

## **SUST 1010 – Introduction to Sustainability**

<b>School:</b>	<b>Academy of Interdisciplinary Studies</b>
<b>Subject Area:</b>	<b>Sustainability</b>
<b>Course Credit:</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Instructor:</b>	<b>LAU Pui Sang</b>
<b>Pre-requisite/co-requisite:</b>	<b>Nil</b>

### **Notes:**

- The syllabi provided here is for reference only and may be subject to changes and adjustments as determined by the course instructors.

# Course Syllabus

<b>Course title</b>	SUST 1010 – Introduction to Sustainability [3 credits]
<b>Time:</b>	June 15 - July 10, Mon/Wed/Fri 9:00 – 12:50
<b>Venue:</b>	TBC
<b>Instructor:</b>	Prof Arthur LAU
<b>Office Hours:</b>	Appointment by e-mail
<b>Teaching Assistants:</b>	TBC

## Course Description

This course provides students with a holistic, interdisciplinary, evidence-based understanding of the challenge of ensuring the sustainability of humanity on a planet with limited natural and social capacities. The course introduces frameworks, approaches and key trade-offs underpinning efforts to deal with existing and emerging global issues and considers how these problems relate to our own lifestyles.

## Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

After completing this course, students will:

1. Have a holistic appreciation of the issues relating to sustainability, including the role played by science, engineering, business, social science and the humanities in understanding these issues
2. Be able to review and evaluate sustainability issues from multiple perspectives
3. Be able to communicate balanced, evidence-based views of the issues and possible solutions
4. Be equipped with approaches and frameworks for action that can contribute to sustainable futures
5. Be able to take a considered view of their own lifestyle choices and potential to contribute to sustainability as professionals and community leaders

## Pedagogy

This is a **blended learning course**. The main readings are provided on Canvas. Students are expected to review these online materials *prior* to each class (approx. 1 hr reading time). Additional (optional) resources are provided for further study. Actual in-class time will involve a review of the reading materials and class activities linked directly to the topics covered online.

## Schedule (Tentative)

The course is delivered in two parts.

- **Part A** (Lecture 1 to 5) – **the main features of the challenge of sustainability** will be covered, including the principal impacts of human activities on the global environment and the options for

managing these challenges. Students' understanding of the issues covered in Part A will be tested in a mid-term exam.

- **Part B** (Lecture 5 to 9) – **possible and preferred futures for human thriving within planetary boundaries** will be explored with mini quizzes following the lectures.

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Lecture	Date	Topic	Assessment
<b>PART A</b>			
<b>1</b>	15 June	<b>Introduction Anthropogenic (human) impact on natural systems</b>	
<b>2</b>	17 June	<b>Planetary boundaries and Earth systems</b>	Report 1 release
	19 June	<b>Tuen Ng Festival (No Class)</b>	
<b>3</b>	22 June	<b>Human thriving within planetary boundaries</b>	
<b>4</b>	24 June	<b>Policy approaches for sustainability Sustainable development &amp; Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)</b>	Report 1 due
<b>5</b>	26 June	<b>Energy futures</b>	Report 2 release
<b>PART B</b>			
<b>6</b>	29 June	<b>Midterm exam Futures for freshwater</b>	
	1 July	<b>HKSAR Establishment Day (No Class)</b>	
<b>7</b>	3 July	<b>Design for a circular economy</b>	Report #2 due
<b>8</b>	6 July	<b>Sustainable consumption</b>	
<b>9</b>	8 July	<b>Futures thinking</b>	
<b>10</b>	10 July	<b>Poster presentation</b>	Essay Release
			Essay due (July 20)

## Assessment

### Mid-term Exam (35%)

A closed book exam that allows a A4 sheet (2 pages) cheat sheet, covering Part A (Lecture 1-6) of the course will be scheduled on **L6. Time and venue to be confirmed**. This is a 2-hour exam.

### Group project (40%)

Students will work in groups to research and identify the key sustainability challenges and provide possible solutions for a selected world region. Additional details with instructions will be made available in the coming weeks.

- **Two Interim Reports (15%)**

Two interim reports are required to report on the progress of the project

- Interim report #1 (5%) – a broad overview of the selected countries' situation (i.e., economy, ecology and society)
- Interim report #2 (10%) – evaluation of sustainability challenges (with reference to the SDGs) in the selected country

For every day that the assignment is submitted late, 0.5 marks will be deducted.

- **Poster (20%)**

- A poster, detailing the findings (related to the SDGs) in a concise manner, will be presented during the final lecture.

- During the poster presentation, each group will have individual Q&A sessions with the instructors. You will also receive questions and feedback from your peers.

- **Peer Review (5%)**

- 5pt of the grade will be from peer evaluations based on the student's **contribution on the group project**. Comments will be mandatory and will be reviewed by the instructional team to ensure fairness in evaluation.

### Written Essay (15%)

There will be one short (800-word) written assignment, due at the end of the Term to provide you an opportunity to demonstrate your overall understanding of the issues covered in the course. Please read the rubric that sets out how the assignment will be evaluated carefully. More details will be posted to the Assignment tab on the course Canvas site. The assignment should be typed and submitted through Canvas. For every day that the assignment is submitted late, 1 mark will be deducted.

### Class attendance and participation (10%)

The course includes in-class activities and discussions to facilitate student learning. Class participation is therefore essential not only to promote your own learning but also to contribute significantly to the learning experiences of others in the class.

To encourage engagement in class activities

- 7% of the grade will be given for **attendance and in-class participation** (proactive in discussions and activities, interactions with instructors, TAs and peers, etc). All students are encouraged to earn the full 7% for their contributions.
- 3% of the grade will be on the **peer evaluation** of your group members based on their contributions during in-class activities.

Attendance is hence an important prerequisite of your participation. If you foresee that you may not attend for several classes, you are strongly advised to reconsider taking the course later so that your learning experiences in the course won't be jeopardized.

### Extra Credit (5%)

The Extra Credit work aims to encourage student in extending their course learning to real scenarios in the form of a News Journal. Interested students are expected to relate ONE of the Topics in Part B (Lectures 7-11) of the syllabus with a piece of local, regional, or global news or events reported during the month of October or November 2025; and share their views on the reported issue referencing the reading materials of the topic in 500 words.

## Course Policy

### Academic Integrity

Plagiarism and violations of the University policy will not be tolerated. Please refer to the university policy about [academic integrity](#) and [student conduct](#).

### Course Copyright

All course materials students receive or to which students have online access are protected by copyright laws. Students may use course materials and make copies for their own use as needed, but unauthorized distribution and/or uploading of materials without the instructor's express permission is strictly prohibited.

### Special Accommodations

If you have a documented disability, or any other problem you think might affect your ability to perform in class, please schedule an appointment to see the instructor early in the semester so that arrangements may be made to accommodate you.

### Inclement Weather

Please refer to the University website regarding [bad weather policies](#). If you are affected by a weather-related emergency, please contact your instructor at the earliest possible time to make special arrangements.

### Policy for GenAI Integration in Teaching and Learning

In general, there are no specific restrictions on use of generative AI for an assessment task. Detailed instructions will be provided for each assignment. Example statement: "In this assessment, you are allowed to use generative artificial intelligence (AI) to aid you in any manner. However, you must give proper credit for any instance where generative AI was used." **Failure to disclose the use of generative AI will result in a failing grade for this assignment.**