

Syllabus for MSMGT 700 Cultural and Historical Foundations of Sustainability

Course Description

In recent centuries, humans have changed their relationship with the natural world and experimented with social arrangements. We will review the history of ideas and actions that can provide a foundation for sustainable management. Because sustainability ideas are often posed as alternatives requiring change, we will discuss the context of dominant ideas and organizational structures that have historical and cultural precedent. We will also discuss ideas about individual sustainability as a way of understanding sustainable systems.

Course Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes are provided in each lesson of the course.

Course Materials

Information on course materials can be found in the [textbook section](#) of the SMGT website.

Course Requirements

Homework Assignments

Fourteen homework assignments correspond with the 14 lessons. The highest 12 homework grades will be averaged. Homework responses will be standardized as one-page essays that demonstrate an ability to extend understanding of assigned readings and lectures. The assignments may include research beyond the course materials. Essays must be posted to the Dropbox in the course by the end of the lesson week. Homework will be accepted late, with the grade reduced 10% for each working day. No homework will be accepted after the due date of the end-of-term exam because of deadlines for submitting grades.

Discussions

Discussions are critical to your successful understanding and completion of the course, and will be graded. The instructor provides starter questions for the discussion in each lesson, but threads can be started on any topic that addresses the course materials for

that lesson. Your engagement should be professional, courteous, respectful, insightful, and open-minded to contrasting viewpoints.

Half of your discussion grade will be based on your ability to take **a leadership role in at least 6 of the weekly discussion sessions**. This means that you need to make an early (first 4 days of the week) initial post on a topic that encourages others to post responses and continue the conversation. Your effort to engage should include multiple, substantial replies (e.g., that encourage, clarify, question, debate, etc.) with responders to extend the discussion. While you can start more than one discussion per week, leadership credit is limited to one case per week per student.

The other half of your discussion grade will be based on your weekly engagement as multiple, substantial **replies to posts made by others**. As with the discussion leader, a good respondent will provide substantial replies that encourage, clarify, question, and debate.

A substantial contribution (initial post or response) will be defined by clearly articulating an explanation of your understanding, be it agreement, disagreement, extension, or synthesis. (Note: One-word or one-sentence responses do not meet the criterion of "substantial contribution.") Entries must be posted by the end of the lesson week to count for a grade.

Format of Posts

Be concise and focused with your discussion entries. Consider the examples provided as starter questions by the instructor – they are under 150 words long. Postings that are too long, complex, or multi-faceted tend to get ignored, misunderstood, or generate many tangents instead of a common discussion. A long, exhaustive initial entry may also draw little discussion if it appears to completely cover the issue, whereas a briefer singular point will leave “room” for further discussion and new viewpoints. As you will see, the best and most involved discussion threads will occur when the group is able to focus. If you have multiple ideas or want to focus on a tangent developing in a thread, start a new, concise, and focused discussion topic.

Exams

Two exams will be administered, at midterm and at the end of the term, based on readings, lectures, discussions, and any other materials provided to the class. The exam format will be essay answers with formatting and page limit guidelines. Midterm exams will be accepted late, with the grade reduced 10% for each working day. No grace period can be offered for the end-of-term exam because of deadlines for submitting grades.

Grading Policy

Assignments	200
Discussions	100
Exams	200
Total	500 Points

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