

Term Information

Effective Term Autumn 2022
Previous Value *Spring 2020*

Course Change Information

What change is being proposed? (If more than one, what changes are being proposed?)

Add 2340 into Sustainability thematic pathway of new GE program.

What is the rationale for the proposed change(s)?

The Philosophy Dept demonstrates in the attached proposal how this course fulfills the learning outcomes of the Sustainability thematic pathway, and therefore students should be able to fulfill this requirement by completing this course.

What are the programmatic implications of the proposed change(s)?

(e.g. program requirements to be added or removed, changes to be made in available resources, effect on other programs that use the course)?

We anticipate no additional resources will be required to deliver this course offering.

Is approval of the request contingent upon the approval of other course or curricular program request? No

Is this a request to withdraw the course? No

General Information

Course Bulletin Listing/Subject Area Philosophy
Fiscal Unit/Academic Org Philosophy - D0575
College/Academic Group Arts and Sciences
Level/Career Undergraduate
Course Number/Catalog 2340
Course Title The Future of Humanity
Transcript Abbreviation Future of Humanity
Course Description Examination of long-term ethical challenges facing humanity due to technological, environmental, and other developments.
Semester Credit Hours/Units Fixed: 3

Offering Information

Length Of Course 14 Week, 12 Week, 8 Week, 7 Week, 6 Week, 4 Week
Flexibly Scheduled Course Never
Does any section of this course have a distance education component? No
Grading Basis Letter Grade
Repeatable No
Course Components Lecture
Grade Roster Component Lecture
Credit Available by Exam No
Admission Condition Course No
Off Campus Never
Campus of Offering Columbus, Lima, Mansfield, Marion, Newark, Wooster
Previous Value *Columbus, Lima*

Prerequisites and Exclusions

Prerequisites/Corequisites

Exclusions

Electronically Enforced No

Cross-Listings

Cross-Listings

Subject/CIP Code

Subject/CIP Code 38.0101
Subsidy Level General Studies Course
Intended Rank Freshman, Sophomore

Requirement/Elective Designation

General Education course:
Culture and Ideas; Sustainability

Previous Value

*General Education course:
Culture and Ideas*

Course Details

Course goals or learning objectives/outcomes

- Students analyze and interpret major forms of human thought, culture, and expression.
- Students evaluate how ideas influence the character of human beliefs, the perception of reality, and the norms which guide human behavior.
- 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,

Previous Value

- *Students analyze and interpret major forms of human thought, culture, and expression.*
- *Students evaluate how ideas influence the character of human beliefs, the perception of reality, and the norms which guide human behavior.*

Content Topic List

- Artificial Intelligence
- Human Enhancement
- Nanotechnology
- Environmental Sustainability

Sought Concurrence

No

Previous Value

Yes

Attachments

- 2340 submission-sustainability form 1.24.2022.pdf: GE Sustainability form
(Other Supporting Documentation. Owner: Shuster,Amy Lynne)
- 2340 Syllabus (for Sustainability theme) 1.24.2022.pdf: Syllabus
(Syllabus. Owner: Shuster,Amy Lynne)

Comments

- To meet the first contingency, the instructions for the weekly questions/comments have been revised to require students to address how the readings or videos relate to sustainability: see p. 3 of the syllabus.

To meet the second contingency, the instructions for the final video project have been revised to provide more detail about what this project involves and to require students to describe a career path in which they could help the future of humanity be more sustainable: see p. 3 of the syllabus and p. 3 of the submission form. *(by Shuster,Amy Lynne on 01/24/2022 08:41 PM)*

- Please see Panel feedback email sent 12/03/2021. *(by Hilty,Michael on 12/03/2021 02:40 PM)*
- Sent back at dept's request *(by Vankeerbergen,Bernadette Chantal on 10/25/2021 04:46 PM)*

Workflow Information

Status	User(s)	Date/Time	Step
Submitted	Shuster,Amy Lynne	09/30/2021 12:38 PM	Submitted for Approval
Approved	Lin,Eden	09/30/2021 02:11 PM	Unit Approval
Revision Requested	Vankeerbergen,Bernadette Chantal	10/25/2021 04:46 PM	College Approval
Submitted	Shuster,Amy Lynne	10/25/2021 04:55 PM	Submitted for Approval
Approved	Lin,Eden	10/25/2021 04:59 PM	Unit Approval
Approved	Vankeerbergen,Bernadette Chantal	11/10/2021 02:16 PM	College Approval
Revision Requested	Hilty,Michael	12/03/2021 02:40 PM	ASCCAO Approval
Submitted	Shuster,Amy Lynne	01/24/2022 08:42 PM	Submitted for Approval
Approved	Lin,Eden	01/24/2022 09:37 PM	Unit Approval
Pending Approval	Vankeerbergen,Bernadette Chantal	01/24/2022 09:37 PM	College Approval

The Future of Humanity

Broadly understood, the ideal of sustainability enjoins us to act so that future generations of human beings are able to have as high a quality of life as we do. Caring about sustainability thus involves caring about the future of our species—a future that we cannot confidently predict. What does the future hold for us? Some believe that advances in technology will make human life unimaginably prosperous. Others have a much darker vision of our future—one in which our descendants are left with a depleted planet and face extinction at the hands of technological forces they cannot control. The future of humanity raises important philosophical and ethical questions. Why should we act more sustainably for the sake of future people? How large should the human population become? In what ways should we use technology to enhance ourselves? Will we someday be able to transcend our bodies by uploading ourselves into computers—and if so, would this be a desirable thing to do? How might artificial superintelligence change human life—and could it destroy it? These are some of the questions that we will consider.

Course Number: PHILOS 2340

Room: TBD

Meeting Times: Tuesday and Thursday, 2:20pm – 3:40pm **[NOTE: For simplicity's sake, I will use the meeting times and dates from when I last taught this course in AU20. Obviously, these will be different for future offerings of the course.]**

Professor: Eden Lin
Department of Philosophy
328 University Hall
Office hours: by appointment
lin.2659@osu.edu

General Education Category: Sustainability Theme.

Goals and Expected Learning Outcomes for All Themes:

- Goal 1: Successful students will analyze an important topic or idea at a more advanced and in-depth level than the foundations.
 - ELO 1.1: Engage in critical and logical thinking about the topic or idea of the theme.
 - ELO 1.2: Engage in an advanced, in-depth, scholarly exploration of the topic or idea of the theme.
- 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.
 - 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.

You will think critically and logically about issues relating to sustainability (ELO 1.1), and you will do this in greater depth than would be appropriate in an introductory course by engaging with academic

journal articles and an academic book (ELO 1.2). You will integrate approaches from disciplines as diverse as climate science, economics, demography, and philosophy (ELO 2.1), and your final video project will have you reflect on what you have learned and creatively apply this to the context of your choice of career (ELO 2.2).

Goals and Expected Learning Outcome for the Sustainability Theme:

- Goal 1: Students analyze and explain how social and natural systems function, interact, and evolve over time; how human well-being 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.
 - ELO 1.1: Describe elements of the fundamental dependence of humans on Earth and environmental systems and on the resilience of these systems.
 - ELO 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.
 - ELO 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.

You will learn, and learn how to describe, how human well-being depends on the limited resources on Earth and on environmental systems whose ability to sustain human life is increasingly imperiled by anthropogenic climate change (ELO 1.1). You will analyze the impact of human activity and technology on society and the natural world (ELO 1.2) throughout the course: for example, the units on climate change and population growth concern their impacts on the natural world, and the units on automation and unemployment and on artificial superintelligence concern the potential future impacts of artificial intelligence on society and the natural world. Throughout the course, you will also reflect on your values and ethical convictions in order to develop thoughtful responses to sustainability-related problems and arguments (ELO 1.3).

Course Materials: There are three required books for the class: *Rise of the Robots* by Martin Ford, *A Crack in Creation* by Jennifer Doudna and Samuel Sternberg, and *Superintelligence* by Nick Bostrom. They are available at the University Bookstore. All other course materials will be available on Carmen or elsewhere on the internet. Please do each assigned reading (and watch each assigned video) *before* the class meeting that it is listed next to.

Grading Information: Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

- Headshot: **5%**
- Attendance and in-class participation: **20%**
- Weekly questions/comments: **20%**
- First exam: **20%**
- Second exam: **20%**
- Final video project: **15%**

Grading Scale: I will use the OSU Standard Grade Scheme:

- 93 – 100 (A)
- 90 – 92.9 (A-)

- 87 – 89.9 (B+)
- 83 – 86.9 (B)
- 80 – 82.9 (B-)
- 77 – 79.9 (C+)
- 73 – 76.9 (C)
- 70 – 72.9 (C-)
- 67 – 69.9 (D+)
- 60 – 66.9 (D)
- Below 60 (E)

Headshot: By **11:59pm on Thursday, August 27**, you must upload a picture of your face in the “Headshot” assignment on Carmen.

Weekly Questions/Comments: Every week until the last week of November, you must do one of two things: (1) submit a question or comment about the reading/video assigned for *Tuesday’s* class meeting by **11:59pm on Monday**, *or* (2) submit a question or comment about the reading/video assigned for *Thursday’s* class by **11:59pm on Wednesday**. Your question or comment should address some way in which the reading/video (or some part of it) relates to sustainability. There will be no partial credit for late submissions, but your lowest two scores in the semester will be dropped.

Exams: There will be two exams, both of them administered in class. The first exam will take place on **Tuesday, October 6** and will concern the material that we will have covered by then. The second exam will take place on **Tuesday, November 24** and will concern all of the material covered after the first exam. Both will be “closed book” exams, which means that you will not be allowed to consult any materials (e.g., your notes, my slides, assigned readings) while taking them.

Final Video Project: You must use Flipgrid to record a 5-minute video in which you describe a possible career path that would allow you to help the future of humanity be more sustainable. In your video, you must explain each of the following four things: (i) what work you would actually be doing, on a day-to-day basis, if you were on this career path, (ii) in what ways you would help the future of humanity be more sustainable if you were on this career path, (iii) why this career path would be a good fit for you in terms of your personality, interests, and qualifications, and (iv) what concrete steps you would need to take to get started on this career path (e.g., what kind of further education or internship experience you would first need to obtain). This will be due at **11:59pm on Thursday, December 3**. You may consult any sources you like and obtain feedback from other people when planning this, but the video itself must be your work alone.

Office Hours: To set up a meeting with me, please send me an email a few days in advance, listing all of the days and times at which you would be available to meet with me. We will meet virtually in the same Zoom meeting room that we use for class.

Academic Misconduct: It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of academic misconduct to the

committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct: <http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/>.

Legitimate Excuses for Absences: If you have what I deem a legitimate excuse for being absent from one of our class meetings, that absence will not count against you in the determination of your attendance and in-class participation grade. I will always deem sufficiently serious illness a legitimate excuse, and since it may make sense for you to recover at home without being seen by a doctor, I will not require documentation. I will assess non-medical excuses on a case by case basis. If you think that you have an excuse for an absence, please tell me what it is as soon as possible—ideally *before* the relevant class meeting, if you know in advance that you will miss it.

Accommodations for Disabilities or COVID: The university strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. In light of the current pandemic, students seeking to request COVID-related accommodations may do so through the university’s [request process](#), managed by Student Life Disability Services. 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.

Syllabus Updates: The syllabus may undergo some changes during the semester. Please download the latest version of the syllabus from the “Syllabus” section on Carmen.

Class Schedule

Introductory Session

**Tuesday,
Aug. 25** What is this course about?
What are its main objectives?
What will it be like?

Climate Change

After reviewing the science of climate change, we consider some effects that its continuation might have on human beings in the future. We then discuss a puzzle in ethics that is connected to climate change: the non-identity problem.

**Thursday,
Aug. 27** Brian Henning, “The Basics of Climate Science”
Kelsey Piper (Vox), “[Will Climate Change Kill Everyone – or Just Lots and Lots of People?](#)”
Upload your headshot by 11:59pm

**Tuesday,
Sept. 1** Molly Gardner, “[The Nonidentity Problem #1](#)” (video)
Molly Gardner, “[The Nonidentity Problem #2](#)” (video)

**Thursday,
Sept. 3** Elizabeth Harman, “Can We Harm and Benefit in Creating?” (skip sections 4, 9, 10, and 11)
Edward Page, “Intergenerational Justice and Climate Change” (pp. 61-66)

Population Growth

How many people will there be? How many people should there be? We consider how the human population has grown and is projected to grow. We also consider an argument for a surprising claim: the repugnant conclusion. According to this claim, the world would be better if it contained many times more people than it now contains, even if all of these people’s lives were barely worth living.

**Tuesday,
Sept. 8** Hans Rosling, “[Don’t Panic](#)” (video)
Derek Parfit, “Overpopulation and the Quality of Life” (pp. 145-155)

**Thursday,
Sept. 10** Derek Parfit, “Overpopulation and the Quality of Life” (pp. 145-155)

Algorithmic Bias

Companies and governments increasingly rely on algorithms to make decisions. By examining their use in the criminal justice system, we consider some ways in which algorithms can be biased.

**Tuesday,
Sept. 15** AI Now, “Automated Decision Systems: Examples of Government Use Cases”
Julia Angwin, Jeff Larson, Surya Mattu, and Lauren Kirchner (ProPublica),
“[Machine Bias](#)”

Jeff Larson, Surya Mattu, Lauren Kirchner, and Julia Angwin (ProPublica), "[How We Analyzed the COMPAS Recidivism Algorithm](#)" (read (i) the introductory section before the "Previous Work" heading and (ii) the "How We Defined Recidivism" section)

**Thursday,
Sept. 17** Sam Corbett-Davis, Emma Pierson, Avi Feller, and Sharad Goel (Washington Post), "[A Computer Program Used for Bail and Sentencing Decisions Was Labeled Biased Against Blacks. It's Actually Not That Clear.](#)"
Rashida Richardson, Jason Schultz, and Kate Crawford, "Dirty Data, Bad Predictions" (pp. 192-203, 218-27)

Optional background reading:

Radley Balko (Washington Post), "[There's Overwhelming Evidence that the Criminal Justice System Is Racist. Here's the Proof.](#)"

Automation and Unemployment

We can expect automation to make more and more jobs obsolete in the coming years. How should we respond to this trend? Might there come a day when only a minority of people are able to secure paid employment? If so, how should we deal with this situation?

**Tuesday,
Sept. 22** Martin Ford, *Rise of the Robots* (pp. ix-xviii, 29-34, 83-96, 102-128)

**Thursday,
Sept. 24** Steve Denning, "The 'Jobless Future' Is a Myth"
The Economist, "Automation and Anxiety: The Impact on Jobs" (excerpts)
Martin Ford, *Rise of the Robots* (pp. 193-198, 206-210, 215-220)

**Tuesday,
Sept. 29** Martin Ford, *Rise of the Robots* (pp. 249-275)
Intelligence Squared Debate: "[The Universal Basic Income Is the Safety Net of the Future](#)" (video; watch from 41:50 to 56:03)

**Thursday,
Oct. 1** John Danaher, "Will Life Be Worth Living in a World Without Work? (skip the section entitled "Will Technological Unemployment Happen?")

**Tuesday,
Oct. 6** **First exam**

Mass Surveillance

Technological developments are enabling governments to conduct surveillance on a scale that was previously impossible. What is privacy, and why is it valuable? Even if the costs of mass surveillance currently outweigh its benefits, could this cease to be true in a future in which individual people have the technological means to destroy civilization?

**Thursday,
Oct. 8** Stuart Thompson and Charlie Warzel (New York Times), "[Twelve Million Phones, One Dataset, Zero Privacy](#)"

Bloomberg, "[The Surveillance Firm Recording Crimes from Baltimore's Skies](#)" (video)

Ruth Gavison, "Privacy and the Limits of Law" (pp. 428-40)

**Tuesday,
Oct. 13** Paul Mozur and Aaron Krolik (New York Times), "[A Surveillance Net Blankets China's Cities, Giving Police Vast Powers](#)"

Ruth Gavison, "Privacy and the Limits of Law" (pp. 440-56)

**Thursday,
Oct. 15** Nick Bostrom, "The Vulnerable World Hypothesis" (pp. 1-10, 23-33)

Human Enhancement and Transhumanism

New technologies will allow human beings to enhance their capacities in various ways. After looking at CRISPR-Cas9, a new genetic engineering technology, we assess some arguments for and against enhancement in general. Then, we examine the possibility that future technologies will allow people to live for thousands of years and to be revived after their deaths. We end by considering the idea that people could be uploaded into computers. Would this be desirable? Would it be possible, even in principle?

**Tuesday,
Oct. 20** McGovern Institute for Brain Research, "[Genome Editing with CRISPR-Cas9](#)" (video)

Jennifer Doudna and Samuel Sternberg, *A Crack in Creation* (pp. xii-xx, 3-15, 96-114, 154-88, 222-34)

**Thursday,
Oct. 22** Michael Sandel, "The Case Against Perfection" Science, Technology, and the Future, "[What Is Transhumanism? The 3 Supers with David Pearce](#)" (video)

**Tuesday,
Oct. 27** Kurzgesagt, "[How to Cure Aging – During Your Lifetime?](#)" (video)
Larry Temkin, "Is Living Longer Living Better?"

**Thursday,
Oct. 29** David Chalmers, "Uploading: A Philosophical Analysis" (pp. 102-111)

**Tuesday,
Nov. 3** David Chalmers, "Uploading: A Philosophical Analysis" (pp. 111-118)

**Thursday,
Nov. 5** *Catch-up day: no new reading*

Artificial Superintelligence

Some believe that by the end of the century, we will have developed artificial superintelligence (ASI): artificial intelligence that is much smarter in every domain than even the smartest human beings are. This ASI might very well become the most powerful entity on Earth. If it is friendly to us, it could do a much better job at solving our problems than we ever could. If it is unfriendly or indifferent to us, it could exterminate us. How should we prepare for the arrival of an ASI?

**Tuesday,
Nov. 10** Nick Bostrom, *Superintelligence* (pp. iii-iv, 4-6, 22-25, 63-94 [skipping “Non-machine intelligence paths” on pp. 80-82], 95-106)

**Thursday,
Nov. 12** Nick Bostrom, *Superintelligence* (pp. 110-120, 127-139)

**Tuesday,
Nov. 17** Nick Bostrom, *Superintelligence* (pp. 140-176)

**Thursday,
Nov. 19** Nick Bostrom, *Superintelligence* (pp. 177-193, 256-264)

**Tuesday,
Nov. 24** **Second exam**

What Can You Do to Help the Future of Humanity?

**Tuesday,
Dec. 1** No reading: please come prepared to discuss your final video project.

**Thursday,
Dec. 3** *Attendance optional: review of Second Exam.*

FINAL VIDEO PROJECT deadline: Thursday, Dec. 3 at 11:59pm

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

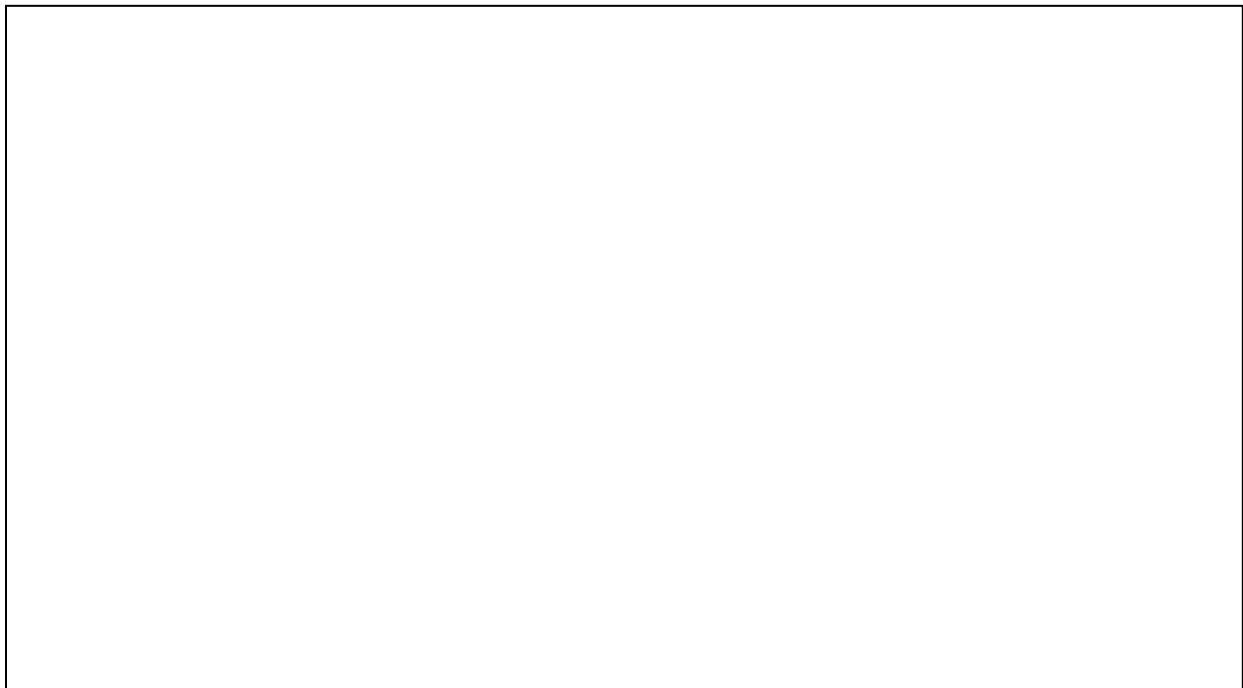
GOAL 1: Successful students will analyze an important topic or idea at a more advanced and in-depth level than the foundations.

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)