

Luther College Course Syllabus: PHIL 282-L01

Luther College is a federated college at the University of Regina. Grounded in the liberal arts tradition, Luther College is committed to personalized education in a community of scholars who value excellent teaching and engaged learning. Luther courses are student-centred and open to students from all faculties and federated colleges at the University of Regina.

Course Number:	PHIL 282-L01 (CRN 32051)
Course Title:	<i>Philosophical Issues in Sustainable Development</i>
Term/Year:	Fall 2016
Times and Locations:	Monday and Wednesday, 14:30 am - 15:45 pm, Luther College Room 208
Pre-Requisites:	Philosophy 100 or completion of 15 credit hours
Instructor Name and Title:	Dr. Roger Petry
Office Location:	Luther College, Room 112
Email:	roger.petry@uregina.ca (put "phil 282" in subject line of e-mail)
Phone Number:	306-585-5295
Office Hours:	Tuesdays 12:45 to 2:00 pm Wednesdays 12:45 to 2:00 pm or by appointment

Any student with a disability who may need accommodations should discuss these with the course instructor, and contact the Coordinator of the Centre for Student Accessibility at 306.585.4631.

Course Description:

Sustainable Development is now central to agendas of the UN, Higher Education, leading businesses, government, and non-governmental organizations. But what does it mean? Is it coherent? Can it be done? This course examines sustainability from a philosophical perspective. Defined early on as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs", the course will seek to clarify its various meanings, their coherence, justifications, implications, and related concepts. Political philosophy, philosophy of economics, and ethics will also be employed. Finally, strategic approaches proposed for achieving sustainability will be considered including institutional change, education, and technological innovation. Where possible, the course will make use of local sustainability issues in examining these philosophical topics.

Contribution to Degrees in Philosophy and Sustainability Certificate:

Philosophy 282 counts towards the *BA Major, Honours Major, and Minor in Philosophy*. It is also a value contribution to the combined *BA Major in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics (PPE; see <http://www.uregina.ca/arts/economics/programs/undergrad/ppe.html>)*. Lastly, it fulfills 1 of the 6 course requirements for the *Certificate in Sustainability* at the University of Regina (see <https://www.luthercollege.edu/university/academics/degrees-certificates-diplomas/arts/certificate-in-sustainability>)

Instructor's Bio:

See: <https://www.luthercollege.edu/university/academics/faculty-profiles/roger-petry>

Learning Objectives and/or Outcomes:

Students in Philosophy 282 will achieve the following learning objectives:

- *To understand possible meanings of sustainable development and sustainability and related concepts and how these differ from historic and dominant paradigms of development*
- *To understand ethical principles and other concepts that underly a robust understanding of sustainable development and possible justifications for these along with criticisms*
- *To understand how the discourse of sustainable development potentially relates to the works of earlier and contemporary political philosophers and the identify of sustainable livelihoods and their implications for achieving sustainability*
- *To be able to classify diverse strategies proposed for achieving sustainability while also being able to conceptually evaluate their strengths and limitations*

Students will acquire this knowledge and develop these skills and capabilities through in-class discussions, readings, an essay assignment, and a midterm and final exam.

Meta-skills and/or Capabilities:

In addition to important contributions to one's personal development and life fulfillment, philosophy develops skills and abilities readily transferred to other academic disciplines, one's chosen profession or field of work, and community responsibilities (see "why study philosophy" at <https://sites.google.com/site/whystudyphilosophy/>). In this course specific capabilities you will develop include:

- **Critical reasoning** skills that include learning how to identify, construct, and challenge various types of arguments related to sustainable development and unsustainability.
 - **Analytical thinking** including the ability to identify key dimensions of economic, social, environmental, and cultural issues that inform the goals of sustainable development, impact sustainability positively and negatively, and shape strategic thinking in a local, Canadian, and/or global context.
 - **A practical sustainable development toolkit** associated with different understandings of sustainability including avenues for questioning and principle-based testing of proposed patterns of lifestyle, livelihood, and development.
 - **Self-awareness, independent, and integrated thinking** that includes formulating and further developing and supporting your own views on pressing issues of sustainable development affecting individuals, organizations, policy makers, and communities to allow for effective judgement as a citizen and strategic engagement in one's communities.
 - **Understanding of important philosophers and philosophical texts** informing current understandings of development and related ethical values applied to future generations, non-human species, and natural and constructed objects.
 - **Development as a Global Citizen:** The ability to provide good arguments is an important part of mobilizing communities to engage in important courses of action that are likely to succeed and are sustainable as well as providing a basis for constructive resolution of conflict across traditional barriers
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Required Text:

Robertson, Margaret. *Sustainability: Principles and Practice*. London: Routledge, 2014. Two copies of the textbook are available on 2 hour, in-library reserve in the Luther College library.

Electronic Resources:

The UR Courses site (<http://www.uregina.ca/urcourses/> (go to: "Login to URCourses")) will be continually updated with lecture slides, announcements, links to other articles/website etc. during the course of the semester.

Class Schedule

Since assignments will be taken up during class, students will need to bring their exercise books to each class. Exercises should be completed for the date assigned. The following is a list of dates indicating important test dates, the final exam, and other significant dates.

Wednesday, Sept. 7	First Day of Class
Monday, October 10	University closed (Thanksgiving)
Wednesday, Oct. 12	<u>Midterm Exam</u>
Wednesday, Oct. 19	Guest Lecture by Luther College Librarian
Wednesday, Nov. 2	Term Paper Proposal Due
Wednesday, Nov. 30	Term Paper Due
Monday, Dec. 5	Review for final/Last Day of this Class
Monday, Dec. 12	<u>Final Exam (2:00 p.m.)</u>

Topics potentially examined during the course include:

- Meanings and coherence of sustainable development (SD) (e.g., sustainability and SD, weak and strong sustainability, SD as a contested concept, SD and natural and human capital/capabilities)
- Relationship of SD to other concepts (e.g. sustainability, sustainable growth, ecological modernization)
- Underlying principles of SD (e.g., the precautionary principle, common but differentiated responsibilities)
- Ethical commitments of SD (e.g., inter and intra-generational equity; the ethical status of future generations; SD and anthropocentrism; instrumental and intrinsic valuations of nature; commitments to improve human well-being, quality of life, and ecological health/resilience; normative justifications for various types of participation in advancing SD)
- SD critiques of modern economic development (e.g., potential limits to economic growth and other factors limiting the long term sustainability of current economies)
- Political philosophy and SD (e.g., the role of the United Nations in advancing the SD agenda (e.g. the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), SD as a strategic discourse)
- The merits of different approaches to advancing SD (e.g., sustainable livelihoods, sustainable production and consumption, organizational and institutional approaches, technological and educational approaches)

Evaluation Components and Due Dates

Evaluation Component	Grade Weight	Due Date
Attendance/participation/ assignments	10%	Conducted during regular class time
Midterm Exam	25%	Wed., Oct. 12
Term Paper Proposal	5%	Wed., Nov. 2
Term Paper	30%	Wed., Nov. 30
Final Exam	30%	Mon., Dec. 12 (2:00 pm)
Total	100%	

Professional Conduct & Policies

Academic Honesty:

Note the definitions of plagiarism and cheating in [§5.14.2.2](#) of the 2016-2017 Calendar. If you have any questions about the proper methods of citing sources, the extent to which sources (including internet resources) must be cited, or what might constitute plagiarism, please discuss your questions with your instructor before handing in work! Cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic misconduct undermine academic integrity and are punishable as outlined in [§5.14.2](#) of the Calendar. Please note that when you hand in assignments, it is assumed that you handed in the version you intended to hand in – the excuse that you ‘accidentally’ handed in the wrong file will not be accepted. Turnitin software will be employed in cases of suspected plagiarism.

Late Submission Policy:

The penalty for late assignments will be 3% of the grade for the assignment per day. A midterm exam on a date other than the scheduled date will only be allowed for legitimate absences accompanied by documented evidence explaining absence (e.g. doctor’s note, etc). All students must write the final exam. It is the student's responsibility to make sure they know the correct time, date and location of the final exam. Getting this information wrong is not a legitimate reason for requesting a deferred exam.

Attendance Policy:

As part of a community of scholars, students are expected to attend classes regularly and to be present on exam dates. Students will find the UR Courses website useful in keeping up with the course in the event of illness. Completion of assignments and regular attendance is important for student success in this course. **Students who are persistently tardy or absent or who neglect academic work may be subject to disciplinary action and may be excluded from the final examinations ([§5.3](#) of the 2016-17 Calendar).**

Use of Electronic Devices:

Students may use laptops/tablets during class for notetaking and other activities related to an examination of topics under discussion. Other uses should be of an exceptional nature and should not distract fellow students. Electronic devices cannot be used during examinations except where special permission has been granted by the instructor to meet a special needs accommodation. Evidence of possible use of an electronic device during an exam will be subject to appropriate penalties for cheating (see “Academic Honesty” above).

Other Policies:

A list of **Luther Course Announcements** that inform students of important dates applicable to all courses along with a **Luther Safety Guide** on how to respond in cases of emergency while in the College is posted on URCourses.