

# Sustainability in Action

## Example Syllabus (from Spring 2023)

[INTRO TO ZOOM FOR STUDENTS \(Links to an external site.\)](#)

**Professor:** Tina Woolston

**Course Goal:** Expose students to the wide array of sustainability topics and potential careers.

### **Course Description:**

The need to create a world that is sustainable not only for people but for the environment is undeniable and the need for expertise from a wide variety of fields is increasingly obvious. The world will need climate scientists, psychologists, engineers, planners, entrepreneurs and people with many other skills and areas of expertise. Which one will you be? Each week we will learn how a field of study relates to sustainability and how it can be applied to create a more sustainable society. The focus is on climate change and the environment but will also touch on the social and economic dimensions of sustainability. Example topics covered include sustainability and: waste, architecture, agriculture, art, health, social justice, policy, community engagement, city planning, and renewable energy.

Alongside the academic components, throughout the semester students will undertake a career exploration (sustainably related or not) that pairs introspective writing with training and practical experience networking and interviewing people in their fields of interest. A supportive environment of peers and professionals will help introduce and guide you through the sometimes-intimidating world of networking and career exploration. Students leave the course versed in how to use LinkedIn, practiced in informational interviewing, having made connections in their field of interest, and experiencing a new sense of confidence in their ability to find a career that suits their interests and skills.

Learning will be student-driven, with much opportunity to delve into and share topics of interest to you, while at the same time being exposed to new concepts and topics by professionals, academics and your peers. This is done through weekly writing assignments and work done outside of class based on your interests. It is a great opportunity to learn about a variety of jobs you might never have heard of before and get first-hand knowledge of what it's like on the inside of a non-profit, government, or company. You will leave the course with an understanding of the true breadth of sustainability and the enormous amount of career opportunities available, whether you prefer analyzing data, working with people or digging in the soil.

### **Course Reading and Other Resources**

The course reading is all online – either through links to articles and books or through PDFs and websites. This is done deliberately so the students can experience a low-impact ‘paperless’ class.

Canvas will provide access to general course information, announcements, handouts, course readings and assignments, supplemental resources, and other materials throughout the semester. You will be responsible for keeping up to date on all these materials.

## **Absences**

If you will not be able to attend a class due to a religious holiday, please inform us at the beginning of the semester so that accommodations can be made. On those rare other occasions when you must be late or absent from class please let us know as soon as possible. Any absence (with the exception of religious holidays) will decrease your participation grade – see below for ways to make up the points.

## **Grades and Grading Policy**

Grades will be based on class participation, presentations, written and other assignments, and completion of career exploration experience. Grades will be distributed as follows:

*Assignments (35%):* These are written assignments or presentations based on the weekly topics, speaker reviews and analysis, and a final course review. There is one group project.

*Class participation (20%):* Grades for class participation will be assessed based on attendance, preparation for class, enthusiasm, participation in in-class discussions and activities, discussion board comments, peer reviews and completion of the mid-semester review. Although active participation in class discussions is encouraged, it is understood that people have different communications styles and some people like to digest and think about a topic before commenting. Please talk to the instructors if you feel like you are not able to contribute as much as you would like during class.

*Informational Interview (10%):* Students are required to do one informational interview with a person of their choice who works in a field they are considering.

*Career Exploration (35%):* There are 5 Discussion posts related to the career exploration as well as a final report and a short presentation on your experience. Students will also be graded on their effort in creating a meaningful experience as well as their willingness to step outside of their comfort zone and explore something new.

**Ways to lose points:** late assignments, missing assignments or assignments that show minimal effort or do not answer all the prompts. Note that class absences – even excused absences (except for religious holidays) will result in a slight reduction in the class participation grade, since if you aren't there, you can't participate in the in-class activities or provide speaker evaluations. Plan to make up the points through extra credit opportunities.

**Ways to gain points:** Extra credit opportunities will be posted on Canvas in a designated discussion post. Email the instructor a write up about the event or submit it through the assignment tool ***within two weeks*** of the event to get credit.

**Extra Credit:** credit is proportional to the educational/networking opportunity and your write up of your experience. The amount of points awarded is discretionary based on an assessment of how relevant the event is to your professional development and how well you were able to explain that in your post. In general, your points are based on the number of hours you put it. Going to a conference and networking and getting contact info from several people would be worth more than going to a movie or lecture.

If you are trying to make up the participation grade (attendance, speaker review and in class participation) for a class that you had to miss, you would need to go to 1 lecture and turn in 1 write up explaining what you gained from the lecture.

The write ups should be around a page (double spaced) in length and outline details about the event and what you gained from it.

General format for write up:

1. Name, date and location of event
2. Name of person(s) speaking and/or agenda for event. Be sure to get the names of the speakers - even if you have to go up to them afterwards. Explain who they are (job title, company, etc.)
3. Info about the event: who organized it, what type of people were in the audience, how many people were there, etc.
4. What happened at the event: give an outline of what was discussed and what you learned.
5. Your take-away from the event (what did you learn about the topic? type of event? yourself? Who did you meet? Are you going to follow up with anyone you met? What did you talk about with whomever you met? Etc.)

## Course Syllabus

Date	Topic	Assignments Due:
<b>Week 1:</b> <b>Thursday</b> <b>Jan 19<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Introduction</b> Course Logistics Climate Change – start presentations	<b>**All assignments are on Canvas**</b> <b>**Bring laptop or smartphone to every class**</b>
<b>Week 2</b>		
<b>Tuesday:</b> <b>Jan 24<sup>th</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate change presentations (combine (20min) and present (40 min))</li> <li>• Sustainability</li> </ul>	1. Climate change presentations
<b>Thursday</b> <b>Jan 26<sup>th</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainability at Tufts</li> <li>• Relationship Mapping</li> <li>• Elevator pitch prep</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sustainability Certification</li> <li>2. Review the <a href="#">Tufts energy dashboard</a></li> <li>3. Networking tools questionnaire</li> </ol>
<b>Week 3 (Nancy out)</b>		
<b>Tuesday</b> <b>Jan 31<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>Environmental Justice</b> <i>Sara Arman</i> Health Equity Corps (HEC) Coordinator <a href="#">Green Roots Chelsea</a>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="#">Ikigai Exercise</a></li> <li>2. <a href="#">View Video about GreenRoots</a></li> <li>3. <a href="#">Julie Wormer on Just Transition</a> (53 min podcast)</li> <li>4. <a href="#">Racism is Killing the Planet</a> (Sierra magazine article)</li> </ol>
<b>Thursday</b> <b>Feb 2<sup>nd</sup></b>	<b>Career Workshop: Tools, Informational interviews</b> <i>Malakia Silcott</i> Assistant Director, Tufts Career Center	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Listen to podcast (29 min) &amp; complete Career Exploration discussion board</li> <li>2. Reading for Career Workshop assignment</li> <li>3. Create LinkedIn, HERD, Handshake accounts. Also log into Tufts Alumni directory</li> <li>4. Speaker Review 1</li> </ol>

Week 4		
<b>Tuesday</b> Feb 7 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Climate Justice</b> <i>Ann Ward</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Education and Outreach Program Administrator</li> <li>PhD Candidate</li> </ul> Tufts Office of Sustainability Dept of Sociology Brandeis University	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comments on career exploration discussion boards</li> <li>Workshop Reflection (speaker review 2)</li> <li>Career Center engagement</li> <li>Climate Justice readings</li> </ol>
<b>Thursday</b> Feb 9 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Networking</b> Elevator pitches Networking	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Career 2 assignment</li> <li>Speaker Review 3</li> <li>Elevator pitch worksheet</li> </ol> <b>Start ZWW</b>
Week 5		
<b>Tuesday</b> Feb 14 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Water</b> Embodied water activity Discussion	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peer review of your classmates' career 2 assignment</li> <li>Complete <i>Prep for Water Class</i> Assignment on Canvas</li> <li>Complete Water Assignment and complete <b>the quiz</b> on Canvas</li> </ol>
<b>Thursday</b> Feb 16 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Waste</b> <i>Kaitlyn Reed</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ZWW reflection</li> <li>Watch John Oliver show about plastic</li> <li>Informational Interview 1</li> <li>Recycling Quiz</li> </ol>
Week 6 (Feb break)		
<b>Tuesday</b> Feb 21 <sup>st</sup>	<b>Work on SDG posters</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Speaker review 4</li> </ol>
<b>Thursday</b> Feb 23 <sup>rd</sup>	<b>Substitute Monday's Schedule on Thursday – no class</b>	
Week 7		
<b>Tuesday</b> Feb 28	<b>SDG poster session</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Info Interview 2 assignment</li> <li>SDG poster</li> </ol>
<b>Thursday</b> Mar 2	<b>Food/Agriculture speaker</b> <i>Tania Taranovski</i> Director of Programs at <a href="#">Farm to Institution New England</a>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prep for Food/Agriculture               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">The impact of climate change on pollen</a></li> <li><a href="#">Impact of climate change on agriculture</a> in general</li> </ol> </li> <li>Optional: Watch <a href="#">Path to Carbon Neutrality</a> webinar about Tufts Dining's sustainability efforts</li> </ol>
Week 8		
<b>Tuesday</b> Mar 7	<b>Healthcare</b> <i>Dr. Noe Copley-Woods, MD</i> Assistant Professor, OBGYN, Univ. Pittsburg	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Speaker review 5</li> <li>Review SDG key words</li> </ol>
<b>Thursday</b> Mar 9	<b>Transportation/Government</b> <i>Paul Henjes</i> Government Relations Associate at FlixBus	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Speaker review 6</li> <li>Info interview 3</li> <li>Transportation prep (Project Drawdown)</li> </ol>
Week 9		
<b>Tuesday</b> Mar 14	<b>Energy 1</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Energy Readings on Canvas</li> <li>Energy Discussion on Canvas</li> <li>Speaker review 7</li> </ol>
<b>Thursday</b> Mar 16	<b>Energy 2</b> <i>Nakul Prabhakar Sangolli</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Energy discussion comments</li> <li>Informational Interview write-up due</li> </ol>

	Master of Arts in Law and Diplomacy	
<b>SPRING BREAK</b>		
<b>Week 10 – Start of Solutions</b>		
<b>Tuesday Mar 28</b>	<b>Carbon Removal</b> <i>Bill Moomaw</i> Emeritus Professor, The Fletcher School and Co-director Tufts Global Development and Environment Institute	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="#">Intact Forests in the United States</a></li> <li>2. <a href="#">Net Zero is a Trap</a></li> <li>3. <a href="#">Career 3</a></li> <li>4. Speaker review 8</li> </ol>
<b>Thursday Mar 30</b>	<b>Arts &amp; Humanities</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Speaker review 9</li> <li>2. Prep for Arts &amp; Humanities <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <a href="#">TED Talk: Why the arts are essential in addressing climate change</a></li> <li>b. <a href="#">Randall Hyman Photography</a></li> <li>c. <a href="#">The Poignant Music of Melting Glaciers</a></li> </ol> </li> <li>3. Arts &amp; Humanities presentations</li> </ol>
<b>Week 11</b>		
<b>Tuesday Apr 4</b>	<b>Green Buildings</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Green building prep <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• View <a href="#">videos</a> about green buildings at Tufts</li> <li>• Read <a href="#">article</a> about green building certifications</li> <li>• Read <a href="#">article</a> about green building performance and cost</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Green Building discussion board</li> <li>3. Arts and Humanities reflection</li> </ol>
<b>Thursday Apr 6</b>	<b>Low Impact Development</b> <i>Scott Horsley</i> Principal, Horsley-Witten Group. Lecturer, Tufts UEP	No assignments due
<b>Week 12</b>		
<b>Tuesday Apr 11</b>	<b>Self-care in a time of crisis</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="#">Career 4</a></li> <li>2. Speaker review 10</li> </ol>
<b>Thursday Apr 13</b>	<b>Other Solutions</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. <a href="#">Project Drawdown</a> review – view videos 3-6</li> <li>4. Feedback on self-care session (optional)</li> </ol>
<b>Week 13</b>		
<b>Tuesday Apr 18</b>	<b>Business/Food</b> <i>Nako Kobayashi</i> Manager, Food Emissions 50 at Ceres, Inc.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Feedback on Project Drawdown Activity</li> </ol>
<b>Thursday Apr 20</b>	<b>Activity</b> Begin EnRoads climate simulation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Prep for EnRoads climate simulation (will be emailed to you)</li> <li>2. Speaker review 11</li> </ol>
<b>Week 14</b>		
<b>Tuesday Apr 25</b>	<b>Activity</b> Conclude EnRoads climate simulation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Become familiar with EnRoads simulator</li> </ol>
<b>Thursday Apr 27</b>	<b>Last class</b> Reflection	No assignments due
<b>May 5</b>	First Day of finals	<b>1. Career exploration presentations due</b>
<b>May 13</b>	Last day of finals	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Career exploration report due</b></li> <li>2. Final Course Review</li> </ol>

## Semester Long Assignments

### Informational Interview

(due mid-semester)

Each student is required to do at least one informational interview. Students choosing to do the 4-5 informational interviews option as their career exploration will have 1 automatically counted towards this requirement.

Submit the following:

1. Summary Document (3-4 paragraphs) that includes:
  - The person's name, title, company, brief description of company, why you chose them
  - How you *connected* with them (e.g. through LinkedIn group, your cousin, etc), and how you *contacted* them.
  - General overview of how it went - what did you take away from the interview?
2. Interview notes: Include the questions and your notes about their answers
  - Must be *legible* and *understandable* (e.g. in complete sentences) so you might have to do a little editing.

### Career exploration

Volunteer at a non-profit of interest to you for 12 hours over the course of the semester OR job shadow 1 or more people for 8 hours sometime during the semester OR do 3-4 (additional) informational interviews with people in careers that interest you. You may also do a combination. We expect you to spend about 13-15 hours over the course of the semester - this is a little over an hour a week - but you can spread it out however it makes sense for you.

The intent of this assignment is to get you moving and engaged in figuring out what you like. It's sometimes intimidating to reach out to strangers, so this will be your push to get out of your comfort zone and connect with professionals or try out something you've been wondering about. We will help connect you with organizations and people.

Note that this is a career exploration, *not* a job or internship search! Interviews for positions will not count, and you should not ask about jobs except in a general sense during informational interviews - it's a big turn-off for the people you're talking to and will leave them with a bad impression of you. Another way to think about is that an informational interview is about *them* and *their experiences*, whereas a job interview is about *you* and *your experiences* - two inherently different things. [This article](#) explains more about how to navigate this.

**By May 5** (first day of finals) record a 5-ish minute **video/presentation** that covers:

6. What you did

7. What you learned - primarily about yourself and what you liked and didn't like about the job(s), but you can also include anything interesting or surprising that you learned about some aspect of sustainability or the career/job.
8. Key take-aways for you
9. Advice to others who might want to do something similar

**By the end of finals** write a **final report** that gives details about the experience and summarizes lessons learned. It should include:

1. Your strategy going into the assignment
2. Description(s) of each entity you talked to/worked with, including names, job titles, purpose of the company, etc.)
3. Dates/times and methods of contact (with notes, pictures, etc. in an appendix)
4. Why you chose them
5. A description of what you did (e.g. "did an informational interview over Zoom;" or describe your volunteer experience tasks)
6. Your key overall take-aways from the experience
7. You will also be assigned some of your classmates' presentations to review and should include in your final report ways you could use information from their experiences in your own career exploration (e.g. did they have some take aways that are relevant to you? Did they talk to people you might also like to talk to, etc.)

The total grade will encompass both your effort over the whole semester in seeking out something that truly interests you, the progress reports, the video, and the final report. Be sure to describe details that show your effort. Of course, I trust that you are making your best effort, but in order to be able to give you a grade you need to be able to demonstrate it as well. This could be in the form of pictures of your volunteer experience, copies of your interview notes, thank you notes to the person you job shadowed, detailed narratives, etc. Make us feel like we were right there with you!

So, to summarize, be sure to:

10. **Take pictures, scan letters, notes, etc. and upload them to your "career updates" and/or include them in your final report.**
11. Complete all career updates related to your career exploration thoroughly throughout the semester (e.g. with details of who you contacted, what organization they are affiliated with, when and how you contacted them, the responses received, how you are adjusting to setbacks, etc.).

### ***Student Resources:***

**Religious Accommodations:** Tufts University faculty, staff, and administration highly value and acknowledge the religious diversity of its student body. Students seeking religious accommodations related to their holy days are encouraged to collaborate with faculty to make arrangements during the first week of each semester. The religious holy days calendar, including the holy days policy from the Faculty Handbook, is available [here](#) for your reference. Students seeking additional support may refer to the University Religious Accommodations

Policy, available [here](#). The University Chaplaincy is also available to respond to questions on religious observances; their contact information is available [here](#).

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** Tufts is committed to providing equal access and support to all qualified students through the provision of reasonable accommodations. If you have a disability that requires reasonable accommodations, contact the StAAR Center at [StaarCenter@tufts.edu](mailto:StaarCenter@tufts.edu) or [617-627-4539](tel:617-627-4539). Please be aware that accommodations cannot be enacted retroactively, making timeliness a critical aspect for their provision.

**Academic Support at the StAAR Center:** The StAAR Center offers a variety of FREE resources to all students. Students may make an appointment to work on any writing-related project or assignment, attend subject tutoring in a variety of disciplines, or meet with an academic coach to hone skills like time management and navigating procrastination. Students can make an appointment for any of these services by visiting <https://students.tufts.edu/staar-center>.

**Student Support, including Mental Health:** As a student, there may be times when personal stressors or difficulties interfere with your academic performance or well-being. The [Dean of Student Affairs Office](#) offers support and care to undergraduates and graduate students who are experiencing difficulties, and can also aid faculty in their work with students. In addition, through Tufts' [Counseling and Mental Health Service \(CMHS\)](#) students can access mental health support 24/7, and they can provide information on additional resources. CMHS also provides confidential consultation, brief counseling, and urgent care at no cost for all Tufts undergraduates as well as for graduate students who have paid the student health fee. To make an appointment, call 617-627-3360. Please visit the CMHS website: <http://go.tufts.edu/Counseling> to learn more about their services and resources.

### ***Classroom Policy Statements:***

**In-Person Classroom Health and Safety Policy:** Tufts is not currently mandating mask-wearing in the classroom. I will be wearing a mask, and others should feel free to do so as well. We cannot know everyone's personal or familial health situations, so please take the steps you need to feel comfortable in an in-person setting. Should the university's masking requirements change, we will update our practices as well. Here is the link to the current Tufts COVID policy: [Healthy@Tufts | Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#).

**Policy on sharing.** This course is designed for everyone to feel comfortable participating in discussion, asking questions, learning, and facilitating the learning of others. In order for that atmosphere to be maintained, any recordings of our conversations will only be shared with the enrolled students in the class (not posted publicly) and it is prohibited for any of us who have access to the video to share it outside the course. Similarly, I have specifically designed the syllabus, exams, handouts, and lectures for the people who are enrolled in the course this term and those may not be shared outside this course. It is against Tufts policy for anyone to share any content made available in this course including course syllabi, reading materials, problems sets, videos, handouts, and exams, with anyone outside of the course without the express permission of the instructor. This especially includes any posting or sharing of videos or other recordings on publicly accessible websites or forums. Any such sharing or posting could violate copyright law or law that protects the privacy of student educational records.

### **Academic Integrity Policy**



Tufts holds its students strictly accountable for adherence to academic integrity. The consequences for violations can be severe. It is critical that you understand the requirements of ethical behavior and academic work as described in Tufts' Academic Integrity handbook. If you ever have a question about the expectations concerning a particular assignment or project in this course, be sure to ask me for clarification. The Faculty of the School of Arts and Sciences and the School of Engineering are required to report suspected cases of academic integrity violations to the Dean of Student Affairs Office. If I suspect that you have cheated or plagiarized in this class, I must report the situation to the dean.