



**SOCIAL JUSTICE AND PEACE STUDIES 3363F (670)
SUSTAINABILITY, ECOLOGY AND JUSTICE
Summer 2026**

Course Information

Calendar Description: This course explores the social impact of the climate crisis and considers alternatives and adaptations as responses. The course engages an intersectional and social justice-oriented lens to examine how the climate crisis, and responses to its effects, impact diverse communities depending on their position in society.

Antirequisites: Social Justice and Peace Studies 3377F/G if taken in Summer 2021 or Summer 2025.

Pre or Corequisites: [Social Justice and Peace Studies 1025F/G](#) and [Social Justice and Peace Studies 1026F/G](#), or permission of the Department.

Extra Information: 3 hours

Course Weight: 0.50

Breadth: Category A

Subject Code: SOCLJUST

Notice: Unless you have either the requisites for this course (fulfilment of pre-requisites, no anti-requisite conflicts), or special permission from your Dean to enrol in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

KING'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
Social Justice and Peace Studies SJPS 3377F
Climate Justice and Sustainability
Summer 2026

Course Director: Dr. J. Young
Office: Zoom
E-mail: jyoungma@uwo.ca

Class Time: Online Asynchronous
Office Hours: By appointment.

This course introduces students to the foundations of sustainability, critically examining how economic, social, and political systems influence sustainable development. Students will explore the principles of sustainability in both theory and practice, with particular attention to emerging trends, public policy, sustainable finance, social innovation, and professional pathways in the field. While sustainability initiatives can promote environmental stewardship and social equity, they can also reproduce existing inequalities and challenge traditional economic and political structures.

Through an in-depth exploration of sustainability challenges and innovations, students will analyze the role of policy, the social economy, financial systems, and community leadership in shaping sustainable futures. Students will be encouraged to critically evaluate sustainability efforts at the local, national, and global levels, considering how different actors—including governments, businesses, and social movements—can both advance and hinder progress toward a more equitable and resilient world.

Key topics include:

- Foundations and frameworks of sustainability, including the Canadian Environmental Sustainability Indicators and Canada's Federal Sustainable Development Strategy.
- Emerging trends and challenges such as globalization, social movements, and climate justice.
- The role of public policy in promoting or constraining sustainability initiatives.
- Social innovation, the circular economy, and the future of sustainable industrial operations.
- Sustainable finance and the evolving role of business in achieving environmental goals.
- Professional pathways and strategies for problem-solving in sustainability careers.

At the end of this course, students will have a critical understanding of sustainability concepts and strategies and develop practical tools for contributing to sustainable change in a variety of professional and community settings.

Required Texts and Readings

Readings will be posted on OWL. There are no additional costs for books or other readings. All materials will be provided.

Teaching Methodology and Expectations of Students

This course is guided by a knowing–doing–being philosophy, a critical orientation, and experiential learning methods adapted for an online, asynchronous environment. Students are expected to contribute actively to their own and their peers' learning outcomes throughout the course.

Learning will occur through independent readings, interactive blog-based discussions, and applied assignments such as the Community Engagement Project and real-world analysis essay. These assignments are designed to build career-ready skills, including critical thinking, sustainability analysis, project development, and communication.

Throughout the course, particular emphasis will be placed on how sustainability knowledge connects to employment pathways in social change, advocacy, social economy, corporate social responsibility (CSR), public policy, and related fields. Assignments offer students opportunities to explore real-world initiatives and community-based projects that link theory to practice and develop professional competencies valued by employers.

In blog discussions, students will interact by posting original responses and offering meaningful feedback to peers, building a virtual community of practice and strengthening professional communication skills. Active engagement, critical reflection, and a willingness to explore diverse perspectives are key to success.

By the end of the course, students will have a deeper understanding of sustainability concepts and how to apply them in roles such as sustainability coordinator, policy advisor, CSR officer, social enterprise developer, and community project lead.

Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools:

In this course, students may use AI. Students may use technology including generative artificial intelligence tools, to contribute to their understanding of the course materials. However, students are ultimately accountable for the work they submit. If a student uses AI, the student must submit as an appendix to their assignments, any content produced by an AI tool, and the prompt used to generate the content. The content produced by an AI tool must be cited appropriately.

Contact Information

The best way to reach me is by speaking to me before or after class, or via email at jyoungma@uwo.ca. I will try to respond within 48 business hours (Monday to Friday, 9 am to 4pm).

Evaluation

| Assignment | Value of Assignment | Due Date |
|--|----------------------------|---------------------|
| Reflection Assignment | 20% | May 12, May 26 |
| Community Engagement Project | 25% | May 30 |
| Essay (2500-2800 words) | 20% | June 5 (Final Copy) |
| Annotated Bibliography with Critical Commentary and Thesis Statement | 5% | May 16 |
| Essay Outline | 5% | May 23 |
| Draft Essay (including edits, tracked changes) | 5% | May 30 |
| Blog – Contemporary Issues | 20% | Weekly/ongoing |

Analytic Reflections (20%). There will be two analytic reflections that must be submitted by the due dates (May 12 and May 26), each of which will be worth 10% of the final mark. The detailed instructions for both analytic reflections will be posted on OWL Brightspace well in advance of the due dates. Students may choose to submit an alternative format such as a video, zine, poster, poem, or other creative format.

Sustainability Essay – 35%

Students analyze a real-world initiative, curriculum, program, or policy for sustainability issues. Students will write an essay that includes their findings and suggest ways to make the program or initiative more sustainable. The essay should be 2500-2800 words.

- **Annotated Bibliography with Critical Commentary (5%).** Students collect 5–7 academic or professional sources on a sustainability topic (related to their real-world initiative. For each, they write: a short summary and a critical evaluation (strengths, weaknesses, gaps).
- **Essay Outline (5%).** Students identify their thesis, key concepts, and arguments.
- **Draft (5%).** Students submit a draft that has been edited (through either tracked changes) by a peer.
- **Final Essay (20%).** Students incorporate feedback into their final essay.

Community Engagement Project – 25%

Students partner with local community organizations to identify and address a sustainability related challenge. They present their findings and proposed solutions in a short report, video, or powerpoint presentation format. This is an opportunity for students to link theory to practice and foster real-world problem-solving. Through this assignment, students can use tools like design thinking to develop innovative, actionable solutions.

Blog – Contemporary Issues in Sustainability (20%)

Contribution by each student is a cornerstone of any effective learning experience. Active class involvement augments the learning experience, increases assimilation of material and stimulates the level of class discussion. The expectation is that you contribute not only to your own learning but to the learning of your classmates.

The aim of the blog is to create a space for student engagement (and to discuss positive social change) to think and co-create with your colleagues. Various contemporary issues will be explored on the blog. The blog is where you will post your responses to my posted statements. Blog comments are similar to class participation, in that they are written in a conversational format and do not require research. Responses are typically 100-200 words. Additional information will be made available on OWL Brightspace. Please post one original response and reply to one other student’s response with meaningful commentary (a counterpoint, real-world example, etc).

Weekly Topics (Tentative)

| Modules | Topic |
|---|--|
| Module 1 – Introduction to Sustainability (2 Classes) | What is Sustainability? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definitions and dimensions (environmental, economic, social) UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) |
| | Canadian Context <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canadian Environmental Sustainability Indicators (CESI) |

| | |
|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canada's Federal Sustainability Development Strategy <p>Introduction to Circular Economy principles</p> |
| Module 2: Emerging Trends & Challenges in Sustainability (2 Classes) | <p>Globalization & Sustainable Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global supply chains and environmental externalities <p>North-South Equity and environmental justice</p> |
| | <p>Social Movements & Protest Politics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indigenous land defense movements <p>Role of civil society and grassroots mobilization</p> |
| Module 3: Sustainability & Public Policy (2 classes) | <p>Policy Tools & Instruments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulation, subsidies, taxation, market-based instruments <p>Carbon pricing and cap-and-trade systems</p> |
| | <p>Case Studies in Canadian Environmental Policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate action plans (federal and provincial levels) • Environmental assessment processes <p>Role of municipalities and regional governments</p> |
| Module 4: Social Economy & Sustainable Innovation (3 classes) | <p>Social Economy & Sustainable Futures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperatives, social enterprises, community-based organizations <p>Localism and alternative economic models</p> |
| | <p>Reimagining Industry & Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green building standards <p>Circular economy in practice: waste-to-resource models</p> |
| | <p>Sustainable Innovation in Action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case studies of Canadian and international firms <p>Role of technology and entrepreneurship in sustainability</p> |
| Module 5: Sustainable Finance (2 classes) | <p>Principles of Sustainable Finance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance) investing <p>Green bonds and impact investing</p> |
| | <p>Challenges & Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk, transparency, and accountability in finance <p>Transitioning capital markets towards sustainability</p> |
| Module 6: Professional Pathways & Problem Solving (3 classes) | <p>Leading Social Change</p> <p>Corporate Social Responsibility & Business Ethics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSR strategies and reporting • Greenwashing and accountability |
| | <p>Sustainability Careers & Sectors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roles in government, NGOs, consulting, entrepreneurship • Skills development and credentialing |

Career Pathways in Sustainability

This course is designed not only to build your knowledge of sustainability theory and practice, but also to support your career development. Sustainability skills are increasingly in demand across a wide range of sectors, from government to social enterprise, advocacy, consulting, and education. The critical thinking, research, community engagement, and communication skills you develop in this course will prepare you for professional opportunities that create positive environmental and social change.

Below are some examples of potential career pathways connected to sustainability:

| Sector | Example Roles | Skills Developed in This Course |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| Social Change & Advocacy | Sustainability Advocate, Environmental Campaigner, Non-Profit Program Coordinator | Critical analysis, communication, community engagement, social economy understanding |
| Government & Public Policy | Policy Analyst, Environmental Policy Advisor, Climate Action Planner | Policy evaluation, public policy analysis, applied research |
| Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) | CSR Specialist, ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance) Coordinator, Sustainability Reporting Officer | Sustainability reporting, strategic problem solving, stakeholder engagement |
| Social Economy & Social Enterprise | Social Entrepreneur, Cooperative Manager, Community Development Worker | Design thinking, innovation for sustainability, social economy strategies |
| Education & Outreach | Sustainability Educator, Community Engagement Specialist, Eco-Consultant | Public communication, education for sustainability, participatory methods |
| Consulting & Research | Sustainability Consultant, Environmental Researcher, Green Innovation Advisor | Applied research, analytical writing, initiative evaluation |

Career Connection: Students are encouraged to explore social change, advocacy and sustainability-related employment opportunities using resources such as GoodWork Canada, CharityVillage, and LinkedIn. These opportunities will also be explored on the class OWL Brightspace site.

- GoodWork Canada – environmental and sustainability jobs, internships, and volunteer opportunities (goodwork.ca)
- CharityVillage – jobs in non-profits, NGOs, and advocacy organizations, including environment-focused work (charityvillage.com)
- Net Impact – global network for students and professionals interested in using business and innovation for social good (netimpact.org)
- LinkedIn – explore postings about breaking into sustainability careers.

FRIDAY MAKE-UP EXAMS

Please note that Friday, Make-Up Exams may **only** be written with the instructor's consent.

King's University College

General Course Policies

2025-2026

1. Academic Accommodations, Consideration for Absences

Academic Accommodation (Accessibility)

Accessibility Services works to ensure that academic programs are accessible to all students, and supports students who may have a condition related to, but not limited to, vision, hearing, mobility, different ways of learning, mental health, chronic illnesses, chronic pain, autism spectrum disorder, ADD/ADHD, and temporary conditions (beyond short-term academic consideration). Accessibility Services provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive assessment. The accommodation policy can be found here [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#). Information on Accessibility Services at King's can be found [here](#).

Academic Consideration for Student Absence

If a student is unable to meet a course requirement due to substantial but temporary extenuating circumstances (medical or compassionate), they should follow the procedures below.

In some cases, where instructors have built flexibility into their assessments, this flexibility will already address consideration needs.

Requests for academic consideration should be directed to the Academic Advising Office of your faculty/college of registration. Requests must be made as soon as possible and no later than 48 hours after the missed assessment.

As a rule, documentation is required for academic consideration. For academic consideration requests on medical grounds, the Student Medical Certificate is available at [here](#).

Students are permitted one academic consideration request without supporting documentation per term per course. Instructors may designate one assessment per half-course weight as requiring formal supporting documentation. Please refer to the course outline for each course. For further information, please see:

<https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/academics/academic-advising/academic-consideration-requests-and-student-absence-portal>

Absences from Final Examinations

If you miss the Final Exam, contact the Academic Advising Office of your faculty/college of registration as soon as you are able to do so. They will assess your eligibility to write the Special Examination (the name given by the University to a makeup Final Exam).

You may also be eligible to write the Special Exam if you are in a “Multiple Exam Situation” (e.g., more than 2 exams in 23-hour period, or more than 3 exams in a 47-hour period).

If a student fails to write a scheduled Special Examination, the date of the next Special Examination (if granted) normally will be the scheduled date for the final exam the next time this course is offered. The maximum course load for that term will be reduced by the credit of the course(s) for which the final examination has been deferred. See the Academic Calendar for details https://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/exams/index.html.

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give notice in writing to the instructor and Academic Advising Office if a course requirement will be affected by a religious holiday/observance. Notice must be given as early as possible, and no later than two weeks prior to an examination, and one week prior to a midterm test date. It is the responsibility of such students to inform themselves concerning the work done in classes from which they are absent and to take appropriate action.

2. Support Services

Accessibility, Counselling and Student Development at King's University College:

<https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/student-supports-and-services>

Students experiencing emotional or mental health distress can access services at King's University College: <https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/student-supports-and-services/personal-counselling>

Good2talk is a good online and phone 24/7 resource for students and is available in English, Mandarin, and French: <https://good2talk.ca>, 1-866-925-5454

MentalHealth@Western provides a complete list of options about how to obtain help: <https://www.uwo.ca/health/psych/index.html>

Academic Support Services at King's University College:

<https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/academics/academic-advising>

GBSV Support:

King's is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at: <https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/student-supports-and-services/campus-safety-and-reporting/gender-and-sexual-violence>

You can reach someone supports at Kings by emailing Care@kings.uwo.ca or calling 519-930-4640 to reach a social worker who can offer help.

You can also reach Western's Gender-Based Violence & Survivor Support Case Manager by [email](#) or by calling 519-661-3568.

See also https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html

University Students' Council offers many valuable support services for students, including the health insurance plan: <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

3. Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

Use of Electronic Devices: Unless explicitly stated otherwise, you are not allowed to have a cell phone, or any other electronic device, with you during tests or examinations. Unauthorized possession of such a device during a test or examination constitutes an academic offence.

Use of Laptops, Tablets, and Smartphones in the Classroom: King's University College at Western University acknowledges the integration of new technologies and learning methods into the curriculum. The use of electronic devices such as laptop computers, tablets, or smartphones can contribute to student engagement and effective learning. At the same time, King's recognizes that instructors and students share jointly the responsibility to establish and maintain a respectful classroom environment conducive to learning.

The use of electronic devices by students during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., shall be for matters related to the course at hand only. Students found to be using electronic devices for purposes not directly related to the class may be subject to sanctions under the Student Code of Conduct; see <https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/student-supports-and-services/campus-safety-and-reporting/student-code-of-conduct>

Inappropriate use of electronics (e.g., laptops, tablets, smartphones) during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., creates a significant disruption. As a consequence, instructors may choose to limit the use of electronic devices in these settings. In addition, in order to provide a safe classroom environment, students attending in-person class sessions are strongly advised to operate laptops with batteries rather than power cords.

4. Statement on Academic Offences

King's is committed to academic integrity. Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, is posted at [here](#).

It is expected that students will submit work that is truly their own, completed without external assistance (human or artificial) except as explicitly permitted by the course instructor. Check with your instructor on what tools, including generative AI (ChatGPT, translation tools, grammar-checking tools) are permitted in the course. Because a tool is permitted in one course, that does not mean it is permitted in other courses.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system; see <https://elearningtoolkit.uwo.ca/tools/OriginalityReports-TurnItIn.html>.

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

5. Copyright of Course Material

Lectures and course materials, including PowerPoint presentations, tests, outlines, and similar materials are protected by copyright. Faculty members are the exclusive owner of copyright in those materials they create. Students may take notes and make copies for their own use. Students may not allow others to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly (whether or not a fee is charged) without the express written consent of a faculty member.

Unauthorized sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

Similarly, students own copyright in their own original papers and exam essays. If a faculty member wishes to post a student's answers or papers on the course website, they should ask for the student's written permission.

6. Use of Recordings

Participants in this course are not permitted to record the sessions, except where recording is an approved accommodation and/or the participant has the prior written permission of the instructor. Unauthorized recording and/or sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

7. Policy on Attendance

Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course, will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course, after due warning has been given. On the recommendation of the department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course.

GENDER-BASED SEXUAL VIOLENCE

King's at Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based violence (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website:

[Mental Health and Wellness at King's – King's University College](#)

You can reach some supports at King's by emailing CARE@kings.uwo.ca or calling 519-930-4640 to reach a social worker who can offer help.

You can reach some supports at King's by emailing CARE@kings.uwo.ca or calling 519-930-4640 to reach a Case Manager/Social worker who can offer help.

You can also reach Western's Gender-Based Violence & Survivor Support Case Manager by [email](#) or by calling 519-661-3568.