

Seminar on Rural Sustainability - A North American Perspective
Fall 2012

Course Meetings: Fridays, 12:05 pm to 1:25 pm Eastern Time.

Course Objective: This course applies key concepts of sustainable development to rural communities in North America. The course is offered as part of the North American Mobility project “SustR: Sustainable Development for Rural Communities: Social, Health, Economic, and Environmental Advances.” The project is organized by a consortium of universities, including Lakehead University (Canada), Michigan Technological University (United States), Universidad Autonoma de Aguascalientes (Mexico), Universidad de Sonora (Mexico), and the University of Northern British Columbia (Canada).

Course Format: The course will be delivered as web-based lectures and readings and web-based discussions over an 11-week period. Lecture materials and readings will be supplied to students from the six consortium universities each week via the course website. On Friday of each week, students from the consortium universities will participate in an online discussion session on the week’s topics, led by the students.

Course Requirements:

Students will submit a three-page reflection paper following each week of the course. Students are expected to address the Discussion Questions found in each weekly module’s web page reflection paper will be posted the Friday before the week when the paper topic is discussed. Reflection papers will be due the Wednesday after the week’s module. Your reflection papers will be posted on the course website. The grading rubric for the reflection paper is attached.

Students are expected to participate in all of the web-based discussions. MTU students will lead the web-based discussion five times during the course, by presenting a 10-minute presentation on the week’s topics and a series of questions on which to focus the discussion. The grading rubric for the discussion is attached.

A 10-page synthesis paper will be due 12/14/2012, drawing together the course and explaining the concepts of rural sustainability. Guidelines for the final reflection are attached.

You will also be asked to complete a short evaluation at the end of the course, in addition to the standard MTU course evaluation. While there is not grade for the evaluation, you will not get a grade until you complete the evaluation.

The grading of the course is based on the following breakdown.

11 weekly reflection papers	55%
synthesis paper	30%
participation	15%

Course Restrictions: There are no prerequisites. The course is open to students at the second-year level (or 30 credit hours) or above or by instructor permission.

Course Website: http://www.geo.mtu.edu/~asmayer/Seminar_on_Rural_Sustainability.htm

Course Schedule

Week	Date*	Topic	Responsible University**
	9/3/2012 - 9/7/2012	No class	
1	9/10/2012 - 9/14/2012	Introduction to the course; Goals and objectives of rural sustainable development	MTU/LU
2	9/17/2012 - 9/21/2012	Global, regional and local forces	MTU
3	9/24/2012 - 9/28/2012	Governance and the Commons	LU
4	10/1/2012 - 10/5/2012	Case study: Renewable energy	MTU
5	10/8/2012 - 10/12/2012	Case study: Food security and cultural connectedness	LU
	10/15/2012 - 10/19/2012	No class	
6	10/22/2012 - 10/26/2012	Case study: Sustainable agriculture	MTU
7	10/29/2012 - 11/2/2012	Case study: Sustainable rural tourism	UNBC
8	11/5/2012 - 11/9/2012	Case study: Natural Resource Extraction – the Case of Mining	LU
9	11/12/2012 - 11/16/2012	Case study: Population	MTU
10	11/19/2012 - 11/23/2012	Case study: Water and Sanitation	LU
	11/26/2012 - 11/30/2012	No class (US Thanksgiving)	
11	12/3/2102 to 12/7/2012	Case study: Biodiversity and rural communities	LU
	12/10 to 12/14/2012	No class	

*Dates are subject to change

** LU = Lakehead University, MTU = Michigan Technological University, UAA = Universidad Autonoma de Aguascalientes, UNISON = Universidad de Sonora, UNBC = University of Northern British Columbia, UPRM = University of Puerto Rico Mayagüez

Academic regulations and procedures are governed by University policy. Academic dishonesty cases will be handled in accordance the University's policies.

Academic Integrity:

<http://www.mtu.edu/dean/conduct/policy/academic-integrity/>

If you have a disability that could affect your performance in this class or that requires an accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act, please your instructor as soon as possible so that we can make appropriate arrangements.

Disability Services:

<http://www.mtu.edu/dean/disability/policies/>

The Affirmative Action Office has asked that you be made aware of the following:
Michigan Technological University complies with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding discrimination, including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. If you have a disability and need a reasonable accommodation for equal access to education or services at Michigan Tech, please call the Dean of Students Office at 487-2212. For other concerns about discrimination, you may contact your advisor, Chair/Dean of your academic unit, or the Affirmative Programs Office at 487-3310.

Affirmative Action:

<http://www.admin.mtu.edu/aao/>

Equal Opportunity Statement:

<http://www.admin.mtu.edu/admin/boc/policy/ch5/>

Reflection Paper Rubric

Module X

Student X

Category	Points				
Organization (30%)	30	25	20	15	10
	Information is very organized with well constructed paragraphs and information is factual and correct.	Information is organized with well constructed paragraphs and information is factual and correct.	Information is organized and information is factual but paragraphs are not well constructed.	The information appears to be disorganized. Information is suspect as to being correct and factual.	Information is not only disorganized but inaccurate.
Quality of Information/Depth of Analysis (50%)	50	45	40	30	20
	Information clearly relates to the topic of module. The reflection provides a good synthesis of the material. The student interweaves information regarding many specific aspects from module.	Information clearly relates to the topic of module. The essay attempts to synthesize material. The student interweaves information regarding a few specific aspects from module.	Information clearly relates to the topic of module. The essay is linear in presentation. Material is listed and described separately and at length. The student does not interweave information regarding aspects from module.	Information has little to do with the main topic.	Information has nothing to do with the main topic.
Mechanics (20%)	20	15	10	5	0
	Paper contains no grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors. Several sources are cited.	Paper contains almost no grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors. A few sources are cited.	Paper contains a few grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors. One or two sources are cited.	Paper contains many grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors. One or two sources are cited.	Paper contains many grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors. No sources are cited.
Total score = XX					

Guidelines for Evaluating Weekly Course Participation:

Participation is the key to a lively class. Your participation during the synchronous and asynchronous class sessions provides the opportunity to practice speaking and persuasive skills, as well as the ability to listen. Comments that are vague, repetitive, unrelated to the current topic, disrespectful of others, or without sufficient foundation will be evaluated negatively. What matters is the (a) depth of your preparation through reviewing the weekly materials (b) the quality of your contributions to the class discussion, not the number of times one speaks, and (c) if it is your group's turn to lead the discussion, the quality of your 10-minute summary.

Outstanding Contributor: Contributions in both components of the class reflect exceptional preparation. Ideas offered are always substantive and provide one or more major insights as well as direction for the class. Challenges are well substantiated and persuasively presented. If this person were not a member of the class, the quality of discussion would be diminished markedly. The 10-minute summary is so well prepared that a discussion participant would not have needed to have reviewed the course materials to understand the module topic. (A grade range: 9.0-10 points)

Good Contributor: Contributions in class reflect thorough preparation. Ideas offered are usually substantive, provide good insights and sometimes direction for the class. Challenges are well substantiated and often persuasive. If this person were not a member of the class, the quality of discussion would be diminished. The 10-minute summary is reasonably well prepared, but either some important points are missed or are not as well explained. (B grade range: 8.0-8.9 points)

Adequate Contributor: Contributions in class reflect satisfactory preparation. Ideas offered are sometimes substantive, provide generally useful insights but seldom offer a new direction for the discussion. Challenges are sometimes presented, fairly well substantiated, and are sometimes persuasive. If this person were not a member of the class, the quality of discussion would be diminished somewhat. The 10-minute summary has been prepared, but many important points are missed or are not well explained. (C grade range: 7.0-7.9 points)

Non-Participant: This person says little or nothing in class. Hence, there is not an adequate basis for evaluation. If this person were not a member of the class, the quality of discussion would not be changed. The 10-minute summary has been prepared, but almost all important points are missed or are not well explained. (D grade range: 6.0-6.9 points)

Unsatisfactory Contributor: Contributions in class reflect inadequate preparation. Ideas offered are seldom substantive, provide few if any insights and never a constructive direction for the class. Integrative comments and effective challenges are absent. If this person were not a member of the class, valuable air-time would be saved. The 10-minute summary has not been prepared. (F grade: < 6.0 points)

Rural Sustainability Seminar

Synthesis Paper

Due: 12/14/2012

Length: 10 pages

Purpose: Synthesize the course materials (web-based lectures, readings, presentations, discussion, etc.) to indicate what you have learned concepts of rural sustainability.

What are the major themes, with respect to rural communities and sustainable development, running through the case studies? This doesn't mean that you should review each case study, one by one, in the paper. Instead, you should synthesize: identify major ideas, with respect to rural communities and sustainable development, which seem to be common among the case studies. Or, you can discuss why one idea seems to be present in some of the case studies and not in the others. You should reference the case studies (including citing relevant readings from the modules) as you describe these strands. You should also connect these strands identified from the case studies to the concepts that covered in the first few lectures of the course.

Try thinking of this paper as something you would hand to a peer or a professor that would tell them everything they need to know about this course! In other words, the paper should stand alone- somebody could read it and not have to have read the module materials, watched the on-line presentations, or participated in the discussion.

The paper should be written in narrative style, but you may want to include headings or sub-headings to designate what you will talk about in each section of the paper. You should finish with a short conclusions section.