

**NRM 5322 – Sustainability  
Course Syllabus – Spring 2024**

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**Course Information**

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**Instructors**

Dr. Maureen Frank  
[maureen.frank@sulross.edu](mailto:maureen.frank@sulross.edu)

830-261-0539 (cell, 9-5 daily, can text/call)  
SRSU Office: RAS 113

Dr. Amanda Veals Dutt  
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480-353-6409 (cell, 9-5 daily, can text/call)  
Located remotely: Tucson, AZ

**Office Hours**

Monday 11:00am-12:00pm (Dr. Frank only, Jan/Feb)  
Tuesday 11:00am-12:00pm (Dr. Veals Dutt only)  
Wednesday 10:00am-12:00pm (either Dr. Frank or Dr. Veals Dutt)  
Or by appointment

**Class Meeting Time/Place**

This is an online class with readings from the course texts that replace formal lectures. Blackboard will be used for all announcements, discussions, assignments, and grades.

**Course Description**

This is an advanced course on the theories, principles, and practices of sustainability. Topics covered will include water resources, food production, urban development, and economics.

**Expanded Course Description**

Sustainability practices have environmental, economic, and social benefits for society as a whole. Everyone benefits from these practices by making the environment cleaner and protecting it for future generations. However, sustainable systems are not always simple to implement when economics, public views, and long-term impacts are considered. How to move towards a more sustainable future for global economics, local communities, and environmental health has come a long way but there is still much work to be done.

This course will teach you about the importance of sustainability in the natural resources field and society as a whole. This class will help prepare students to meet the challenges of making society and our profession more sustainable.

**Course Objectives**

Students will learn about sustainability in various forms as it effects natural resources and society. Specifically, upon course completion students shall have an understanding of:

1. the elements of sustainability including ecosystems, social equity, environmental justice, food, energy, product life cycles, green buildings, and urban development.
2. the tools and technical skills needed for dealing with and resolving sustainability issues.

### **Student Learning Outcomes, M.S. in Range and Wildlife Management**

1. Students will be able to apply statistical concepts and procedures to research.
2. Students will be able to evaluate literature and references to substantiate the applied research project.
3. Students will be able to justify and defend research questions and design.

### **Student Learning Outcomes, M.Ag. in Natural Resources Conservation**

1. Students will be able to apply statistical concepts and procedures to natural resource data.
2. Students will be able to evaluate literature and references as they apply to the natural resource field.
3. Students will be able to demonstrate their knowledge of the fundamentals and advanced concepts of range and wildlife management.

### **Marketable Skills, M.Ag. in Natural Resources Conservation (THECB requirement)**

1. Students will demonstrate knowledge of key Natural Resource Management topics.
2. Students will be able to apply knowledge to projects that include biostatistics, research methods, and scientific writing.
3. Students will demonstrate skills in scientific writing and analysis.

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## **Course Materials and Policies**

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### **Textbooks**

*You can purchase an e-book or a physical textbook.*

1. Robertson, M. 2017. Sustainability Principles and Practice. Second edition. Routledge Press, New York. 418 pp. ISBN-10: 1138650242 / ISBN-13: 9781138650244. **Required.**

**Note: This book is available as a free eBook from the SRSU library website, but access is not always guaranteed (only 3 users can access it simultaneously), so you may choose to purchase it.**

### **Grading**

Weekly reports (13 @ 50 points each)	650 points
Weekly discussions (13 @ 50 points each)	650 points
Interview with a Professional	100 points
Research Paper	200 points

### **Grades**

A: 89.5 – 100%
B: 79.5 – 89.4%
C: 69.5 – 79.4%
D: 59.5 – 69.4%
F: < 59.4%

### **Due Dates and Extensions**

This course is structured into weekly time periods that begin on Monday and end on Sunday. All

assignments are due by Sunday at 11:59pm unless otherwise specified. **No due dates for ANY graded work will be extended and no points will be given for late assignments except under extraordinary circumstances.** The student must initiate contact with the instructor to request an exception for late work. See the class schedule (posted in Blackboard) for the dates and assignments for each week.

## **Major Assignments and Examinations**

### *Readings*

Throughout the semester, readings will be assigned from the textbook Sustainability Principles and Practice. Some weeks will have additional readings, which will be posted on Blackboard and available for download under the weekly reading heading. Please keep up with the readings so that you can do your best on the associated weekly reports and discussions.

### *Weekly reports*

At the end of each week's readings, you will be expected to write a summary report based on the chapter readings assigned from the textbook Sustainability Principles and Practice and any additional assigned readings. For weeks where additional readings are not provided, you are expected to find a relevant paper (published in a scientific journal) that was published no later than 2018. This additional paper of your choosing must be relevant to that week's topic and you must include it in your report that week. To receive full credit, the report must give a thorough but concise overview of all the chapters covered and additional readings (provided by instructors or obtained by student). A detailed rubric for these reports can be found on Blackboard.

### *Weekly discussions*

Each week one or more Discussion Boards will be posted to Blackboard for student participation. Each student should participate in the forum and each posting will be graded based upon the relevance, depth of knowledge, and unique contribution that it made to the discussion. For each discussion board, you will need to make your own original post (by Thursday), as well as comment on posts by other students or instructors (by Sunday). You must make these postings during the week in which it was scheduled. Please make your first initial post (original post) by Thursday of the week it is scheduled. You then have until Sunday to respond to other posts. You should reply to more than 2 other student posts to facilitate discussion and receive maximum credit. You will not receive credit for late postings.

### *Interview with a Professional*

Students will conduct an interview with a professional in the natural resources field who works in an organization that deals with sustainability issues. Students will submit 2-3 names and contact information for potential interviewees as well as draft interview questions. Once potential candidates for an interview and questions have been approved by the instructors, interviews may be conducted at the student's and professional's convenience. A detailed rubric for this assignment can be found on Blackboard.

### *Research Paper*

During the semester, you will be working on a research paper on a topic of your choosing. The topic must relate to a chapter in your textbook (e.g., climate, pollution). The paper must be based on peer-reviewed research and will be due at the end of the semester. A detailed rubric for paper can be found on Blackboard.

### **Academic Integrity**

Students in this class are expected to demonstrate scholarly behavior and academic honesty in the use of intellectual property. A scholar is expected to be punctual, prepared, and focused; meaningful and pertinent participation is appreciated. Examples of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to: Turning in work as original that was used in whole or part for another course and/or professor; turning in another person's work as one's own; copying from professional works or internet sites without citation; collaborating on a course assignment, examination, or quiz when collaboration is forbidden.

### **General Expectations**

As this is a graduate-level course, we have high expectations for all students. We expect quality, graduate-level writing and that you will seek assistance from the university help center on writing projects if needed. We will provide you with prompt and meaningful feedback on your assignments.

Many of the topics we discuss in this course will be contentious and there will probably be many different points of view amongst the class. As we cover these topics, we expect you to:

- Treat your classmates with respect, even if you do not agree with their viewpoints
- Defend your own opinions with logical rhetoric and not fallacies
- Avoid all ad hominem attacks, insults, or other derogatory comments against a person

You can expect the instructors to:

- Serve as a moderator
- Provide current scientific information
- Articulate where science ends and policy or opinion begin
- Remain neutral in most discussions; if we give an opinion, you can expect us to show the same respect that we expect from you.

### **Communication**

You are required to check your ***Sul Ross e-mail and Blackboard announcements several times per week***. We do not use the personal or preferred e-mail addresses that you may have on record with the University.

### **SRSU Distance Education Statement**

Students enrolled in distance education courses have equal access to the university's academic support services, such as library resources, online databases, and instructional technology support. For more information about accessing these resources, visit the SRSU website. Students should correspond using Sul Ross email accounts and submit online assignments through Blackboard, which requires secure login. Students enrolled in distance education

courses at Sul Ross are expected to adhere to all policies pertaining to academic honesty and appropriate student conduct, as described in the student handbook. Students in web-based courses must maintain appropriate equipment and software, according to the needs and requirements of the course, as outlined on the SRSU website. Directions for filing a student complaint are located in the student handbook.

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## Resources

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### **SRSU Disability Services (ADA Statement)**

Sul Ross State University (SRSU) is committed to equal access in compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is SRSU policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request each semester for each class. Alpine Students seeking accessibility/accommodations services must contact Mary Schwartz, LPC, SRSU's Accessibility Services Coordinator at 432-837-8203, or email [mschwartz@sulross.edu](mailto:mschwartz@sulross.edu). The office is located on the first floor of Ferguson Hall, Room 112. Mailing address is P.O. Box C122, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas, 79832.

### **Counseling Services**

Sul Ross State University (SRSU) has partnered with TimelyCare, which is an online mental health support platform, and all SRSU students will have access to nine free counseling sessions. These can be accessed by visiting <https://timelycare.com/srsu>. Counseling is also offered in Ferguson Hall Room 112 in Alpine, and via telehealth Zoom sessions for remote students.

### **Library Information**

The Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library in Alpine offers FREE resources and services to the entire SRSU community. Access and borrow books, articles, and more by visiting the library's website, [library.sulross.edu](http://library.sulross.edu). Off-campus access requires logging in with your LoboID and password. Librarians are a tremendous resource for your coursework and can be reached in person, by email ([srsulibrary@sulross.edu](mailto:srsulibrary@sulross.edu)), or phone (432-837-8123).

### **Tutoring**

If you need help with writing, please contact Graduate Student Support Services: [gradcenter@sulross.edu](mailto:gradcenter@sulross.edu) or (432) 837-8524.

### **Blackboard Support Desk**

If you have any technical issues with Blackboard itself, the Blackboard Support Desk is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You can reach the support desk by calling (888) 837-6055, emailing [blackboardsupport@sulross.edu](mailto:blackboardsupport@sulross.edu), using resources from the Technology Support tab within Blackboard, or clicking the Support Desk graphic on the course homepage.

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## Tentative Course Schedule

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*Subject to change, please check Blackboard for updates.*

Week	Dates	Topic	Reading Assignments	Due This Week
1	1/17-1/21	Sustainability	Ch 1-2	Report 1
2	1/22-1/28	Biosphere	Ch 3, Ferreira et al. 2020	Report 2, discussion
3	1/29-2/4	Human Sphere	Ch 4, Polasky et al. 2019	Report 3, discussion
4	2/5-2/11	Climate	Ch 5	Report 4, discussion, research paper topic
5	2/12-2/18	Water	Ch 6	Report 5, discussion
6	2/19-2/25	Ecosystems	Ch 7, Naugle et al. 2019	Report 6, discussion
7	2/26-3/3	Pollution	Ch 8	Report 7, discussion
8	3/4-3/10	Energy	Ch 9	Report 8, discussion, interview draft
SPRING BREAK – NO CLASSES				
9	3/18-3/24	Green Buildings and Sites	Ch 10, Besire & Cuce 2018	Report 9, discussion
10	3/25-3/31	Livable Cities	Ch 11, Eltin & Ehmke 2021	Report 10, discussion
11	4/1-4/7	Food	Ch 12	Report 11, discussion
12	4/8-4/14	Products	Ch 13	Report 12, discussion
13	4/15-4/21	Waste and Recycling	Ch 14, Hao et al. 2020	Report 13, discussion
14	4/22-4/28	Working in an Organization	Ch 15	Interview
15	4/29-5/5	Working as Agents for Change	Ch17	Discussion
16	5/6-5/8			Research Paper