COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The concept of sustainability is very broad and specific at the same time, as it is applied to different areas ranging from social systems to law, or engineering, or public health, or natural systems. Students from all backgrounds need to develop a general understanding of sustainability that covers multiple fields in order to develop and apply solutions. Effective solutions not only require the ability to comprehend various concepts, but also the ability to productively integrate knowledge from different fields and communicate resulting solutions effectively.

This course introduces students to the goals, principles, and practical applications of sustainability. In this course, we will examine the major environmental and social issues and trends happening in modern society from a multidisciplinary perspective. It will teach students how to understand the complex confluence of social systems and natural resource systems. Topics will include the intellectual origins of sustainability, environmental law and regulation, pollution, water, climate, energy and public health. The course introduces perspectives from the natural and social sciences, arts and humanities, engineering, and professional disciplines and explores how their interconnection increases the prospects for a sustainable future. The course challenges students to understand the interdisciplinary nature of sustainability and to learn to work with others from different disciplines in group projects that focus on real world examples, such as the Chesapeake Bay. Cutting edge research will be presented by faculty working in the area of sustainability from a variety of disciplines.

This is the gateway course for the Undergraduate Minor in Sustainability. There are no prerequisites. Undergraduates from any school on campus are eligible for this course whether minoring in Sustainability or not.

MEET THE TEAM:

The course is a team-taught course featuring 5 faculty experts from 5 different GW schools. In addition, other GW faculty and experts from federal agencies and area businesses and non-governmental organizations will be featured.

Prof Adele Ashkar, a landscape architect in the College of Professional Studies, is an expert in landscape design, urban ecology, stormwater infrastructure and conservation landscaping.

Prof Lisa Benton-Short, a Geographer in CCAS, provides expertise in urban issues that include air, land and water pollution, climate change, environmental justice and the protection of parks and open spaces.

Prof. Peter LaPuma, in the Environmental and Occupational Health department in the School of Public Health, brings in-depth knowledge about sustainable energy, renewable energy and the links to human health.

Prof Lee Paddock, Associate Dean of Environmental Law in the GW Law School, brings more than 30 years of environmental law practice on a variety of issues, including water, climate and energy.

Prof Rumana Riffat, an Environmental Engineer in the School of Engineering and Applied Science will provide expertise in sustainable water treatment, water resources management, and wastewater reuse.