Instructor: Nathaniel Wright

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Office Hours:

Prerequisites: ENG 201, ECO 101, or ECO 120 and 125.

Course Description
A sustainable society meets the needs of the present without diminishing the ability of future generations to enjoy the present standard of living. In this course students study how the interactions of economic, political, social and environmental forces challenge the sustainability of global society. Students learn to analyze and critique diverse theoretical perspectives on sustainability. Topics include access to resources, climate change, biodiversity, environmental justice, the illegal economy and the transboundary nature of sustainability issues.

Course Objectives
You will leave this class with an understanding of the tensions that arise when a society pursues economic expansion (growth) and environmental sustainability simultaneously. We will systematically examine why these tensions form, and what methods have been deployed to harmonize these competing interests.

Economic Efficiency and Pareto Improvements – What is meant by economic/pareto efficiency, and why it is that the price of a good may not reflect its true social cost.

Market Failures – Students will learn why it is that markets can fail allocate resources optimally and how this can cause resource depletion and environmental catastrophe.

Market Solutions – Students will gain an understanding of policies that have been devised to harmonize the goals of economic growth and environment sustainability, and correct for market failure, while still relying market mechanisms. Students will leave with the ability to evaluate the efficacy and limitations of such programs.

Non-Market Solutions – We will look at policies and programs designed to pursue sustainable ends that rely on non-market actors (often governments) i.e., actors that are not beholden to market forces or the pressures of competition. Students will leave with the ability to evaluate the efficacy and limitations of such programs.

Post-Sustainability - What if catastrophic environmental outcomes are already unavoidable?
What sort of policies could be pursued not to reverse the damage done, but to allow us to cope with it? We will explore the possibilities available to a society operating under these sorts of constraints. The goal is that students will know how to address such topics constructively and without despair.

**Course Text:** There is no textbook required for this class. **All texts will be posted on blackboard free of charge.**

**Additional texts will be posted on blackboard.**

### Grading:

- **Attendance/Participation** 10%
- **Assignments/Response papers** 20% (TBA on BB)
- **Term Paper** 20% (11/30/21)
- **Midterm Exam** 25% (10/14/21)
- **Final Exam** 25% (12/21/21)

### Participation

I will be taking attendance at the beginning of each class. Please be considerate of classmates: arrive to class on time and be respectful and constructive during class discussions. Please do not hesitate to ask questions if you have them. Students are generally far too hesitant to speak in class, and this can make class dull and unproductive. All good faith questions, comments, and ideas are welcome. Cell phones and other electronic devices must be turned off before the class begins.

Please do keep your mask on during class at this time. We can revisit this as new information comes out and safety guidelines change.

### Assignments/Response Papers

There will be approximately 6 assignments throughout the semester. These will consist of questions, problems and/or response papers. You will receive a score for each assignment ranging from 1 to 4 (for be the maximum number of points). You may work together on problems and questions, but response papers must be written individually. All assignments will be posted on blackboard. Response papers will be submitted on blackboard, other assignments will be in class. Every assignment should be submitted on time. There is a 25% penalty for all late assignments, and if the assignment is received more than a week late I will not accept it unless there are extenuating circumstances.

### Term Paper

You will need to submit a 6 – 8 page research paper on the topic of your choice, although the topic does have to relate to the course material. If you have any questions about whether a topic of interest qualifies, see me during office hours and we can discuss it. A more detailed description of expectations is forthcoming. The paper will be due on Tuesday, November 30th.
Exams
There will be a midterm and a final exam. The exams will consist of a few multiple choice questions, short answer questions, and problems. The date for the midterm is tentative, but will likely take place on Thursday, October 14th. The final will be held on Tuesday, December 21st from 3:30 PM - 5:30 PM.

Policies

Academic Integrity (copied from the 2020-2021 Undergraduate Bulletin)
*The following information is excerpted from the CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity. The complete text of the CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity can be accessed at http://www.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/la/Academic_Integrity_Policy.pdf.*

Academic dishonesty is prohibited in The City University of New York. Penalties for academic dishonesty include academic sanctions, such as failing or otherwise reduced grades, and/or disciplinary sanctions, including suspension or expulsion.

Definitions and Examples of Academic Dishonesty
Cheating is the unauthorized use or attempted use of material, information, notes, study aids, devices or communication during an academic exercise. The following are some examples of cheating, but by no means is it an exhaustive list:

- Copying from another student during an examination or allowing another to copy your work
- Unauthorized collaboration on a take-home assignment or examination
- Using notes during a closed-book examination
- Taking an examination for another student, or asking or allowing another student to take an examination for you
- Changing a graded exam and returning it for more credit
- Submitting substantial portions of the same paper to more than one course without consulting with each instructor
- Preparing answers or writing notes in a blue book (exam booklet) before an examination
- Allowing others to research and write assigned papers or do assigned projects, including use of commercial term paper services
- Giving assistance to acts of academic misconduct/dishonesty
- Fabricating data (all or in part)
- Submitting someone else’s work as your own
- Unauthorized use during an examination of any electronic devices such as cell phones, palm pilots, smart phones, tablet devices, computers or other technologies to retrieve or send information.
Plagiarism is the act of presenting another person’s ideas, research or writings as your own. The following are some examples of plagiarism, but by no means is it an exhaustive list:

- Copying another person’s actual words without the use of quotation marks and footnotes attributing the words to their source
- Presenting another person’s ideas or theories in your own words without acknowledging the source
- Using information that is not common knowledge without acknowledging the sources
- Failing to acknowledge collaborators on homework and laboratory assignments
- Internet plagiarism includes submitting downloaded term papers or parts of term papers, paraphrasing or copying information from the Internet without citing the source, and “cutting and pasting” from various sources without proper attribution.

Obtaining unfair advantage is any activity that intentionally or unintentionally gives a student an unfair advantage in the student’s academic work over another student. The following are some examples of obtaining an unfair advantage, but by no means is it an exhaustive list:

- Stealing, reproducing, circulating or otherwise gaining advance access to examination materials
- Depriving other students of access to library materials by stealing, destroying, defacing, or concealing them
- Retaining, using or circulating examination materials, which clearly indicate that they should be returned at the end of the exam
- Intentionally obstructing or interfering with another student’s work

Falsification of records and official documents. The following are some examples of falsification, but by no means is it an exhaustive list:

- Forging signatures of authorization
- Falsifying information on an official academic record
- Falsifying information on an official document such as a grade report, letter of permission, drop/add form, I.D. card or other college document

**Attendance** (copied from the 2020-2021 Undergraduate Bulletin)

Students are expected to attend all class meetings as scheduled. Excessive absence may result in a failing grade for the course and may result in the loss of financial aid. The number of absences that constitute excessive absence is determined by the individual instructor, who announces attendance guidelines at the beginning of the semester in the course syllabus. Students who register during the Change of Program period after classes have begun are responsible for the individual course attendance policy, effective from the first day of the semester.

**Extra Work During the Semester** (copied from the 2020-2021 Undergraduate Bulletin)
Instructors are not obligated to offer extra-credit work in any course. Any extra-credit coursework opportunities offered during the semester for a student to improve his or her grade must be made available to all students at the same time. The term "extra credit work" refers to optional work that may be assigned by the instructor to all students in addition to the required work for the course that all students must complete. It is distinguished from substitute assignments or substitute work that may be assigned by the instructor to individual students, such as make-up assignments to accommodate emergencies or to accommodate the special circumstances of individual students.

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** (copied from the 2020-2021 Undergraduate Bulletin)

A student should make an initial request for accommodation to the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities, and provide appropriate supporting documentation. The Student Disabilities Services Coordinator may consult with appropriate college officials such as the instructor or Provost to determine the appropriateness of the requested accommodation consistent with the program requirements. Such consultation shall be confidential, and limited to those officials whose input is necessary to the decision.

Students may consult with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities or the 504/ADA Compliance Coordinator at any time to discuss and understand their rights under the Rehabilitation Act, the ADA, and state and local legislation, and they are encouraged to do so. Carrie Dehls is the Human Resources Benefits Coordinator. Employees may reach her at cdehls@jjay.cuny.edu or at 212.237.8504.

Malaine Clarke is the Director of Accessibility Services. Students may reach her at maclarke@jjay.cuny.edu or at 212.237.8185.

Silvia Montalban is the College’s 504/ADA Compliance Coordinator, She can be reached at smontalban@jjay.cuny.edu or at 646.557.4409.

Additional information about this CUNY policy can be accessed at: [http://www.jjay.cuny.edu/accessibility-services-appeal-process](http://www.jjay.cuny.edu/accessibility-services-appeal-process)

I. Introduction

Week One:
Thursday, August 26th

II. Efficiency, Social Cost, and a Recent US Economic History as Told by Garbage

Week Two:
Tuesday, August 30th: Hall and Lieberman Chapter 14 and Rogers Chapter 5
Thursday, September 2nd: Hall and Lieberman Chapter 14 and Rogers Chapter 6

Week Three:
Tuesday, September 7th: No Class
Thursday, September 9th Hall and Lieberman Chapter 15 and Rogers Chapter 8

III. Rivalry, Excludability, and the Tragedy of The Commons
Week Four
Tuesday, September 14th
Thursday, September 16th: No Class

Week Five
Tuesday, September 21st
Thursday, September 23rd


Week Six
Tuesday, September 28th
Thursday, September 30th

Week Seven
Tuesday, October 5th
Thursday, October 7th

V. Midterm
Week Eight
Tuesday, October 12th: Review for the Midterm
Thursday, October 14th: Midterm Exam

VI. The Basics of Climate Science
Week Nine
Tuesday, October 19th:
Thursday, October 21st:

VII. Market Policies for Climate Change
Week Ten
Tuesday, October 26th
Thursday, October 28th

VIII. Non-Markets Solutions
Week Eleven
Tuesday, November 2nd
Thursday, November 4th

IX. Post-Sustainability and with and without Despair
Week Twelve
Tuesday, November 9th
Thursday, November 11th

X. Carbon Capture Technologies: How much hope is too much?
Week 13,
Tuesday, November 16th
Thursday, November 18th:

Week 14,
Tuesday, November 23rd:
Thursday, November 25th: No Class

Week 15
Tuesday, November 30th: Presentations and Term Paper Due
Thursday, December 2nd: Presentations

Week 16:
December 7th: Presentations
December 9th: Final Exam