

Special Topics: The Sustainable Campus Course Overview and Policies

Welcome to Professor Mike Bryson's Spring 2015 SUST 390 Special Topics course which focuses on the sustainability of college and university campuses. This document provides an overview of the course's theme, goals, format, activities, and general requirements. For more detailed information, including our weekly schedule, required assignments, and suggested readings, consult the [Syllabus](#) section of our course Blackboard (Bb) site. SUST 390 is an upper-level course in the Sustainability Studies major, and may be taken for elective credit by students in other programs.

Pre-req: ENG 102 and SUST 210.

The Sustainable Campus: More than Just a Cool Building

What are colleges and universities doing to make themselves more sustainable institutions? How can their efforts serve as laboratories for innovation and models for larger communities, from small college towns to sprawling suburbs to bustling big cities? What have Roosevelt University and other area institutions accomplished the last few years in creating more sustainable campuses, and where are they headed in terms of sustainability planning, operations, academics, and community relations?

This new special topics course focuses on the microcosm of the university as a lens through which to explore how communities are striving to save energy, conserve water, reduce waste, encourage active transportation, restore biodiversity, foster environmental literacy, develop innovative curricula, and connect with local communities. Seen in this context, the Sustainable Campus is always a work in progress, yet has the capacity to model sustainable development strategies that may be applied to communities large and small.

While we will consider case-studies of other US colleges and universities that are well on the path toward sustainability, this section of SUST 390 will concentrate on Roosevelt's efforts since 2010 to green its operations and curriculum, which have recently culminated in a series of university-wide sustainability planning workshops during the Fall 2014 semester. As a follow-up to the creation of **RU's Strategic Sustainability Plan** (the draft of which is currently under review by the RU faculty and administration), our class will gather data about Roosevelt and its sustainability initiatives accomplishments within these four thematic areas:

- Academics
- Engagement
- Operations
- Planning and Administration



Among our many activities, we'll use the STARS 2.0 Sustainability Tracking and Reporting System adopted by many universities to guide our research, as we document and assess Roosevelt's progress on various indicators of sustainability. This work will form the foundation of the university's forthcoming STARS reporting efforts in alignment with the new Strategic Sustainability Plan, and provide critical baseline data as we launch new sustainability initiatives in coming years.

Students in SUST 390 The Sustainable Campus will get an in-depth perspective on the university’s sustainability efforts and, through their research, gain practical experience gathering data and generating reports for the STARS 2.0 tracking system. More importantly, they will have a hand in helping the university realize its vision of becoming a more sustainable institution, both inside its walls and throughout its connection with Chicagoland communities.

Learning Objectives and Course Goals

- Understand the key elements of campus sustainability in terms of operations, academics, outreach, governance, leadership, etc.
- Investigate instructive examples of campus sustainability efforts at different colleges and universities
- Analyze Roosevelt's efforts since 2010 to green itself, create a sustainability plan, and map out future goals and projects
- Conduct research on RU sustainability efforts in academics, campus and public engagement, operations, and planning/administration; and produce usable data for the STARS 2.0 reporting system
- Develop skills in critical interpretation of texts, data compilation and analysis, public communication and presentation, and utilization of the STARS 2.0 metric

Tentative Weekly Schedule at a Glance

Updated 14 January 2015 and subject to revision as needed

Week	Topic / Activity	Campus Reports	Assignment Due	STARS Assessment Work
1 -- Jan 14	Introduction to Course			
2 -- Jan 21	AASHE and STARS	Establish schedule		Organize research teams
3 -- Jan 28	Leadership	Reports start		Develop work plan
4 -- Feb 4	Curriculum		Research Plan	Contact sources
5 -- Feb 11	Change			Gather data
6 -- Feb 18	Mission and Culture			Gather data
7 -- Feb 25	Accountability			Assess progress to date
8 -- Mar 4	Transformation		Progress Report	Gather/analyze data
9 -- Mar 11	Spring Break			
10 -- Mar 18	Research / Service			Gather/analyze data
11 -- Mar 25	Research / Service			Gather/analyze data
12 -- Apr 1	No class this week			Confer as groups
13 -- Apr 8	Research / Service			Identify/fix gaps in data
14 -- Apr 15	STARS Submission	Last report day	Data Report	Upload data to system
15 -- Apr 22	SUST Symposium			
16 -- Apr 29	Finals Week		Reflection Essay	

Seminar Format and Classroom Expectations

This class is a seminar, which places a premium on critical thinking, interactive discussion, class participation, writing, and research. Our small size and hands-on learning approach mean that **each of you will play a vital role in the class as scholar, worker, and active participant**. Consequently, my expectations are high for engaged, thoughtful, and regular participation.

Please note these important classroom guidelines:

- Attend every class session. There is no substitute for good attendance.
- Turn phones to silent mode during class to avoid interruptions.
- Close laptops unless we're working on something together (email and Facebook can wait).
- Come to class prepared to discuss all of the assigned readings.
- Check your RU student email account several times per week to stay hip (to the syllabus, that is).

Requirements and Key Assignments

This class is 16 weeks in duration (which includes Spring Break and Finals) and has a distinct weekly rhythm. Required readings include our assigned text, *Sustainability in Higher Education: Stories and Strategies for Transformation* (Barlett and Chase, eds.), websites, and/or documents available in the **Readings** section of our Bb site. You should also access the following online information resources:

- Subscribe to the [SUST at RU blog](#) and the [Schaumburg's Sustainable Future blog](#); and "like" the [SUST Facebook page](#) (if you're a FB user)
- Register on the [AASHE website](#) and e-subscribe to the [AASHE Bulletin](#)

In addition to regular and engaged **Class Participation** during all class activities and discussions, our class also requires several key writing/research assignments:

- a **Campus Sustainability Report** (6-10 Pp slides) in which you describe, analyze, and make a 15min class presentation on the sustainability accomplishments and initiatives of a college or university of your choice; these will run from Weeks 3 to 14
- a collaboratively written **Research Plan** (2 pages) that maps out your STARS assessment team's research strategy on a timeline
- a **Progress Report** (1-2 pages) that details your own progress on your designated research responsibilities within your group
- a **Data Report** (Excel file) that contains the quantitative data and verbal explanation required for the STARS credit(s) for which you are responsible
- a **Reflection Essay** (5-7 pages) submitted at semester's end in which you reflect upon your overall learning experiences in light of the course readings, writing and research work in the course, and participation in your STARS research team

More information on specific assignments, class participation, and course grading policies will be available in the **Syllabus** section of our Bb site.

Contact Information

Email (mbryson@roosevelt.edu) is the best way to get in touch with me; cellphone is next best. My office hours are published in our 350 Bb site as well as on the Contact page on my faculty website. Wednesdays I'm in Gage 205 from 11am-2:30pm unless scheduled for a faculty meeting.

Mike Bryson, PhD

Associate Professor & Director of Sustainability Studies
Gage 205 (office hours on Mon 10:30am-12:45pm and Wed 11am-2:30pm)
mbryson@roosevelt.edu | 312.281.3148 (office) | 815.557.3153 (cell)
<http://sites.roosevelt.edu/mbryson> (faculty website)

I am available for a campus-based or phone appointment, should you have questions or feel like you need some individualized help beyond what I can provide in the classroom. Keeping up is vitally important in this class, for our schedule is both tight and complex. Please do not disappear! I check my email and voicemail regularly, and I do my best to return messages within a day during the work week. Remember that there's no substitute for regular participation and timely submission of your assignments.

Accommodation of Persons with Disabilities

"The University will provide reasonable accommodations to students or applicants with documented disabilities in compliance with all local, state and federal laws and University policies and procedures.

"Students with documented disabilities who wish to receive accommodations and/or services should notify the University as soon as possible. Students should contact the Office of Disability Services, at (312) 341-3810 for the Chicago Campus or (847) 619-8846 for the Schaumburg Campus, and provide documentation of their disabilities and their requests for accommodations/services to this office. Reasonable accommodations will be determined on a case-by-case basis."

(RU Student Handbook, p. 113).

Accommodation of Students for Religious Holidays

"Roosevelt University respects the rights of students to observe major religious holidays and will make accommodations, upon request, for such observances. Students who wish to observe religious holidays must inform their instructors in writing within the first two weeks of each semester of their intent to observe the holiday so that alternative arrangements convenient to both students and faculty can be made at the earliest opportunity. Students who make such arrangements by the deadline will not be required to attend classes or take examinations on the designated days, and faculty must provide reasonable opportunities for such students to make up missed work and examinations. However, all work missed for such absences, including papers and examinations, must be made up. Students who do not arrange for excused absences by the deadline are not entitled to such accommodations."

(RU Student Handbook, p. 112).

Updated 14 January 2015

Weekly Schedule at a Glance

Updated 9 February 2015

Week	Topic / Activity	Campus Reports	Assignment Due	STARS Assessment Work
1 -- Jan 14	Introduction to Course			
2 -- Jan 21	AASHE and STARS			Organize research teams
3 -- Jan 28	Leadership	Maria, Rebecca		Develop work plan
4 -- Feb 4	Curriculum	Emily, Sera	Research Plan 2/6	Contact sources
5 -- Feb 11	Change	Jenny, Shannon		Gather data
6 -- Feb 18	Mission and Culture	Ana, Cassidy		Gather data
7 -- Feb 25	No class this week			Confer as groups
8 -- Mar 4	STARS Planning	CH, JW, MM, YB	Progress Report 3/6	Gather/analyze data
9 -- Mar 11	Spring Break			
10 -- Mar 18	Accountability	Kyle, Reece		Gather/analyze data
11 -- Mar 25	Transformation	Colleen, Kelsey		Gather/analyze data
12 -- Apr 1	No class this week			Confer as groups
13 -- Apr 8	Research / Service	Jordan, Stephanie		Identify/fix gaps in data
14 -- Apr 15	STARS Submission	Deidra, Tom	Data Report 4/17	Prepare data for uploading
15 -- Apr 22	SUST Symposium			
16 -- Apr 29	Finals Week		Reflection Essay 4/29	

Detailed Weekly Schedule of Readings, Activities, and Assignments

Color Key: Campus Reports / Major writing assignments

Week One (1/14): The Sustainable Campus

- Introduction to course theme, format, report schedule, and academic requirements
- Online resources: register with [AASHE](#); subscribe to the [SUST at RU](#) blog, the [Schaumburg's Sustainable Future](#) blog, and the [AASHE Bulletin](#); like the [SUST Facebook page](#); and check out the [RU Green Campus](#) website

Week Two (1/21): AASHE and the STARS 2.0 Assessment Tool

- Readings for discussion:
 - AASHE Bulletin news
 - RU Strategic Sustainability Plan (review carefully)
 - STARS Annual Report (2014), Credit Checklist, and Technical Manual (scan)
- Review schedule for Campus Reports (thanks for volunteering on week 1!)
- Organize STARS research teams and discuss semester schedule

Week Three (1/28): Leadership

- Readings for discussion:
 - AASHE Bulletin news
 - Barlett and Chase, Part I -- Leadership and Commitment
- Campus Reports: Maria C., Rebecca Q.
- STARS Teams: determine credits to pursue, develop research plan, and map out timeline

Week Four (2/4): Curriculum

- Readings for discussion:
 - AASHE Bulletin news
 - Barlett and Chase, Part II -- Curricular Transformation
- **Campus Reports:** Emily R., Sera S.
- STARS Teams: group-authored **Research Plan due Fri 2/6**

Week Five (2/11): Change

- Readings for discussion:
 - AASHE Bulletin news
 - Barlett and Chase, Part III -- Defining the Paradigm for Change
- **Campus Reports:** Jenny P., Shannon C.
- STARS Teams: begin contacting sources for data

Week Six (2/18): Mission and Culture

- Readings for discussion:
 - AASHE Bulletin news
 - Barlett and Chase, Part IV -- Institutional Mission and the Culture of Sustainability
- **Campus Reports:** Cassidy A., Ana M.
- STARS Teams: gather data

Week Seven (2/25): REGULAR CLASS DOES NOT MEET

- STARS Teams should confer as groups during class time: assess progress to date, adjust plans/goals/work assignments as necessary, continue gathering and assessing data
- Consult instructor via Bb and email
- Read ahead in Barlett and Chase for Weeks 10 and 11

Week Eight (3/4): Campus Report and Research Team Progress Assessment

- Readings for discussion:
 - AASHE Bulletin news
- **Campus Reports:** Courtney H., Jesse W., Melissa M., and Yessenia B.
- STARS Teams: gather/analyze data, assess progress thus far to prepare individual reports
- **Progress Report due Fri 3/6** (individually authored)

Week Nine (3/11): Spring Break

Week Ten (3/18): Accountability

- Readings for discussion:
 - AASHE Bulletin news
 - Barlett and Chase, Part V -- Accountability
- **Campus Reports:** Kyle H., Reece K.
- STARS Teams: gather/analyze data

Week Eleven (3/25): Transformation

- Readings for discussion:
 - AASHE Bulletin news
 - Barlett and Chase, Part VI -- Professional and Personal Transformation
- **Campus Reports**: Colleen D., Kelsey N.
- STARS Teams: gather/analyze data

Week Twelve (4/1): REGULAR CLASS DOES NOT MEET

- STARS Teams should confer as groups during class time: gather/analyze data and assess/troubleshoot progress to date; back up all Excel files and notes; check format and content against published example reports (UIC, Loyola, etc.)
- Consult instructor via Bb and email

Week Thirteen (4/8): Research / Service

- Readings for discussion:
 - AASHE Bulletin news
- **Campus Reports**: Jordan E., Stephanie C.
- STARS Teams: identify/fill gaps in data

Week Fourteen (4/15): STARS Submission Party

- Readings for discussion:
 - AASHE Bulletin news
- **Campus Reports**: Diedra S., Tom L.
- STARS Teams: prepare data in Excel files to be uploaded to STARS system
- **Data Report due Fri 4/17** (individually authored)

Week Fifteen (4/22): Earth Day and the SUST Student Symposium

- Our class hosts the Spring 2015 Symposium! Invite friends and colleagues, promote on social media, enjoy the research/internship presentations, and savor the conviviality. Location is here in WB 616 unless otherwise announced.
- Fill out course evaluations (online)

Week Sixteen (4/29): Finals Week

- **Reflection Essay due** (individually authored)

-- This schedule will be modified as needed --