the terms of these treaties leading to widespread devastation. We recognize this painful past, and we honor Daḳota peoples' history on this land, their sovereignty, and their continued contributions to our region. Minnesota comes from the Daḳota name for this region, Mni Sota Maḳoḳe — "the land where the waters reflect the skies." The Daḳota and numerous other Indigenous peoples, whose cultural, spiritual, and economic practices are intrinsically woven to this landscape, hold this land sacred. We recognize them as original stewards of this land and all the relatives within it, who had thriving and vibrant communities prior to disruption by settlers. Today, the State of Minnesota shares geography with eleven Tribal Nations.

By offering this land acknowledgement, we affirm tribal sovereignty and hold the University of Minnesota accountable to recognize and counter the historical and contemporary injustices that continue to impact Indigenous people, through mutually beneficial partnerships, research, policies, and practices that respect Indigeneity.

Inclusion Statement

In this class, I aim to create a learning environment where everyone—regardless of race, ethnicity, nationality, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, class, religion, or (dis)ability—feels welcomed, respected, and supported. Please reach out to me if you feel troubled by anything that occurs at any time during this class. In addition, I will try to be sensitive to the many challenges and stressors that happens in people’s lives. If you are struggling with anything during the semester (illness, having a baby, getting married/divorced, breakups, financial troubles, mental health crises, etc.) please reach out to me. I may be able to offer you accommodations, such as a due date extension, or connect you with helpful resources. My goal for this class is to create an effective learning environment and to provide a supportive community for each and every one of you.

University and School Policies and Resources

Disability Resource Center (DRC). UMN is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. The DRC is the campus office that collaborates with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange accommodations. If you have, or think you may have, a disability (e.g., mental health, attentional, learning, chronic health, sensory, or physical), please call 612-626-1333 to arrange a confidential discussion. For more information, please see diversity.umn.edu/disability. If you are registered with the DRC and have a current letter requesting accommodations, please contact me as early in the semester as possible to discuss.

Center for Writing's Student Writing Support. Student Writing Support provides free writing instruction for all University of Minnesota students – graduate and undergraduate - at all stages of the writing process. They help students develop productive writing habits and revision strategies via in-person consultations. See writing.umn.edu.

Academic Policies. For links to UMN and Humphrey School policies, please see <https://z.umn.edu/PolicyStatements>. Policies include information on student conduct, scholastic dishonesty, legitimate absences, sexual harassment, equal opportunity, disability accommodations, and more. It is your responsibility to understand these policies; ignorance of the policies is not an acceptable excuse for violating a policy.

Please note that if a class session falls on a holiday that you celebrate, your absence from class is excused. I am happy to meet with you to go over anything they missed. Here is a relevant UMN administrative policy on this.

ChatGPT

Artificial intelligence (AI) language models, such as ChatGPT, cannot be used for course assignments. The following actions are prohibited in this course:

- Submitting all or any part of an assignment statement to an online learning support platform;
- Incorporating any part of an AI generated response in an assignment;
- Using AI to brainstorm, formulate arguments, or template ideas for assignments;
- Using AI to summarize or contextualize source materials;
- Submitting your own work for this class to an online learning support platform for iteration or improvement.

Course Schedule and Readings

WEEK 1	January 17	Course introduction
	January 22	What is sustainable development? Chapter 1 of Sachs, Jeffrey. 2015. <i>The Age of Sustainable Development</i> . New York: Columbia University Press.
WEEK 2	January 24	How we got here: Theoretical perspectives Chapter 2 of Bellamy Foster, John, Brett Clark, & Richard York. 2010. <i>The Ecological Rift; Capitalism's War on the Earth</i> . New York: Monthly Review Press. Givens, Jennifer E., Xiaorui Huang, and Andrew K. Jorgenson. 2019. Ecologically Unequal Exchange: A Theory of Global Environmental Injustice. <i>Sociology Compass</i> 13 (5): e12693.
	January 29	How we got here: Historical perspectives Pages 1369-1377 of Acemoglu, Daron et al. 2001. The Colonial Origins of Comparative Development: An Empirical Investigation." <i>The American Economic Review</i> 91: 5, 1369-1401. Varanasi, Anuradha. 2022. How Colonialism Spawned and Continues to Exacerbate the Climate Crisis. https://news.climate.columbia.edu/2022/09/21/how-colonialism-spawned-and-continues-to-exacerbate-the-climate-crisis/
WEEK 3	January 31	Planetary boundaries and doughnut economics Steffen, Will et al. 2015. Planetary Boundaries: Guiding Human Development on a Changing Planet. <i>Science</i> 347 (6223): 1259855. Raworth, Kate. 2017. Why It's Time for Doughnut Economics. <i>IPPR Progressive Review</i> 24 (3): 216–22.
	February 5	The Sustainable Development Goals United Nations. 2015. <i>Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development</i> . New York: United Nations. Hickel, Jason. 2015. Five Reasons to Think Twice about the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/africaatlse/2015/09/23/five-reasons-to-think-twice-about-the-uns-sustainable-development-goals/
WEEK 4	February 7	Other sustainable development indicators Chapter 6 of <i>World Happiness Report 2020</i> , Eds. John Helliwell, Richard Layard, and Jeffrey Sachs. p. 113-128. UNDP. 2023. What is a Circular Economy and Why Does it Matter? https://climatepromise.undp.org/news-and-stories/what-is-circular-economy-and-how-it-helps-fight-climate-change

WEEK 5	February 12	<p style="text-align: center;">Measuring progress toward the SDGs</p> <p>United Nations. 2023. Global Indicator Framework for the Sustainable Development Goals and Targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. New York: UN.</p> <p>Kitzmueller, Lucas, Brian Stacy, and Daniel Gerszon Mahler. 2021. Are We There yet? Many Countries Don't Report Progress on All SDGs According to the World Bank's New Statistical Performance Indicators. https://blogs.worldbank.org/opendata/are-we-there-yet-many-countries-dont-report-progress-all-sdgs-according-world-banks-new</p>
	February 14	<p style="text-align: center;">The current state of the SDGs</p> <p>United Nations. 2023. The Sustainable Development Goals Report: Special Edition. New York: United Nations Statistics Division.</p> <p>TED Talk: Hannah Ritchie - Are We the Last Generation – Or the First Sustainable One? https://www.ted.com/talks/hannah_ritchie_are_we_the_last_generation_or_the_first_sustainable_one?language=en</p>
WEEK 6	February 19	<p style="text-align: center;">The United Nations</p> <p>What is the United Nations? https://una.org.uk/get-involved/learn-and-teach/overview-united-nations</p> <p>Dempsey, Judy. 2023. Judy Asks: Is the United Nations Still Fit for Purpose? https://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/90606</p> <p>TED Talk: Alanna O'Malley – The United Nations: From Blue Helmets to Blue Skies. https://www.ted.com/talks/alanna_o_malley_the_united_nations_from_blue_helmets_to_blue_skies</p>
	February 21	<p style="text-align: center;">The UN and climate change</p> <p>Council on Foreign Relations. 2023. Timeline: UN Climate Talks. https://www.cfr.org/timeline/un-climate-talks</p> <p>Leber, Rebecca. 2023. The Future of the Planet Hinges on Understanding These 5 Key Phrases. Vox. https://www.vox.com/climate/2023/11/27/23970847/climate-change-glossary-net-zero-carbon-capture-finance-cop28</p> <p>Irfan, Umair. 2023. 3 Wins and 3 Losses at the Biggest Climate Conference Ever. Vox. https://www.vox.com/climate/24000157/cop28-climate-conference-uae-dubai-winners-losers-fossil-fuels-methane</p>

WEEK 7	February 26	<p style="text-align: center;">US government food aid</p> <p>Casey, Alyssa R. 2021. <i>U.S. International Food Assistance: An Overview</i>. CRS Report R45422. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service.</p> <p>Charles, Dan. 2024. Why There's a Storm Brewing about Global Food Aid from the U.S. . https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2024/01/09/1222952895/why-theres-a-storm-brewing-about-global-food-aid-from-the-u-s</p>
	February 28	<p style="text-align: center;">Foreign aid</p> <p>Chapter 9. Radelet, Stephen. 2015. <i>The Great Surge: The Ascent of the Developing World</i>. New York: Simon & Schuster.</p> <p>TEDx Talk: Maliha Chishti – Foreign Aid: Are We Really Helping Others or Just Ourselves? https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1xJ6p0B5V_A</p>
WEEK 8	March 4 & 6	SPRING BREAK
WEEK 9	March 11	<p style="text-align: center;">The World Bank</p> <p>Masters, Jonathan, Noah Berman, & Andrew Chatzky. 2023. The World Bank Group’s Role in Global Development. https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/world-bank-groups-role-global-development</p> <p>Preface of Goldman, Michael. 2005. <i>Imperial Nature: The World Bank and Struggles for Social Justice in the Age of Globalization</i>. New Haven: Yale University Press.</p>
	March 13	<p style="text-align: center;">Other multilateral development banks</p> <p>Pages 1-23 of Multilateral Development Banks. 2020. Financing the Sustainable Development Goals: The Contributions of the Multilateral Development Banks.</p> <p>Roy, Diana. 2023. What Does the Inter-American Development Bank Do? https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/what-does-inter-american-development-bank-do</p>
WEEK 10	March 18	<p style="text-align: center;">CGIAR (Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research)</p> <p>Gates, Bill. 2019. You’ve Probably Never Heard of CGIAR, But they are Essential to Feeding our Future. https://www.gatesnotes.com/How-CGIAR-is-feeding-our-future</p> <p>CGIAR. 2021. CGIAR 2030 Research Innovation and Strategy: Transforming Food, Land, and Water Systems in a Climate Crisis. Montpellier, France: CGIAR.</p>
	March 20	<p style="text-align: center;">Big international non-governmental organizations (BINGOs)</p> <p>Lewis, David, Nazneen Kanji, and Nuno S. Themudo. 2020. Introduction: What Are Non-Governmental Organizations? In <i>Non-Governmental Organizations and Development</i>, 2nd ed. London: Routledge.</p> <p>Godrej, Dinyar. 2014. NGOs – Do They Help? https://newint.org/features/2014/12/01/ngos-keynote</p>

WEEK 11	March 25	<p style="text-align: center;">Microcredit organizations</p> <p>Wykstra, Stephanie. 2019. Microcredit Was a Hugely Hyped Solution to Global Poverty. What Happened? https://www.vox.com/future-perfect/2019/1/15/18182167/microcredit-microfinance-poverty-grameen-bank-yunus</p> <p>Mobarak, Ahmed Mushfiq & Vivek Dimble. 2019. Can the Microcredit Model be Improved? https://insights.som.yale.edu/insights/can-the-microcredit-model-be-improved</p>
	March 27	<p style="text-align: center;">South-South cooperation</p> <p>Pages 8-18 of UNDP. 2016. Scaling-Up South-South Cooperation for Sustainable Development. New York: UNDP.</p> <p>Masters, Jonathan, Noah Berman, & Andrew Chatzky. 2023. China’s Massive Belt and Road Initiative. https://www.cfr.org/backgroundunder/chinas-massive-belt-and-road-initiative</p>
WEEK 12	April 1	<p style="text-align: center;">Government social protection programs</p> <p>Richterman, Aaron, Christophe Millien, Elizabeth F. Bair, Gregory Jerome, Jean Christophe Dimitri Suffrin, Jere R. Behrman, and Harsha Thirumurthy. 2023. The Effects of Cash Transfers on Adult and Child Mortality in Low- and Middle-Income Countries. <i>Nature</i> 618 (7965): 575–82.</p> <p>de Hoop, Jacobus, and Valeria Groppo. 2020. How Do Cash Transfers Affect Child Work and Schooling? Surprising Evidence from Malawi, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia. Innocenti Research Briefs 2020/14. Vol. 2020/14. UNICEF-Innocenti.</p>
	April 3	<p style="text-align: center;">Philanthropic foundations</p> <p>Pages 12-25 of OECD. 2023. Private Philanthropy for Sustainable Development, 2018-20. Paris: OECD Publishing.</p> <p>Schurman, Rachel. 2018. Micro(Soft) Managing a ‘Green Revolution’ for Africa: The New Donor Culture and International Agricultural Development. <i>World Development</i> 112: 180–92.</p>
WEEK 13	April 8	<p style="text-align: center;">Case study: Bhutan</p> <p>Gyeltshen, Jamba. 2022. Bhutan’s Sustainable Development Initiatives and Gross National Happiness. In <i>Sustainable Development: Asia-Pacific Perspectives</i>, edited by Pak Sum Low, 85–94. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.</p> <p>TED Talk: Tshering Tobgay - This Country isn't Just Carbon Neutral — It's Carbon Negative. https://www.ted.com/talks/tshering_tobgay_this_country_isn_t_just_carbon_neutral_it_s_carbon_negative</p>

	April 10	<p style="text-align: center;">Case study: Brazil</p> <p>Garrett, Rachael D., Federico Cammelli, Joice Ferreira, Samuel A. Levy, Judson Valentim, and Ima Vieira. 2021. Forests and Sustainable Development in the Brazilian Amazon: History, Trends, and Future Prospects. <i>Annual Review of Environment and Resources</i> 46 (1): 625–52.</p> <p>Watch the following Vox video: The Destruction of the Amazon, Explained. https://www.vox.com/2019/11/22/20978579/amazon-explained-rainforest-brazil-deforestation</p>
WEEK 14	April 15	<p style="text-align: center;">Current events in sustainable development</p> <p>News articles to be assigned.</p>
	April 17	NO CLASS
WEEK 15	April 22	<p style="text-align: center;">Rethinking sustainable development</p> <p>Sultana, Farhana. 2023. Whose Growth in Whose Planetary Boundaries? Decolonising Planetary Justice in the Anthropocene. <i>Geo: Geography and Environment</i> 10 (2): e00128.</p> <p>TEDx Talk: Rebecca Freitag – This is How we Get the SDGs Right. https://www.ted.com/talks/rebecca_freitag_this_is_how_we_get_the_sdg_s_right</p>
	April 24	Final Paper Presentations
WEEK 16	April 29	Final Paper Presentations