

SOC 3460 Environmental Justice

Spring 2021

Cunz Hall 150

Tuesday and Thursday 12:45-2:05

Christopher Kleps

Office Hours: [Via Zoom Link](#)

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Course Description and Objectives:

This course will explore how environmental problems such as pollution, ecological destruction, and climate change are experienced differently across race, gender, social class, and region. We will focus on how capitalism, racism, culture, politics, science, and technology operate with regard to the environment. This course will emphasize topics related to environmental racism and social movements that have emerged to combat environmental destruction and its disproportionate impacts on the poor and people of color. Topics covered will include the impacts of climate change, concentrations of toxins in poor and minority communities, mountaintop removal in Appalachia, food systems, water quality in Flint MI and elsewhere, and community organizing efforts to combat injustices. How can ordinary citizens challenge powerful corporate interests to protect their neighborhoods and communities from environmental harm?

I believe Sociology is best learned through conversation, and not reading followed by a lecture simply summarizing the reading. Our online discussion boards are a place to share insights. It is your job to do the course readings and be ready to have substantive online discussion of them. If we are lucky we will have many substantive, but respectful, disagreements there. Remember *you must always treat each other with dignity and listen to your classmates' ideas*. I will treat you with this same respect. We will cover sensitive topics and you must remember all opinions are to be respected. That said, opinions and facts are not the same thing. We would all do well to remember the difference before we write and consider revising our opinions when the facts do not support them. Our classmates can often be a great source of insight our own lives may not have exposed us to.

COURSE GOALS: By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- examine environmental issues from a sociological perspective, especially human causes of environmental change such as technology, population, and consumption
- analyze and explain how social and natural systems function, interact, and evolve over time;
- explain how human wellbeing depends on these interactions
- explain how actions have impacts on subsequent generations and societies globally
- articulate how human values, behaviors, and institutions impact multi-faceted, potential solutions across time

REQUIRED TEXTS:

An Invitation to Environmental Sociology, 5th edition. Bell and Ashwood, 2012.

Taylor, Dorceta. 2014. *Toxic Communities*. New York: NYU Press.

Other readings will be posted online on Carmen/Canvas

GE STATEMENT

This course fulfills the following GE requirement:

Sustainability: Students analyze and explain how social and natural systems function, interact, and evolve over time; how human wellbeing depends on these interactions; how actions have impacts on subsequent generations and societies globally; and how human values, behaviors, and institutions impact multi-faceted, potential solutions across time.

GE Course Information Sociology 3460 fulfills the General Education theme “Sustainability”

Theme: Sustainability	
Goals	Expected Learning Outcomes
GOAL: Students analyze and explain how social and natural systems function, interact, and evolve over time; how human wellbeing depends on these interactions; how actions have impacts on subsequent generations and societies globally; and how human values, behaviors, and institutions impact multi-faceted, potential solutions across time.	Successful students are able to ...
	1.1 Describe elements of the fundamental dependence of humans on Earth and environmental systems and on the resilience of these systems.
	1.2 Describe, analyze and critique the roles and impacts of human activity and technology on both human society and the natural world, in the past, currently, and in the future.
	1.3 Devise informed and meaningful responses to problems and arguments in the area of sustainability based on the interpretation of appropriate evidence and an explicit statement of values.

Modules: To assist in course organization, I have divided the course into 15 weekly modules.

Within each module you will find the following:

1. The reading material for the week
2. The discussion board for the week
3. Any at home viewing materials
4. Any other assignments due that week
5. The office hours signup

Due Dates: Every single assignment is due on a Wednesday at 11:59 PM. In addition to the syllabus below, the due dates for assignments are reflected on Carmen in several places: 1. On your “to do” list on the middle right of the course homepage, 2. Within the weekly modules section, and 3. Within the assignments tab.

Office Hours: Each week you will find a signup sheet for office hours on Friday from 11-3 via zoom. The signup locks Thursday evening. If you are unable to attend during this time, please reach out via email and we can arrange an alternate time.

SUMMARY OF GRADING

- 1. Carmen Discussion: 24% (10 weekly discussions, each worth 3 points)**
- 2. Reading Responses: 24% (Three Responses scored 0-6 points)**
- 3. Paper Proposal: 7% (One proposal worth 7 points)**
- 4. Papers: 45% (The first is worth 20 points the second is worth 25 points)**
- 5. Extra Credit: Up to 3 points**

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- 1. Attendance:** While I will not be taking attendance, I still encourage full attendance to get the most out of the course. Class will be an opportunity to clarify the assigned readings, engage in discussion, and explore new directions for the day's topic.
- 2. Carmen Discussion:** During ten weeks this semester, I will post questions to Carmen. You are required to do one of two things: 1. Give a substantive response to the question or 2. Reply to a classmate's discussion post. Substantive posts will answer the question and provide evidence from the reading or that you've come across in this class or others. I expect them to be at least two paragraphs long. I will be reviewing and participating in these posts myself to help push the discussion forward.
- 3. Reading Responses:** You will be required to write three reading responses based on assigned readings for this class. The first reading response is due week 5. The second is due week 9. The third is due week 15. In this reading response, you will summarize the reading and then do one of the following: 1) Write about how this reading relates to your own life and experiences, 2) Write about how this relates to Columbus, 3) Write about something in the reading that had a strong impact on you and why, 4) Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of this reading, or 5) Write about how we could solve the problem discussed. This response should be 1-2 pages. The summary portion should take up no more than half of your paper. A rubric will be posted on the Canvas page.
- 4. Paper:** There will be one paper in this course, but it will be divided into three parts. The paper will be about an environmental justice issue of your choosing. It will discuss the specifics of the problem itself, the social forces that created and contribute to the problem, the group(s) working to remedy the problem, the work they've proposed or already done, your own independent ideas for solving the problem, and discussion of why we can expect the various solutions to work or not. This is intended to be a critical paper, not merely a descriptive paper. By which I mean, I expect you to present arguments for why we should care about the problem and empirical evidence for how potential discussed solutions will be effective. Detailed rubrics are posted on Carmen for parts 1 and 2.

Paper Proposal: This will be a ½-1 page proposal. In this proposal you will briefly identify the problem, briefly explain why it's worthy of inclusion in your paper, and provide at least two scholarly sources that you intend to cite for your paper. This will also include a brief discussion of how those sources will be relevant. This paper will help keep you accountable and give me an opportunity to provide feedback prior to the first major assignment.

Paper Part 1 (The Problem): In this portion of the paper you will identify the specific problem you intend to discuss. You will also identify the social causes and contributions of the problem. Discussing the problem will include details such as the location, how people and the environment are affected, and how it is an issue of environmental justice as opposed to only being an issue of general environmental protection. Students will also need to convince the reader (me) why they should care about the problem. While it is certainly appropriate to discuss the injustice of the problem, the most effective papers will also discuss how the problem might impact those not obviously considered within the danger zone. Students should also provide specific factual and theoretical details for how the problem came to arise and why it continues. This section must be at least three pages and no more than six.

Paper Part 2 (The Solution): In this portion of the paper you will discuss any group(s) fighting to solve the problem discussed in the first paper. If there are issues of inequality within the organization itself, this should be discussed. You should also discuss how the group(s) are specifically considering matters of justice and not just general protection. This section will also include discussion of the actions the group(s) are taking to fix the problem or any proposed solutions. You should also propose at least one additional solution of your own. Be creative. This section should be critical and supported by evidence. Instead of merely describing the solutions proposed by yourself and the group(s) you should be evaluating the likelihood that they will work. To support your position, you will need to find evidence and not merely speculate. This section must be at least three pages and no more than six.

5. Extra Credit

Once you have turned in your four reading responses, you may do up to 2 extra reading responses. You can receive up to 1.5 points of extra credit added to your final grade based on the quality of the extra response (.5 for C or lower, 1 for B, 1.5 for A).

OSU Standard Grading Scheme:

Starting %	Grade
93	A
90	A-
87	B+
83	B
80	B-
77	C+

73	C
70	C-
67	D+
63	D
60	D-
0	E

ADMINISTRATIVE

Academic Misconduct: While this course is now online, expectations regarding academic integrity are no different than they would be for an in-person class. While I believe learning is best done collaboratively, some assessments must be done individually. I will note on each graded assignment whether you are permitted to work on it collaboratively. However, even for assignments allowing for collaborative learning all writing must be done individually and be your own work. Please note, that for some assignments I do use Turnitin to verify that written assignments are your original work.

Academic integrity is essential to maintaining an environment that fosters excellence in teaching, research, and other educational and scholarly activities. Thus, The Ohio State University and the Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM) expect that all students have read and understand the University’s Code of Student Conduct, and that all students will complete all academic and scholarly assignments with fairness and honesty. Students must recognize that failure to follow the rules and guidelines established in the University’s Code of Student Conduct and this syllabus may constitute “Academic Misconduct.”

The Ohio State University’s Code of Student Conduct (Section 3335-23-04) defines academic misconduct as: “Any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the University, or subvert the educational process.” Examples of academic misconduct include (but are not limited to) plagiarism, collusion (unauthorized collaboration), copying the work of another student, and possession of unauthorized materials during an examination. Ignorance of the University’s Code of Student Conduct is never considered an “excuse” for academic misconduct, so I recommend that you review the Code of Student Conduct and, specifically, the sections dealing with academic misconduct.

If I suspect that a student has committed academic misconduct in this course, I am obligated by University Rules to report my suspicions to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. If COAM determines that you have violated the University’s Code of Student Conduct (i.e., committed academic misconduct), the sanctions for the misconduct could include a failing grade in this course and suspension or dismissal from the University.

If you have any questions about the above policy or what constitutes academic misconduct in this course, please contact me.

Other sources of information on academic misconduct (integrity) to which you can refer

include:

The Committee on Academic Misconduct web pages (oaa.osu.edu/coam/home.html)

Ten Suggestions for Preserving Academic Integrity
(oaa.osu.edu/coam/ten-suggestions.html)

Eight Cardinal Rules of Academic Integrity (www.northwestern.edu/uacc/8cards.html)

Disability Statement: The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Student Life Disability Services. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. SLDS contact information: slds@osu.edu; 614-292-3307; slds.osu.edu; 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue.

Mental Health Statement: As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student's ability to participate in daily activities. The Ohio State University offers services to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. If you or someone you know are suffering from any of the aforementioned conditions, you can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Office of Student Life's Counseling and Consultation Service (CCS) by visiting ccs.osu.edu or calling [614-292-5766](tel:614-292-5766). CCS is located on the 4th Floor of the Younkin Success Center and 10th Floor of Lincoln Tower. You can reach an on call counselor when CCS is closed at [614-292-5766](tel:614-292-5766) and 24 hour emergency help is also available through the 24/7 National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273-TALK or at suicidepreventionlifeline.org.

Basic Need Security Statement: Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, is urged to explore resources provided by OSU including student services and benefits (<https://online.osu.edu/student-services-benefits>) and the food pantry provided by the Buckeye Food Alliance (<http://www.buckeyefoodalliance.org/>).

Adopted from Sara Goldrick-Rab's medium post
(<https://storify.com/saragoldrickrab/basic-needs-security-and-the-syllabus>).

Email: I will respond to all emails within one business day. Keep in mind this may mean that emails received on Friday are responded to by Monday. Please also know that I do not typically monitor my email throughout the entire day. Therefore, last minute emails may not receive replies as early as you are hoping. **Please write your emails in a**

professional manner. Include a proper greeting and closing and give attention to grammar and spelling (occasional typos are inevitable and perfectly understandable). My email is kleps.1@osu.edu.

Late Work: Late work can almost always be avoided, but I understand emergency situations can arise. However, emergencies are not an excuse for procrastination. Work is due at the beginning of class, unless otherwise stated on the syllabus. Late work will receive a 1% deduction per hour, and up to 10% per day. In the event of an emergency, please provide documentation ASAP.

Unpaid Fees: Faculty rules specify that students are to have their fees paid by the first day of enrollment for the quarter. [Faculty Rule 3335-9-12]. If you have not paid your fees, you will not be allowed to continue attending class until: 1. your fees are paid, OR 2. you have met with a Sociology Advisor and a Financial Aid Counselor and are working to get your fees paid.

COURSE SCHEDULE AND DUE DATES

Week 1 (Welcome and Intro)

Tuesday January 12th

No Reading

Wednesday: Weekly Discussion Post Due

Thursday January 14th

Read Bell and Ashwood pg. 29-40 (Section on Environmental Justice)

Week 2 (Justice and Sustainability)

Tuesday January 19th

Read Bell and Ashwood pg. 171-191 (Chapter 6: Body and Justice) Bell and

Ashwood pg. 29-40 (Section on Environmental Justice)

Thursday January 21st

Bell and Ashwood pg. 8-28 (Sustainability)

Week 3 (Solutions and Sources of Environmental Problems)

Tuesday January 26th

Beck, Ulrich. 2010. "How Climate Change Might Save the World" *Harvard Design Magazine*. 39: 1-9. **Carmen**

Wednesday: Weekly discussion post due

Thursday January 28th
Bell and Ashwood- Ch 2 Consumption (pg. 49-75)

Week 4 (Sources of Environmental Problems)

Tuesday February 2nd
Documentary at Home: The End of Suburbia (52 minutes)

Wednesday: Weekly discussion post

Thursday February 4th
Bell and Ashwood- Ch 3- Money and Markets (pg. 78-106)

Week 5 (Economics and the Environment)

Tuesday February 9th
Metcalf, Stephen. 2017. "Neoliberalism: The Idea That Changed the World." *The Guardian*. 8(18): 3-7. **AND**
Harrison, Jill. 2014. "Neoliberal environmental justice: mainstream ideas of justice in political conflict over agricultural pesticides in the United States." *Environmental Politics* 23(4): 650-669. **Both Carmen**

Wednesday: Weekly discussion post and Reading Response 1 Due

Thursday February 11th:
Documentary at home : Flow (83 minutes)

Week 6 (Water and Environmental Racism)

Tuesday February 16th
Campbell, Carla, Rachael Greenberg, Deepa Mankikar, and Ronald Ross. 2016. "A Case Study of Environmental Injustice: The Failure in Flint." *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*. 13(10): 951-962. **Carmen**
Nigra, Anne. 2020. "Environmental Racism and the need for Private Well Protections." *PNAS*. 117(30): 17476-17478. **Carmen**

Wednesday: Weekly discussion post and Paper Proposal Due

Thursday February 18th
Toxic Communities Intro and Chapter 1 (pg. 1-32)

Week 7 (Environmental Racism)

Tuesday February 23rd: NO CLASS

Thursday February 25th
Toxic Communities Chapter 2 (pg. 33-46)

Week 8 (Environmental Racism)

Tuesday March 2nd

Toxic Communities Chapter 4 (pg. 69-97)

Wednesday: Weekly discussion post due

Thursday March 4th

Pastor, Manuel, Jimm Sadd, and John Hipp. 2002. "Which came first? Toxic Facilities, Minority Move-In, and Environmental Justice." *Journal of Urban Affairs* 23(1): 1-21. **Carmen**

Week 9 (Environmental Racism)

Tuesday March 9th

Boone, Christopher and Ali Modarres. 1999. "Creating a Toxic Neighborhood in Los Angeles County: A Historical Examination of Environmental Inequality." *Urban Affairs Review* 35(2): 163-187. **Carmen**

Wednesday: Weekly discussion post and Reading Response 2 Due

Thursday March 11th

Pulido, Laura. 2010. "Rethinking Environmental Racism: White Privilege and Urban Development in Southern California." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*. 90: 12-40. **Carmen**

Week 10 (Residential Segregation)

Tuesday March 16th

Toxic Communities Chapter 7 (pg. 147-191)

Wednesday: Weekly discussion post

Thursday March 18th

Toxic Communities chapter 8 (pg. 192-227)

Week 11: (Internal Colonization)

Tuesday March 23rd

Toxic Communities Chapter 3 (47-68)

Wednesday March 24th: Paper Part 1 Due

Thursday March 25th

Documentary at home: Awake (86 minutes)

Week 12 (Park Access)

Tuesday March 30th

West, Paul. 1999. "Local Parks and Race" *Leisure Sciences* 11: 11-28. **Carmen**

Dai, Dajun. 2011. "Racial/Ethnic and socio-economic disparities in urban green space accessibility." *Landscape and Urban Planning*. 102(4): 234-244. **Carmen**

Wednesday: Weekly discussion post due

Thursday April 1st: NO CLASS

Week 13 (The Built Environment)

Tuesday April 6th

Cutts, Bethany, Kate Darby, Christopher Boone, and Alexandra Brewis. 2009. "City structure, obesity, and environmental justice- An integrated analysis of physical and social barriers to walkable streets and park access." *Social Science and Medicine* 69(9): 1314-1322. **Carmen**

Wednesday: Weekly discussion post due

Thursday April 8th

Bell and Ashwood: Chapter 11: Mobilizing the Ecological Society (pg. 315-344)

Week 14 (Governance)

Tuesday April 13th

Bell and Ashwood: Chapter 12: Governing the Ecological Society (pg. 345-364)

Wednesday: Weekly Discussion Post due

Thursday April 15th

Checker, Melissa. 2007. "But I know it's True: Environmental Risk Assessment, Justice and Anthropology." *Human Organization* 66(2): 112-124. **Carmen**

Week 15 (Issues within Activism)

Tuesday April 20th

Bell, Shannon and Yvonne Braun. 2010. "Coal, Identity, and the Gendering of Environmental Justice Activism in Central Appalachia." *Gender & Society* 24(6): 794-813. **Carmen**

Wednesday: Reading Response 3 Due

Thursday April 22nd.

Lichertman, Paul. 1995. "Piecing together multicultural community: Cultural Differences in Community Building Among Grass-Roots Environmentalists." *Social Problems* 513-534. **Carmen**

Finals Week

Wednesday April 28th: Paper Part 2 Due

GE THEME COURSES

Overview

Courses that are accepted into the General Education (GE) Themes must meet two sets of Expected Learning Outcomes (ELOs): those common for all GE Themes and one set specific to the content of the Theme. This form begins with the criteria common to all themes and has expandable sections relating to each specific theme.

A course may be accepted into more than one Theme if the ELOs for each theme are met. Courses seeing approval for multiple Themes will complete a submission document for each theme. Courses seeking approval as a 4-credit, Integrative Practices course need to complete a similar submission form for the chosen practice. It may be helpful to consult your Director of Undergraduate Studies or appropriate support staff person as you develop and submit your course.

Please enter text in the boxes to describe how your class will meet the ELOs of the Theme to which it applies. Please use language that is clear and concise and that colleagues outside of your discipline will be able to follow. You are encouraged to refer specifically to the syllabus submitted for the course, since the reviewers will also have that document. Because this document will be used in the course review and approval process, you should be as specific as possible, listing concrete activities, specific theories, names of scholars, titles of textbooks etc.

Course subject & number

General Expectations of All Themes

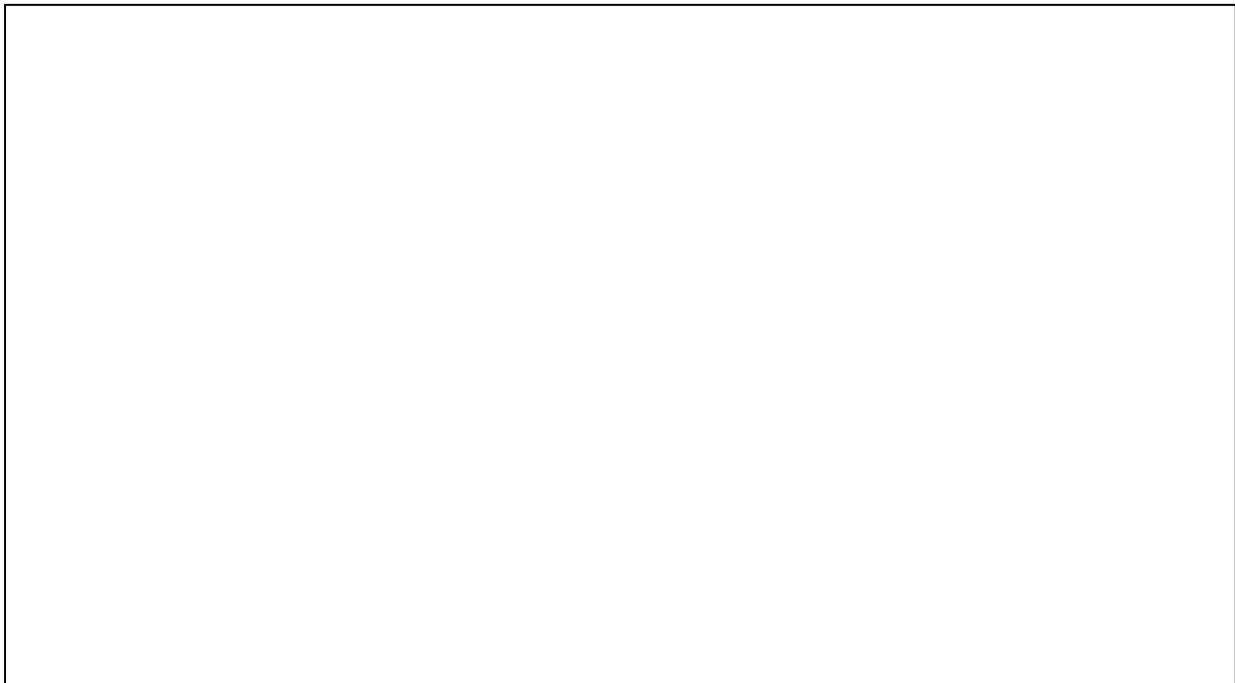
GOAL 1: Successful students will analyze an important topic or idea at a more advanced and in-depth level than the foundations.

Please briefly identify the ways in which this course represents an advanced study of the focal theme. In this context, “advanced” refers to courses that are e.g., synthetic, rely on research or cutting-edge findings, or deeply engage with the subject matter, among other possibilities. *(50-500 words)*

Course subject & number

ELO 1.1 Engage in critical and logical thinking about the topic or idea of the theme. Please link this ELO to the course goals and topics and indicate *specific* activities/assignments through which it will be met. (50-700 words)

ELO 1.2 Engage in an advanced, in-depth, scholarly exploration of the topic or idea of the theme. Please link this ELO to the course goals and topics and indicate *specific* activities/assignments through which it will be met. (50-700 words)

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the student to write their response to the ELOs. It occupies the lower half of the page.

Course subject & number

GOAL 2: Successful students will integrate approaches to the theme by making connections to out-of-classroom experiences with academic knowledge or across disciplines and/or to work they have done in previous classes and that they anticipate doing in future.

ELO 2.1 Identify, describe, and synthesize approaches or experiences as they apply to the theme.

Please link this ELO to the course goals and topics and indicate *specific* activities/assignments through which it will be met. (50-700 words)

ELO 2.2 Demonstrate a developing sense of self as a learner through reflection, self-assessment, and creative work, building on prior experiences to respond to new and challenging contexts.

Please link this ELO to the course goals and topics and indicate *specific* activities/assignments through which it will be met. (50-700 words)

Course subject & number

Specific Expectations of Courses in Sustainability

GOAL 1: Students analyze and explain how social and natural systems function, interact, and evolve over time; how human wellbeing depends on these interactions; how actions have impacts on subsequent generations and societies globally; and how human values, behaviors, and institutions impact multi-faceted, potential solutions across time.

1.1 Describe elements of the fundamental dependence of humans on Earth and environmental systems and on the resilience of these systems. Please link this ELO to the course goals and topics and indicate *specific* activities/assignments through which it will be met. (50-700 words)

Course subject & number

1.2 Describe, analyze and critique the roles and impacts of human activity and technology on both human society and the natural world, in the past, currently, and in the future. Please link this ELO to the course goals and topics and indicate *specific* activities/assignments through which it will be met. (50-700 words)

1.3 Devise informed and meaningful responses to problems and arguments in the area of sustainability based on the interpretation of appropriate evidence and an explicit statement of values. Please link this ELO to the course goals and topics and indicate *specific* activities/assignments through which it will be met. (50-700 words)