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# Syllabus: Sustainable Living: Solutions for the 21st Century

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*University of Massachusetts Amherst*

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# NRC 185 – Sustainable Living: Solutions for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century - Spring 2015

## Course Syllabus

Lena Fletcher

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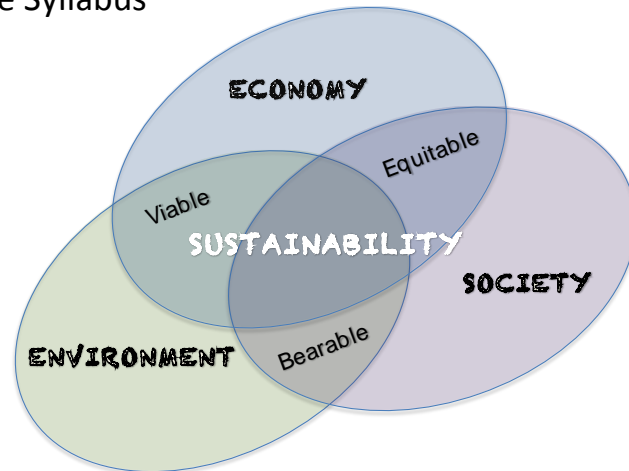
**Office phone:** 413-545-1799 (but email is better)

### Teaching team:

Laurie Simmons – lsimmons@acad.umass.edu

Max Dilthey – mdilthey@umass.edu

Kevin Hollerbach – khollerb@umass.edu



**Class time and place:** Integrated Learning Center S120

*Section 1:* Tuesday 4-5:15

*Section 2:* Thursday 4-5:15

*Optional team work time with TA support in TBL classroom:* Wednesdays 6-7:30pm in Holdsworth 211.

\*You will need to schedule at least 2 hours of weekly in-person face time with your team in addition to class time.\*

### Office Hours:

**Lena:** Monday (1:-3pm), Wednesday (10am-noon), Friday (10am-noon), or email me for an appointment.

\*Email any instructor with *at least* 24 hours-notice for an appointment; no guarantees for weekend email responses.

### Course Description:

In this innovative interdisciplinary course you will work with your peers to research and understand how sustainability in different contexts presents solutions to many problems facing modern society. You will work in teams to investigate, evaluate, communicate, and reflect on the multifaceted challenges associated with natural resource use, food systems, energy, transportation, waste, the built environment, water quality, and climate change. You will also research case studies, debate controversies, assess political and cultural contexts, investigate technological advances, and identify gaps in scientific knowledge. Using these resources, you and your peers will be tasked with developing your own sustainable solutions for the 21st century. The class will meet once a week in the new team-based learning classrooms in the Integrated Learning Center.

### Learning outcomes:

1. *To understand the challenges of sustainability, and identify how these challenges drive innovation, current research, and sustainable design and planning.*
2. *To recognize and appreciate the context of the current sustainability challenges facing the national and global population.*
3. *To collaboratively address and problem-solve complex sustainability challenges through team-based assignments.*
4. *To develop critical thinking skills and intentionally apply these skills towards issues of sustainability and society.*
5. *To improve skills for finding and using reliable information that support sustainability understanding.*
6. *To practice and improve communication skills through discussion and debate, written responses, graphic development and presentations.*
7. *To accept and give appropriate and constructive professional feedback.*
8. *To collaboratively identify, contact, and volunteer with a group doing sustainable work in the community and to reflect on your service learning experience.*
9. *To cultivate an increased awareness of, and appreciation for, the current sustainability movement through a team-based community service learning project.*

**Overall goal:** To increase awareness, optimism and motivation regarding the systemic challenges to sustainable living we are facing in the areas of natural resource use, food systems, energy, transportation, waste, the built environment, water quality and climate change and to equip students with the information, tools and experience to affect positive change.

**Course format:** We will meet Tuesdays or Thursdays 4-5:15pm throughout the semester. You will be assigned readings, audio, and video to access outside of class and will be responsible for the content individually and in teams. In-class time will be spent contemplating and discussing the course material and working on relevant team projects. Teams will be required to meet outside of class in-person routinely to complete team projects. The team service learning project will be conducted *entirely* outside of class time.

**Projects and grades:**

Assignments	Percent of grade
<b>Participation</b> - includes daily iClicker quiz questions, iPeer teamwork evaluation grades, and some in-class activities (mini projects, brainstorming/sharing, contributions to your team)	20%
<b>Weekly team projects</b> -mostly in-class (5 projects, 3 points each)	15%
3-week <b>team energy project</b> – mostly in-class	5%
<b>Individual resource log</b> – individual log of resource use	5%
<b>Ishmael</b> responses– 3 short essay responses	10%
Weekly Moodle <b>forum posts</b> (1 original post and ≥1 response to another student’s post)	10%
<b>Personal holistic goal</b> – individual project on your own sustainable goals	15%
<b>Service learning team project</b> (design and implement a service project in the community with an organization working toward improving the sustainability of our society – document your project with a film on your work).	20%
<b>Total:</b>	100%

**Attendance:** Students are expected to attend *every* class. Much of the work in this class is team-based, and you will negatively impact your team members and team’s work if you are not present. Additionally, iClickers will be used in a variety of ways; unexcused absences will be noticed and will impact your grade (see the [University Class Absence Policy](#) for more information).

**Required: iClicker**

Students are required to bring **yourself** and your **iClicker** to *every* class. Please have an extra set of batteries for your iClicker. A dead iClicker is not an excuse!

**Required book(s):**

*Ishmael* by Daniel Quinn (1992) - (can be found used or new for \$4-\$18).  
*No Impact Man* by Colin Beavan (2009) - (can be found used or new for \$6-\$15).

**Academic Honesty:** You are expected to do your own work on all individual quizzes and assignments. Evidence to the contrary will be dealt with seriously, and really is not worth it (see the [University Policy on Academic Honesty](#)).

**Course Website:** A Moodle site is set up for the course; please refer to it for reference materials, assignments, links to readings and videos, relevant announcements, and the most up-to-date information.

**Communication:** Email will be used routinely for announcements, reminders, and resources. Please check your email regularly and carefully. You are responsible for any email content.