

NRM 5322 - Sustainability

Spring 2026

Instructor: Dr. Kelbi Delaune

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Office hours: Tu/W/Th 10:00am-12:00pm, or app.

Class meeting time and space:

This is an online, asynchronous course that will be available through Blackboard.

Course Description:

This course provides a comprehensive study of sustainability, emphasizing the foundational theories, core principles, and practical strategies needed to address today's environmental challenges. Students will gain a deeper understanding across a broad range of topics such as water conservation, food systems, urban growth, and economic sustainability.

Sustainability is essential for creating a balanced relationship between humanity and the natural world. While great progress has been made across scientific and technological fields, the pace of environmental change continues to accelerate. To ensure our planet is healthier for future generations, humankind is tasked with understanding and addressing a more sustainable lifestyle. However, implementing sustainable practices often involves navigating complex issues such as economic pressures, societal attitudes, and long-term impacts. This course will provide students with the knowledge and skills needed to contribute to these complex issues both as science practitioners and members of society.

Course Objectives:

Students will explore the concept of sustainability in its various forms and its impact on natural resources and society. By the end of the course, students will:

1. Gain an understanding of key aspects of sustainability, including ecosystems, social equity, environmental justice, sustainable food systems, energy, product life cycles, green building design, and urban planning.
2. Develop the technical skills and tools necessary to address and resolve sustainability challenges effectively.

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.

Course Materials:

Robertson, M. 2017. Sustainability Principles and Practice. Second edition. Routledge Press, New York. 418 pp. ISBN-10: 1138650242 / ISBN-13: 9781138650244. Required. Additional reading materials will be provided in the course Blackboard.

Libraries:

The Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library and Archives of the Big Bend 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. 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), or phone (432-837-8123).

Grading:

The class is structured into weekly time periods that begin on Monday and end on Sunday (11:59pm) for the weekly discussions as well as the additional course assessments.

Grading will be based on the percentage of points earned out of the total.

Participation and Engagement	300
Sustainability Journal	250
Weekly Reports	150

Final Reflection	300
TOTAL	1000

Scale: 90-100% = A; 80-89% = B; 70-79% = C; 60-69% = D.

Course Structure:

The course will be delivered entirely online, using a mix of synchronous and asynchronous components through Blackboard to facilitate engagement and flexibility. This course is intentionally designed to be student-led, with an emphasis on fostering deep thinking, exploration of personal academic interests, and rich discussions. Students will take an active role in shaping the dialogue and contributing their unique perspectives, ensuring a dynamic and engaging learning experience. Weekly reading and activities and occasional recorded materials will provide the background and context for the course. I will update resources on the course site as discussions evolve to ensure student interest and ideas are cultivated. As this is a discussion and project-based course, staying curious and engaged are necessary for growth.

Course Assessments:

Participation and Engagement:

Participation makes up 30% (300pts) of the graded material in this course. This includes contributions to weekly discussions, activities, and any additional course activities that develop. Discussions will be student-led, however I will provide the week's prompts and supplemental materials for that week and join in.

Sustainability Journal:

The sustainability journal will account for 25% (250) of the graded materials in this course. Throughout the semester, students will maintain a personal Sustainability Journal to document their reflections on course topics, readings, and discussions. The journal will serve as a space to connect theoretical concepts with real-world observations and personal experiences.

Weekly Reports:

Weekly reports will account for 15% (15@ 10pts= 150) of the graded materials in this course. Students will upload weekly reports to the course Blackboard weekly that correspond to the readings from the textbook and any other assigned course readings.

Final Reflection:

The final project for the course will account for 30% (300 points) of your final grade. Students can select or propose the format for this assignment which could include

developing a policy brief, developing a story board, community outreach plan, podcast, etc. The final project will be evaluated based on its originality, depth of analysis, and ability to communicate complex ideas effectively to the intended audience. Students will present their projects during Week 15, sharing insights and reflecting on their learning journey throughout the course.

Tentative Course Schedule:

Term Week	Date	Topic	Activities	Due Dates
1	Jan 14		Welcome Discussion	
2	Jan 19	Sustainability (CH 1-2)	Discussion 1	
3	Jan 26	Biosphere & Human sphere (CH 3-4)	Discussion 2	Report 1
4	Feb 2	Climate (Ch 5)	Discussion 3	Report 2
5	Feb 9	Water (CH 6)	Discussion 4, Case Study	Report 3
6	Feb 16	Ecosystems (CH 7)	Discussion 5	Report 4
7	Feb 23	Pollution (CH 8)	Discussion 6	Report 5
8	Mar 2	Energy (CH 9)	Discussion 7	Report 6
9	Mar 9	SPRING BREAK		
10	Mar 16	Green Infrastructure (CH 10)	Discussion 8	Report 7
11	Mar 23	Livable Cities (CH 11)	Discussion 9	
12	Mar 30	Food (12)	Discussion 10	Report 8
13	Apr 6	Waste & Recycling (CH 13)	Discussion 11	Report 9

14	Apr 13	Working in an organization (CH 14)	Discussion 12	Report 10
15	Apr 20	Working as agents for change	Discussion 13	Sustainability Journal Due 5/8
16	Apr 27	TBD	Discussion 14	
17	May 4	Finals Week- Optional Synchronous Session		Final Reflection Due

*Subject to change if needed based on course progression, student interest, etc.

ADA Statement SRSU Accessibility Services:

Sul Ross State University (SRSU) is committed to equal access in compliance with the 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. Students seeking accessibility/accommodations services must contact Mrs. Mary Schwartz Grisham, LPC, SRSU's Accessibility Services Director or Ronnie Harris, LPC, Counselor, at 432-837-8203 or email mschwartz@sulross.edu or ronnie.harris@sulross.edu. Our office is located on the first floor of Ferguson Hall, room 112, and our mailing address is P.O. Box C122, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas, 79832.

Academic Integrity:

Students in this class are expected to demonstrate scholarly behavior and academic honesty in the use of intellectual property. Students should submit work that is their own and avoid the temptation to engage in behaviors that violate academic integrity, such as 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. Students should also avoid using open AI sources unless permission is expressly given for an assignment or course. Violations of academic integrity can result in failing assignments, failing a class, and/or more serious university consequences. These behaviors also erode the value of college degrees and higher education overall.

Student Responsibilities Statement:

All full-time and part-time students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the Student Handbook and the Undergraduate & Graduate Catalog and for abiding by the

University rules and regulations. Additionally, students are responsible for checking their Sul Ross email as an official form of communication from the university. Every student is expected to obey all federal, state and local laws and is expected to familiarize him/herself with the requirements of such laws.

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 a 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 in the student handbook.

Classroom Climate of Respect:

Importantly, this class will foster free expression, critical investigation, and the open discussion of ideas. This means that all of us must help create and sustain an atmosphere of tolerance, civility, and respect for the viewpoints of others. Similarly, we must all learn how to probe, oppose and disagree without resorting to tactics of intimidation, harassment, or personal attack. No one is entitled to harass, belittle, or discriminate against another on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, age, gender, national origin, or sexual preference. Still, we will not be silenced by the difficulty of fruitfully discussing politically sensitive issues.

Supportive Statement:

I aim to create a learning environment for my students that supports various perspectives and experiences. I understand that the recent pandemic, economic disparity, and health concerns, or even unexpected life events may impact the conditions necessary for you to succeed. My commitment is to be there for you and help you meet the learning objectives of this course. I do this to demonstrate my commitment to you and to the mission of Sul Ross State University to create a supportive environment and care for the whole student as part of the Sul Ross Familia. If you feel like your performance in the class is being impacted by your experiences outside of class, please don't hesitate to come and talk with me. I want to be a resource for you.