

GEOL 1333: Sustainability Project Management
Fall Semester 2025

Thursday, 6:00-8:30 p.m.

Thaw 203

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The traditional definition of *Sustainability* is to design systems that meet the needs of current populations without jeopardizing the ability of future generations to thrive. The more practical definition of sustainability is that it can be used as a lens through which environmental, social and economic initiatives and projects can be created, planned and executed in a thoughtful and inclusive way. At the campus level, this lens can be applied to buildings, campus culture, waste mitigation, or policies that address student basic needs (food, housing etc.) and campus culture. Sustainability in both theory and practice is intentionally broad in scope. **In this class you will use sustainability as the lens for learning project management in a cross-functional team setting.**

Our focus will be experiential. Students will conceive, develop, and advocate for sustainability projects on campus and/or in the community. We will have guest speakers to offer their perspectives on sustainability priorities and topics, and students will organize and participate in campus-based sustainability initiatives, culminating in the presentation of their work at the Annual Student Sustainability Showcase on **Friday, December 5, 2025.**

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. *Students will gain practical project management and sustainability experience.* This semester, you will self-organize into groups, working to develop a project that will enhance sustainable practices on the Pitt campus and/or in the Pitt “community”.
2. *Students will understand how to project plan using sustainability as a lens.* Through lectures, conversations, research, interviews, group projects, and more, you will have the opportunity to learn about sustainability from many perspectives and to see how your perspectives may evolve with the experience. You will develop your project using that learned experience.
3. *Students will enhance their project management skills and understanding of sustainability initiatives.* Each week you will work on organizational, interpersonal, communication, and leadership skills. You will self-organize into project management roles, and utilize your skills to build a cohesive, working project team and a successful sustainability initiative.

CLASS & ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE:

8/28/25 (Week 1) Class Intros and Level Set

- Welcome and intros- Instructors, TAs and Class
 - Icebreaker: Better Connection
- Guest Lecture (Ward Allebach): History of Sustainability at Pitt
- Sustainability Theory
- Course Introduction: Class Structure and Expectations
 - Project Brainstorm and Discussion
- Campus Perspectives
- Prep for Week 2 Assignment (Project Connections 1)
- Assignment Due 8.28.25: N/A

9/4/25 (Week 2) Mentor Meet and Greet

- Mentor Tabling Session and Sustainability Staff Roundtable
- Assignment Due: Project Connections 1 due 9.3.25 at 12pm
- Assignment Due: Project Connections 2 due 9.4.25 at 9pm

9/11/25 (Week 3) Project Scoping: Research, Mission and Comms

- Project Connections Team Brainstorm
- Scoping your Project: Research and Mission Statement
- Professional Communication
- Intro to Personal Sustainability Plan Assignment
- Assignment Due 9.11.25 End of Class: Project Connections 3
- Assignment Due 9.12.25 at 5pm: Mentor Agreement (if you need additional time please notify the instructors)

9/18/25 (Week 4) Project Scoping: PM Roles, Leadership and Goals

- Project Team Report Out: Project and Mentor
- Guest Lecture (Ward Allebach): Active Listening

- User Manual to Me Team Exercise
- Project Management: Scoping your goals (SMART Goals)
 - Team Goal Exercise
- Leadership and Project Team Roles
- Assignment Due 9.18.25 by 6pm: User Manual to Me
- Assignment Due 9.19.25 by 5pm: Group Report #1 (Draft mission, goals and mentor meeting plan)

9/25/25 (Week 5) Timelines and Budgets

- Project Team Report Out: Draft Mission and Goals
- Project Management: Timeline Deep Dive- creating tasks and milestones
- Building a budget
- Assignment Due 9.25.25 by 6pm: Assignment Due: Personal Sustainability Plan Part 1
- Assignment Due 9.26.25 by 5pm: Group Report #2 (Timeline with tasks; Budget)

10/2/25 (Week 6) Outreach and Engagement

- Project Team Report Out: Roses and Thorns
- Outreach and Engagement
 - Elevator Pitches, Fact Sheets
 - Tabling
 - Videos and Reels
- Building relationships: Stakeholders and Allies
 - Stakeholder mapping exercise
- Assignment Due 10.3.25 by 5pm: Group Report #3 (Outreach and engagement strategy; Stakeholders; Initial research)
- Personal Meetings with TAs and Instructors- Week 6-7

10/9/25 (Week 7) Team Project Pitch

- Team Project Pitch with Feedback
 - 5 slides/5 minutes
- Assignment Due 10.9.25 by 6pm: Slide Deck for Project Pitch and Fact Sheet (one-sheet)

- Assignment Due 10.10.25 by 5pm: Draft Project Proposal (NO GROUP REPORT DUE THIS WEEK)
- Personal Meetings with TAs and Instructors- Week 6-7

10/16/25 (Week 8) Data and Deliverables

- Data Visualization and Deliverables Deep-Dive
- Assignment Due 10.17.25 by 5pm: Group Report #4 (revamped with project proposal feedback and deliverables)

10/23/25 (Week 9) Planning for the Future

- Project Team Report Out: Roses and Thorns
- Applied Skills: A day in the life of how to utilize the major objectives of the class in time management, goal setting, stakeholder engagement, asking & listening, problem solving, etc.
- Planning for the Future/Transition Plans
- Assignment Due 10.24.25 by 5pm: Group Report #5 (transition plan outline)

10/30/25 (Week 10) Planning for the Showcase

- Showcase Expectations: Tabling, Videos, Presentation
- Group Meetings and Guest Lectures
- Assignment Due 10.30.25 by 6pm: Personal Retrospective pt. 1
- Assignment Due 10.31.25 by 5pm: Group Report #6 (full report update)
- Final Personal Meetings with TAs and Instructors

11/6/25 (Week 11) Group Meetings and Showcase Prep

- Group Meetings and Guest Lectures
- Assignment Due 11.7.25 by 5pm: Final Project Proposal (NO GROUP REPORT DUE THIS WEEK)
- Final Personal Meetings with TAs and Instructors

11/13/25 (Week 12) Group Meetings and Showcase Prep

- Group Meetings and Guest Lectures
- Assignment Due 11.13.25 by 6pm: Personal Sustainability Plan Pt. 2
- Assignment Due 11.14.25 by 5pm: Group Report #7 (full report update)
- Assignment Due 11.14.25 by 5pm: Draft Video Reels

- Final Personal Meetings with TAs and Instructors

11/20/25 (Week 13) Showcase Presentation Run-Thru

- 1st Presentation Run Through; Video Debut
- Assignment Due 11.20.25 by 6pm: Draft Showcase Slide Deck, Draft Tabling Plan and Final Reels/Videos
- NO GROUP REPORT DUE THIS WEEK

11/27/25 (Week 14): Thanksgiving Break- NO CLASS

12/4/25 (Week 15) Final Showcase Prep

- Final Presentations Run Through
- Assignment Due 12.4.25 by 6pm: FINAL tabling and reels/videos due
- Assignment Due 12.4.25 by 11pm: FINAL Showcase Slide Deck
- NO GROUP REPORT DUE THIS WEEK

12/5 (Week 15)

- **Sustainability Showcase 9am-3pm, William Pitt Union**

12/11/25 (Week 16) Final Materials and Class/Project Wrap Up

- Last day of class
- Assignment Due 12.11.25 by 6pm: Group Report #8: ALL FINAL MATERIALS AND REFLECTIONS DUE
- Assignment Due 12.11.25 by 6pm: Personal Retrospective pt. 2

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GRADING

Mid-term Checkpoint (THRU WEEK 7) – 330 points

- o Group Assignments and Group Reports (150)
- o Personal Sustainability Plan Pt. 1 (100)
- o Other Individual Assignments (30)
- o TA, Mentor, Instructor, & Self/Peer Evaluations (50)

Final Semester Evaluation (WEEK 16) – 670 points

- o Group Assignments and Group Reports (90)
- o Personal Sustainability Plan Pt. 2 (100)

- o TA, Mentor, Instructor, & Self/Peer Evaluations (50)
- o Showcase Presentation, Tabling and Video (330)
- o Personal Retrospective pt. 1 (25)
- o Personal Retrospective pt. 2 (25)
- o Final Group Report and Materials (50)

Total Points Available: 1000 points

Grading Breakdown:

A = 900-1000
B = 800-899
C = 700-799
D = 600-699
F = 599 or below

Class Participation and Attendance

Being Here is A Big Deal!

- o Please note that there are many legitimate reasons to miss or be late for/leave early from class. If you let me know about it in advance, I can consider waiving the penalties.
- o Missing more than three classes for any reason (which equates to more than 20% of the class time for the semester!) will result in lowering your overall grade for the class by a full letter grade. So, please be mindful of attendance, especially early in the semester.

Late Policy

All assignments should be submitted on Canvas on the date and time that they are due, unless otherwise noted. Assignments handed in afterward will be penalized points equal to one letter grade per full week late. I reserve the right to use my own judgment for penalties and/or extended deadlines whenever I am alerted in advance to potential lateness.

Additional Information

It is expected that you will spend an average of three to five hours outside of class each week in preparation for the following week's class. Please note that students need to be evaluated in a substantial fashion before the deadline for Monitored Withdrawal, usually by the end of the ninth week of the term.

Your Well-being Matters

College can be an exciting and challenging time for students. Taking time to maintain your well-being and seek appropriate support can help you achieve your goals and lead a fulfilling life. It can be helpful to remember that we all benefit from assistance and guidance at times, and there are many resources available to support your well-being while you are at Pitt. You are encouraged to visit [Thrive@Pitt](#) to learn more about well-being and the many campus resources available to help you thrive.

If you or anyone you know experiences overwhelming academic stress, persistent difficult feelings and/or challenging life events, you are strongly encouraged to seek support. In addition to reaching out

to friends and loved ones, consider connecting with a faculty member you trust for assistance connecting to helpful resources.

- [SNAP](#) provides monthly benefits to help eligible students afford groceries, supporting academic focus and overall well-being. If you're interested in learning more or seeing if you qualify, visit the [Pennsylvania Department of Human Services website](#), or contact Pitt's Care and Resource Support Office for resources and application guidance.
- [Care & Resource Support](#): Connect with resources like an on-campus food pantry and thrift store, as well as Care Advocates.
- [Counseling Center](#): The mission of the University Counseling Center is to create an inclusive space and provide high quality services that support the emotional well-being of Pitt's diverse student body.
- [Financial Aid Office](#): Learn more about financial aid, including FASFA, and connect with individuals who can answer questions
- [Financial Wellness Center](#): The Financial Wellness Center aims to equip students with the personal finance skills to take control of their finances now and in the future.
- [OIS](#): The Office of International Services (OIS) provides immigration-related services for international visitors, students, faculty, researchers, and staff at the University of Pittsburgh

Academic Integrity

Students in this course will be expected to comply with the [University of Pittsburgh's Policy on Academic Integrity](#). Any student suspected of violating this obligation for any reason during the semester will be required to participate in the procedural process, initiated at the instructor level, as outlined in the University Guidelines on Academic Integrity. This may include, but is not limited to, the confiscation of the examination of any individual suspected of violating University Policy. Furthermore, no student may bring any unauthorized materials to an exam, including dictionaries and programmable calculators.

To learn more about Academic Integrity, visit the [Academic Integrity Guide](#) for an overview of the topic. For hands- on practice, complete the [Academic Integrity Modules](#).

Disability Services

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and [Disability Resources and Services](#) (DRS), 140 William Pitt Union, (412) 648-7890, drsrecep@pitt.edu, (412) 228-5347 for P3 ASL users, as early as possible in the term. DRS will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course.

Civil Rights and Title IX

The University of Pittsburgh does not tolerate any form of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation based on disability, race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, genetic information, marital status, familial status, sex, age, sexual orientation, veteran status or gender identity or other factors as stated in the University's Title IX policy. The University is committed to taking prompt action to end a hostile environment that interferes with the University's mission. For more information about policies, procedures, and practices, visit the [Civil Rights & Title IX Compliance web page](#).

I ask that everyone in the class strive to help ensure that other members of this class can learn in a supportive and respectful environment. If there are instances of the aforementioned issues, please contact the Title IX Coordinator, by calling 412-648-7860, or e-mailing titleixcoordinator@pitt.edu. Reports can also be [filed online](#). You may also choose to report this to a faculty/staff member; they are required to communicate this to the University's Office of Institutional Engagement and Wellbeing. If

you wish to maintain complete confidentiality, you may also contact the University Counseling Center (412-648-7930).

Gender Inclusive Statement Language

Language is gender-inclusive and non-sexist when we use words that affirm and respect how people describe, express, and experience their gender. Gender-inclusive/non-sexist language acknowledges people of all genders (for example, first year student versus freshman, chair versus chairman, humankind versus mankind, everyone versus ladies and gentlemen, etc.). It also affirms non-binary gender identifications, and recognizes both gender identity and expression. Identities including trans, intersex, and genderqueer reflect personal descriptions, expressions, and experiences. Just as sexist language excludes women's experiences, gendered language excludes the experiences of individuals whose identities may not fit the gender binary, and/or who may not identify with the sex they were assigned at birth. Students, faculty, and staff have the right to control their own identity and to be referred to by the name and pronouns with which they identify. People also have the right to maintain their privacy regarding information they do not wish to share about their identities, including gender identity and pronouns.

Email Communication

Each student is issued a University e-mail address (username@pitt.edu) upon admittance. This e-mail address may be used by the University for official communication with students. Students are expected to read e-mail sent to this account on a regular basis. Failure to read and react to University communications in a timely manner does not absolve the student from knowing and complying with the content of the communications. The University provides an e-mail forwarding service that allows students to read their e-mail via other service providers (e.g., Hotmail, AOL, Yahoo). Students that choose to forward their e-mail from their pitt.edu address to another address do so at their own risk. If e-mail is lost as a result of forwarding, it does not absolve the student from responding to official communications sent to their University e-mail address.

Generative AI

Some Use of Generative AI Permitted Under Some Circumstances or With Explicit Permission

During this class, we may use Generative AI tools such as ChatGPT. You will be informed as to when, where, and how these tools are permitted to be used, along with guidance for attribution. Any use outside of this permission constitutes a violation of Pitt's [Guidelines on Academic Integrity \[PDF\]](#).

Statement on Scholarly Discourse

In this course we will be discussing very complex issues of which all of us have strong feelings and, in most cases, unfounded attitudes. It is essential that we approach this endeavor with our minds open to evidence that may conflict with our presuppositions. Moreover, it is vital that we treat each other's opinions and comments with courtesy even when they diverge and conflict with our own. We must avoid personal attacks and the use of ad hominem arguments to invalidate each other's positions. Instead, we must develop a culture of civil argumentation, wherein all positions have the right to be defended and argued against in intellectually reasoned ways. It is this standard that everyone must accept in order to stay in this class; a standard that applies to all inquiries in the university, but whose observance is especially important in a course whose subject matter is so emotionally charged.