

School of Diplomacy and International Relations
Seton Hall University

DIPL 3201 AA & AB
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
Spring 2020

SYLLABUS

Instructor: Professor Nabeela N. Alam
Office: McQuaid Hall 107, x2265
Office hours: Mondays 1-3pm, or by appointment
Email: nabeela.alam@shu.edu

Class times and location:
AA: MW 9:30am – 10:45am
AB: MW 11:00am – 12:15pm
Stafford 09

Note: Please put **DIPL 3201 AA** or **DIPL 3201 AB** in the subject line of ALL class-related emails

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This undergraduate course in sustainable development analyses the interplay of economic, social, and environmental goals. With the current U.S. Administration withdrawing from the Paris Agreement that went into effect in November 2016 following ratification of the Sustainable Development Goals in September 2015, this is an important time to study sustainable development. Economic development is important for raising living standards, but development policies don't automatically ensure that all sections of society gain. Nor do they necessarily preserve opportunities for current or future generations. Sustainable development policies are meant to minimize environmental damage, foster environmental protection, and ensure that growth aimed to raise living standards is socially inclusive.

The course also recognizes that countries are at different stages of development. Therefore, developed and developing countries' preferences for and their ability to undertake sustainable development will vary. Keeping these constraints in mind, we will learn and apply economic thinking to address the problems of reducing poverty, allocating resources over time, accommodating trade-offs between development and the environment, and solving collective action problems in undertaking sustainable practices.

Textbook readings will be supplemented with relevant policy briefs and academic or magazine articles through the semester. The course is both lecture-based and discussion-driven, giving students the opportunity to demonstrate their grasp of concepts. Coursework includes both individual assignments, and a problem-based group project.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The learning objective for the student are to:

1. Discuss and critically evaluate policies and current challenges in terms sustainability, addressing the economic, social and environmental dimensions, and at individual, local and global levels.
2. Apply economic thinking and economic tools to assess issues of sustainable development.
3. Understand the importance of measurement and evaluation in tracking progress in sustainable development.
4. Demonstrate proficiency in numerical problem-solving and evaluating empirical evidence.
5. Communicate standpoints effectively using relevant arguments as well as empirical evidence, both in writing and in public discourse and presentations.
6. Collaborate with other students to critically analyze a current challenge in sustainable development for a particular country or community and design a well-researched targeted intervention to address that problem.

Please read the syllabus carefully as it contains important instructions, key dates, grading criteria, and other information that will help you navigate DIPL 3201 successfully through the semester. Make sure you are familiar with the requirements, course architecture, and the course page on Blackboard to aid in your semester of learning.

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIAL

There are two required books for the course, which you can buy on Amazon.

1. Jeffrey Sachs. 2015. *Age of Sustainable Development*. Columbia University Press.
2. Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo. 2011. *Poor Economics: A Radical Rethinking of the Way to Fight Global Poverty*. Public Affairs.

In addition, you are encouraged to read these recommended books:

3. Geoffrey Heal. 2016. *Endangered Economies: How the Neglect of Nature Threatens Our Prosperity*. Columbia University Press.
4. William Nordhaus. 2013. *The Climate Casino: Risk, Uncertainty, and Economics for a Warming World*. Yale University Press.

Additional required reading or audio material will be handed out in class or posted on Blackboard under the Course Schedule.

COURSE COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

All course material will be handed out in class, emailed or posted on the course site on Blackboard, located at <http://myweb.shu.edu/> or accessible through PirateNet. I will send emails and course announcement from the course website on Blackboard, so you should regularly (once every 36 hours) check the email address you listed in the SHU directory.

To confirm that you are receiving emails through Blackboard, log into the course site and send an email to yourself. The [Technology Service Desk](#) (servicedesk@shu.edu, (973) 275-2222 or x2222) can assist you with any questions.

When emailing me, type **DIPL 3201 AA** or **DIPL 3201 AB** in the subject area and follow this with a subject relevant to your email. For instance, you may write “**DIPL 3201 AB – Midterm**” as the subject of your email. An email with the appropriate subject automatically gets forwarded to my **DIPL 3201** folder and minimizes the probability of getting overlooked in a busy inbox. I will do my best to respond to your email within 24 hours during weekdays and within 48 hours during weekends.

GRADING DISTRIBUTION

The grade for this course has three main components:

Individual component (50%)	
In class exercises and quizzes	10%
Class participation and preparation	10%
Midterm exam	30%
Group component (45%)	
SDG Diagnostic and Project proposal	10%
Project presentation	20%
Project design paper	20%

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

In-class exercises and quizzes (10%)

From time to time I will ask students to complete a short, written exercise in class (such as a 2-minute response) or a multiple-choice reading quiz. This will help you synthesize the main take-aways from the readings and class discussions.

Class participation and preparation (10%)

Class participation includes but is not limited to asking relevant questions, commenting on class content or assigned readings, or building on the comments of others to further discussion, answering questions *meaningfully*, demonstrating thoughtful responses to assigned readings, and referring *meaningfully* to real world examples relevant to discussions. If you participate regularly in class, I will learn your names and count your participation towards your course grade.

Your contributions should be **articulate** (concise, clear, civil), **logically consistent**, use **relevant evidence**, **connect to the course material**, and **stay on point**. I will particularly reward original and creative comments or arguments.

Preparation involves **completing and processing the assigned readings** *before* coming to class or office hours. Note that the reading is designed to provide you with multiple perspectives and an array of evidence. To do well in this course, you must engage in *active* and *critical* reading during which you take good notes, draw out the key arguments made by the authors, reflect on the evidence presented, evaluate whether the evidence presented is objective, and critically assess whether the information presented is convincing or what other evidence you would require to make an informed decision. I will treat assigned readings as background and build on them in class to give a more in-depth treatment of the topics. You will demonstrate preparation for class by using the reading and audio material in your classroom contributions.

Midterm Exam (30%)

There is just one exam for this course. You will take the midterm exam in class on **Wednesday, March 18**. The exam will be a combination of true/false, short answers, and short analytical questions requiring use of graphs or numerical problem-solving. You are responsible in the exams for **all** material covered in class, in assignments, and in assigned readings – i.e., **everything** unless explicitly told otherwise in class.

A student unable to take the exam is required to provide proper documentation to the instructor **prior** to the exam. This is the only scenario where a missed exam will be excused, and I will review further steps to be taken. If your absence is excused, I may choose to give you a written make-up exam on the blackboard or an oral exam. While oral exams are particularly painful, I will not write a new exam for one or two students.

Group project: Country SDG diagnostic and Project design (50%)

Students will form groups of 3 and jointly choose a country of interest. You will conduct an SDG diagnostic for your country and design an intervention to tackle a sustainable development issue.

First, each group will provide the sustainable development context for their country using collected data and other policy or academic evidence. This will help identify several priority areas in sustainable development which the country should focus on. Next, students will use this assessment to identify a concrete issue, articulate the problem in the local context, and then propose an intervention at an individual, household, or village level to tackle that problem. For instance, you may find that methane production in rural agricultural communities is very high in Chile, and particularly in one region of the country. Having identified this problem, you will find out what activities contribute to rural methane production and devise a solution that will lower emissions in a way that the local communities will adhere to.

You will need to schedule a meeting with me both before and after the proposal to discuss your ideas and then get feedback for next steps. It is better to hash out ideas and check to see you're on track before you commit to them. Using the feedback on your proposal, you will work out the details of your intervention and present your work in class. You will get feedback from me again, and your classmates, during and after your presentation. Finally, you will submit a 10-12 page final write-up of your project design using all the feedback to date.

The project will be completed in three stages:

SDG Assessment and Project proposal	due February 28 (F) at 4:00pm
Presentation	on April 22 (W) / April 27 (M) / April 29 (W)
Project design paper	due May 6 (W) at 4:00pm

Detailed written instructions for the project will be given and discussed in class. The project briefs we will analyze through the middle third of the semester are models to follow when thinking about your own interventions.

All together the project counts for 50% of your final course grade. Project-based learning is a widely recognized and increasingly used tool in higher education to promote collaborative and active learning where students learn concepts skills by trying to solve a real-world problem.

Research Resource: The brief requires your using economic and social indicators from relevant databases. You should make an appointment with **Lisa DeLuca** (Lisa.DeLuca@shu.edu) at the library to help you with accessing data.

Papers should utilize one of the Chicago Manual of Style **citation formats**: Author-Date or Notes and Bibliography. The guidelines for these formats are on the course Blackboard page. The citation format is different from the MLA or APA format you may have learnt in other courses outside of the School of Diplomacy.

ACADEMIC RESOURCES

Academic Resource Center

<https://www13.shu.edu/offices/arc/index.cfm>
Phone: (973) 761-9108; Email: arc@shu.edu
Location: Arts & Sciences Hall Rm. 242

Online Writing Lab

<http://academic.shu.edu/owl/front.htm>
Email: owl@shu.edu

Writing Center

<http://blogs.shu.edu/studenttoolkit/the-writing-lab/>
Phone: (973) 761-7501
Location: Walsh Library, 3rd Floor
Sign up for appointment using Compass*

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance in all class sessions is required and I will take attendance. Attendance is expected and will not be rewarded with a score towards your final grade. Do not confuse the attendance requirement with class participation requirements. I understand, however, that unforeseen circumstances that are beyond your control may arise, and so you are allowed two absences without need of explanation. Any absence beyond this point can negatively impact your overall grade. In other words: you have two free class passes, so use them wisely by saving them for emergencies and unavoidable circumstances. Please do not be late. Repeated instances of lateness can be treated as absences at the discretion of the instructor.

Grade appeals will be considered only in the event you discover a mistake in grading. Nonetheless, you must wait 48 hours before appealing. Note that re-grades will not be limited to the disputed part of the exam or assignment.

Incomplete grade designation for the course will be given only in exceptional cases for emergencies. Students wishing to request a grade of Incomplete must provide documentation to support the request accompanied by a Course Adjustment Form (available from the Diplomacy Main Office) to the professor *before* the date of the final examination. If the incomplete request is approved, the professor reserves the right to specify the new submission date for all missing coursework. Students who fail to submit the missing course work within this time period will receive a failing grade for all missing coursework and a final grade based on all coursework assigned. Any Incomplete not resolved within one calendar year of receiving the Incomplete or by the time of graduation (whichever comes first) automatically becomes an “FI” (which is equivalent to an F). It is the responsibility of the student to make sure they have completed all course requirements within the timeframe allotted. Please be aware that Incompletes on your transcript will impact financial aid and academic standing.

Technology can be both beneficial and harmful in learning. Based on my teaching experience and recent evidence¹, laptops will not be allowed in class, even for accessing the required reading material. Mobile phones and other hand-held devices must be set to silent and put away during class. If you require accommodations for using technology in the classroom, please contact me directly to resolve the matter.

SETON HALL POLICIES AND RESOURCES

Accommodations. It is the policy and practice of Seton Hall University to promote inclusive learning environments. If you have a documented disability you may be eligible for reasonable accommodations in compliance with University policy, the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and/or the New Jersey Law against Discrimination. Please note, students are not permitted to negotiate accommodations directly with professors. To request accommodations or assistance, please self-identify with the Office for Disability Support Services (DSS), Duffy Hall, Room 67 at the beginning of the semester. For more information or to register for services, contact DSS at (973) 313-6003 or by e-mail at DSS@shu.edu.

Counselling. The Office of Counselling and Psychological Services (CAPS) provides free year-round counselling to students in need of support. CAPS is located in Mooney Hall and can be reached at (973) 761-9500.

Academic Honesty. Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will be reported to the administration, and may result in a lowered or failing grade for the course and up to possible dismissal from the School of Diplomacy. See university and school standards for academic conduct at the following links:

- <http://www13.shu.edu/offices/student-life/community-standards/upload/Seton-Hall-University-Student-Code-of-Conduct.pdf>
- <http://www.shu.edu/academics/diplomacy/academic-conduct.cfm>.

¹ See, for instance [Freakonomics \(2016\): Who Needs Handwriting](#) and [Dynarski's \(2016\) "For better learning in college, lay down the laptop and pick up a pen."](#) post at Brookings Institution. If you are interested, I'll be happy to point you to more sources.

COURSE SCHEDULE (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

DIPL 3201 AA/AB SYLLABUS (SPRING 2020)

Session #/Date	Topic & Tools	Readings / Assignments
1	Jan 13 (M)	Introduction: What is sustainable development?
2	Jan 15 (W)	Inclusive growth: Measuring what matters – GDP, HDI, Gini
	Jan 20 (M)	Martin Luther King – NO CLASS
3	Jan 22 (W)	Sustainable growth: Tackling externalities and planetary boundaries
4	Jan 27 (M)	Economic growth I – GDP and living standards
5	Jan 29 (W)	Economic growth II – Why some countries grow faster
6	Feb 3 (M)	Economic growth III – Inequality, institutions, and growth
7	Feb 5 (W)	Social Inclusion I: Race and ethnicity
8	Feb 10 (M)	Poverty I: Measuring poverty and inequality
9	Feb 12 (W)	Poverty II: Ending extreme poverty/ Project: BRAC TUP Bangladesh
10	Feb 17 (M)	Social inclusion II: Gender/ Project: BRAC-ELA Uganda
11	Feb 19 (W)	Poverty III: Hunger
12	Feb 24 (M)	Poverty IV: Health/RCT's and Project: Cookstoves Bangladesh
13	Feb 26 (W)	Poverty V: Health & Education/ Project: Information on returns to schooling in Madagascar
	Mar 1-8	SPRING BREAK – NO CLASSES
14	Mar 9 (M)	Poverty VI: Education/ Project: Vocational Training Kenya
15	Mar 11 (W)	Poverty VII: Family & fertility / Project: Family Planning Zambia
16	Mar 16 (M)	Midterm Review
17	Mar 18 (W)	*** MIDTERM EXAM ***
18	Mar 23(M)	Climate change I: Food security and agricultural practices
19	Mar 25 (W)	Climate change II: Resilient cities and urbanization trends
20	Mar 30 (M)	Climate change III: Science & projections
21	Apr 1 (W)	Climate change IV: Coping strategies, cost-benefit analysis
22	Apr 6 (M)	Climate change V: Uncertain costs and benefits
23	Apr 8 (W)	Climate change VI: Present costs and future benefits
	Apr 13 (M)	Easter Monday – NO CLASS
24	Apr 15 (W)	Governance I: Policies to reduce carbon emissions
25	Apr 20 (M)	Governance II: Global public goods & international cooperation
26	Apr 22 (W)	SDG's: Taking stock / Group presentations (2 teams)
27	Apr 27 (M)	Group presentations (4 teams)
28	Apr 29 (W)	Group presentations (4 teams)
29	May 4 (M)	Wrap-up: Putting in perspective what we've learnt
	May 6 (W)	FINAL PROJECT DUE @4pm on Wed, May 6