**SUS 330 Sustainable Economics**

**Synonym Number: 95077**

**Spring 2016**

**3 credits**



**I. Course Information:**

*Meeting Time and Day:* Thursdays 1:00-3:50 PM *Class Location:* Academic Building, 215

*Start Date:* 01/19/16 *End Date:* 04/10/16

*Refund Date:* 02/05/16 *Withdraw Date:* 04/10/16

# *Prerequisites:* MAT-120 or higher, ENG-121, and

# *one of the following:* ECO-201 or ECO-202 or ECO-245;

# minimum grade C-.

**Instructor Information**:

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*Office: Bristol Hall 109 (enter through room 111)*

*Office Hours: Mon.: 10:00-12:00 AM and 1:00-4:00 PM; also by appointment*

1. **Course Description:** Presents an interdisciplinary approach to economics that includes concepts from ecology, physical science, and behavioral economics. Places traditional economic concepts within a foundation of sustainability by stressing the essential interconnections among the environment, economics, and social equity. Explores the limits of neoclassical economics to explain and predict economic phenomena and the failure of the mainstream economic approach to situate these phenomena sufficiently within biophysical and social equity contexts. Students develop systemic and contextual understanding of economic theory and economic phenomena. This understanding forms a basis for seeking potential solutions to problems of unsustainability through a transdisciplinary approach to economic change.

Topical Outline

1. The limits of neoclassical economics as a tool for analysis and action within a sustainable society.
2. Sustainability-oriented, alternative approaches to neoclassical economic analysis and policy.
3. Biophysical considerations for economics: the first and second laws of thermodynamics, resource constraints, and environmental damage.
4. Economics as a subset of nature.
5. Concepts and theories important to sustainable economics such as ecosystem resources, market allocation, stock-flow and fund-service resources, market allocation, monetary theory and policy, public goods, market failures, externalities, throughput, and growth versus development.
6. Capital: beyond financial and built capital to considerations of human, social, and natural capital within economic frameworks.
7. Market failures and their potential remedies.
8. Measuring economic success: gross domestic product (GDP) and its alternatives.
9. Social considerations for economics: equity issues in the economy.
10. Economic issues of scale and scope and how these relate to sustainability.
11. Examples of practical applications of sustainable economic theory.
12. **Student Learning Outcomes, Competencies, and Skills:** Upon completion of this course, you should:
13. Evaluate the limits of approaching complex societal problems through a narrow (reductionist) disciplinary approach.
14. Demonstrate an in-depth understanding of major critiques of neoclassical economics.
15. Demonstrate an in-depth understanding of at least one major, sustainability-oriented theoretical/practical alternative to neoclassical economics.
16. Demonstrate a firm understanding of the first and second laws of thermodynamics and the limitations they impose on real-world environmental, economic, and social equity problems.
17. Explain economic relationships among the natural world, business, and social institutions.
18. Explain relationships between sustainability and economic efficiency.
19. Understand the value of ecosystem services and how these services can be evaluated using sustainable economic analysis and tools.
20. Acquire familiarity with concepts and theories important to sustainable economics such as: ecosystem resources, market allocation, stock-flow and fund-service resources, monetary theory, public goods, market failures, externalities, throughput, and growth versus development.
21. Demonstrate an understanding of approaches to solving resource problems in the abiotic and biotic realm using sustainable economic analysis and management tools.
22. **IDEA** Objectives: In addition to the above learning outcomes, you can be expected to achieve the following competencies—provided that you participate fully in the course and complete all requirements:

Objective #2: Learning fundamental principles, generalizations, or theories.

Objective #3: Learning to apply course material to improve thinking, problem solving, and decisions.

Objective #11: Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view.

1. **Evaluation Methods and Class Management:** Your grade in this course will be determined by participation, online discussion of course material and concepts, a research project related to biophysical economics, and analytical and reflective writing assignments. Class participation and involvement in face-to-face discussions are part of your grade. Participation consists of a variety of ways of engaging as well as being both present and aware during class. Your education depends on both your instructor’s creation of a learning environment and your engagement with the course experience. You are required to read the assigned readings **prior** to each class session and be prepared to discuss relevant ideas and concepts in class. Please try to avoid entering class late or leaving early because doing so disrupts the class. Here are some general guidelines to help you understand the structure of this course, the expectations I have of you, and what you can expect from me.

* We will be using the following online tool as primary means of communication:

Canvas (<https://coloradomtn.instructure.com/>) CMC’s chosen e-learning tool will provide an online site for our course. This is where you will find course announcements, assignments, and more. I will provide an overview of Canvas during the first week of class.

* All assigned papers must be turned in via Canvas, which means they must be word processed.
* Your CMC e-mail address is considered to be an official means of contacting you about this course. Therefore, you are expected to check your CMC e-mail regularly.
* I may choose to alter the course material as the semester progresses. These changes will be conveyed to you in class and reflected in Canvas. Any such changes will be finalized by the date they are assigned.
* I will accept late assignments for one week following the original due date. All late assignments will be docked one full grade (10%). No assignments will be accepted following our last class meeting.
* If you need to miss a class, please notify me as soon as you are aware of this to make arrangements to get the course material and make up any missed activities. Course attendance is part of your grade, and being in class will influence your level of success in this course since many of the assignments stem from course discussions.
* You create your path in this life, and building a meaningful and satisfying path takes effort. Information means nothing unless you take it in, consider it within the framework of what you already know, reflect upon it, and create your own interpretation and meaning from this process. This course is designed to help you learn important information about sustainable economics, but it is your own efforts in this process that matter the most. Stay current with course readings and other requirements, and come to class ready to engage in stimulating discussions with your classmates.
* A note on academic honesty: plagiarism is not acceptable in this class. Plagiarism occurs when you use someone else’s work, do not cite them for their work, and claim such work as your own. Plagiarism is considered academic misconduct and will be treated as such as defined in the “Academic Policies and Requirements” section of the *Colorado Mountain College Student Handbook*.

Grade % Quality Points

A 93.5%-100% 4.0

A- 89.5%-93.4% 3.7

B+ 86.5%-89.4% 3.3

B 82.5%-86.4% 3.0

B- 79.5%-82.4% 2.7

C+ 76.5%-79.4% 2.3

C 72.5%-76.4% 2.0

C- 69.5%-72.4% 1.7

D+ 66.5%-69.4% 1.3

D 62.5%-66.4% 1.0

D- 59.5%-62.4% 0.7

F below 59.5% 0.0

Grades will be assessed as follows:

**General Class Participation 15% of final grade**

**CMC Sustainability Conference Participation 5% of final grade**

**Online Discussion Questions 20% of final grade**

**Analytical Reflection on Hall and Klitgaard 25% of final grade**

**LEDDA Framework Development Group Project 10% of final grade**

**Analytical Reflection on LEEDA and the Course 25% of final grade**

**Semester Total: 100%**

**Class participation: 15% of final grade:** The success of this course—for you and for your classmates—depends largely on your commitment to attending, preparing for, and participating in class. Readings will be assigned for each class—do them! If you don't, you'll be lost in class, and class discussions will suffer markedly, impacting the learning of others as well. Also, since class participation is worth 15% of your final grade, your grade will suffer if you continually lag behind in or don't complete readings, if you skip classes, or if you neglect to participate. That said, you will not necessarily be graded on the *quantity* of your participation. Having a great amount of poor quality, uninformed participation is not beneficial to you or to the class and will not result in a high grade for attendance, preparation, and participation. Readings assigned for a particular class are to be completed *prior* to that class. As one gauge of your class participation, I will take attendance regularly. If you have questions about your participation grade, please consult with me.

* *Addresses learning outcomes 1-11 and IDEA objectives 2, 3, and 11.*

**Sustainability Conference Participation, 5% of final grade:** You will be required to attend CMC’s college-wide sustainability conference on Thursday and Friday, April 21-22. Friday, April 22 is Earth Day as well, so the conference will be the place to be! Details will be provided in class. Please make arrangements to attend all day on the 21st and from 8:45-2:30 on the 22nd. Do not wait until the last minute to make your plan so that you have more trouble doing so. If there is some very pressing reason that you cannot attend this event, you will have an opportunity to complete an optional paper to fulfill this course requirement.

* *Addresses learning outcomes 1 and 5 and 5-6 and IDEA objectives 3 and 11.*

**Online Discussion Questions, 20% of final grade:** You will be required to participate in online discussions based on course readings, films, assignments, and in-class conversations. You will use the Canvas courseware platform to engage in these discussions, and specific instructions on how to do so will be provided in class. You are encouraged, not only to post your own individual responses to the question(s) posed, but also to respond thoughtfully to your classmates’ and your professor’s posts and/or to ask questions relevant to the discussion. Although these discussions are somewhat informal in nature, please communicate clearly and thoughtfully using standard English grammar and sentence structure. Texting lingo, for example, is not acceptable for these writing assignments.

* *Addresses learning outcomes 1-11 and IDEA objectives 2, 3, and 11.*

**Analytical Reflection on Hall and Klitgaard: 25% of final grade:** You will not be taking tests for this class. Instead, you will be asked to write analytical and reflective essays that call upon you to analyze and synthesize major course readings, discussions, films, and information. The first essay will focus heavily on our first course text: *Energy and the Wealth of Nations* by Hall and Klitgaard. I recommend that you take these essays quite seriously and strive to make them represent your very best thinking and writing. Specific assignment instructions will be discussed in class and posted via Canvas.

* *Addresses learning outcomes 1-5 and 8 and IDEA outcomes 2, 3 and 11.*

**LEDDA Framework Development Group Project: 10% of final grade:** As a highly effective vehicle for applying transformative economic principles, you will work with a small group to develop initial plans for a Local Economic Direct Democracy Association. This work will take place during the final weeks of classes and will include a group presentation to the class of the framework you develop. This project should help you immensely as you prepare to discuss the LEEDA framework in your final analytical and reflective essay for the term. I strongly suggest you plan to be present and active in your group’s work so that you can learn the material well and gain experience applying sustainability concepts to real world contexts.

* *Addresses learning outcomes 1-3, 5, and 7-9 and IDEA outcomes 2, 3, and 11.*

**Analytical Reflection on LEEDA and the Course: 25% of final grade:** Near the end of the term, you will write your second and final in-depth analytical and reflective essay for this course. In this essay, you will be called upon to synthesize course content, develop and support your own arguments about the current and future state of the economic system, and relate the content of the course to the context of your own learning and life. This essay will include a particular focus on *Economic Direct Democracy: A Framework to End Poverty and Maximize Well-Being* by Boik as well as other course materials that address approaches to sustainability-oriented economic change. Instructions for this essay will be provided in class and via Canvas.

* *Addresses learning outcomes 3, 5, 8, and 9 and IDEA outcomes 2-3 and 11.*

**Extra Credit:** I may identify in class and/or via Canvas opportunities to earn extra credit. All such opportunities will be open to all students.

**Notice:** A student judged to have engaged in academic misconduct as defined in the “Academic Policies and Requirements” section of the *Colorado Mountain College Student Handbook* will, at a minimum, receive a “zero” for the work in question. The student may also be removed from the class, resulting in a failing grade. All student course material may be submitted to turnitin.com (or another anti-plagiarism program) at the instructor’s discretion. “Academic Expectations,” the “Student Code of Conduct and Judicial Process,” and more information about academic misconduct can be found in the *Student Handbook*.

Students are responsible for course materials from assigned text(s) and reading, lectures, labs, and other assignments as required. The instructor may alter any, or all, of this syllabus during the semester as the learning environment requires. Students will be notified in writing of changes. Attendance at all class meetings is expected.

1. **Attendance and No-show Reporting:**

Attendance and early engagement are important elements for your success in this course. All students who do not attend the first class(es) or meet early attendance requirements must be reported by the instructor to the Registrar’s Office. Financial aid students or students receiving veteran’s benefits who do not attend the first class(es) or meet early attendance requirements will be dropped from the course and may not receive financial assistance ([**http://coloradomtn.edu/financial\_aid**](http://coloradomtn.edu/financial_aid)).

1. Students with Disabilities: If you have a disability protected by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and feel you may need classroom accommodations based on the impact of your disability, please contact the Disability Services Coordinator for our campus: Deb Farmer at 970-870-4450
2. Withdrawal from this Course:

Students wishing to withdraw from this course must INITIATE the course withdrawal/drop process at the site Registration Office. This class could be cancelled one week prior to the census date if a sufficient number of students are not enrolled by that date.

1. Grading System and Options**:** Information about grading is available in the Colorado Mountain College catalog. Grades will be posted to <https://webadvisor.coloradomtn.edu/> (WebAdvisor) by Thursday following the last day of classes at the end of each semester.
2. **Required Course Materials:** The following texts are required for this course:

Hall, Charles A. S, and Kent A. Klitgaard. *Energy and the Wealth of Nations: Understanding the Biophysical Economy*. New York: Springer, 2012. ISBN: 978-1-4419-9397-7.

Boik, John C. *Economic Direct Democracy: A Framework to End Poverty and Maximize Well-Being*. Houston: SiteForChange, 2014. Available for free online via the website for the Principled Societies Project (<http://www.principledsocietiesproject.org/>); text also made available through Canvas. In order to support the LEEDA project development, you are encouraged to purchase the book from the Principled Societies Project, Amazon, or another book dealer.

Additional course materials will be made available via the Internet or Canvas. This material will be listed in the weekly modules within Canvas. As the course progresses, I may alter the readings to better address/explore a topic/area of interest/concern. Any such changes will be reflected in Canvas at least one class period prior to the originally assigned date, and students will be notified during class of any such changes.

**Colorado Mountain College has chosen to partner with Follett Virtual Bookstores to operate textbook services.**

The official textbook list for CMC will be available on Follett's site, [www.coloradomtn.bkstr.com](http://www.coloradomtn.bkstr.com).  You also can easily access this site by choosing "bookstore" from the quick links on [www.coloradomtn.edu](http://www.coloradomtn.edu).  Students and other members of the campus community may sign up for the Online Textbook Store's email mailing list here [www.coloradomtn.bkstr.com/email](http://www.coloradomtn.bkstr.com/email) to receive important messages from the CMC Online Textbook Store. Students can sell back books anytime online or in-person at Follett's CMC buyback events.  Sign up for the online store's email list at [www.coloradomtn.bkstr.com/email](http://www.coloradomtn.bkstr.com/email) for more info on future buyback dates and times. If you have any online bookstore questions, you can email [coloradomtn@fvb.follett.com](mailto:coloradomtn@fvb.follett.com) or call 800-621-4088.

1. **Other Information:** A course outline/schedule is available in Canvas. This outline/schedule is tentative and many be modified during the semester as needed. You will be notified of any changes both via Canvas and in class.

**XI. Virtual Library Information:** [**http://coloradomtn.edu/library**](http://coloradomtn.edu/library)

The Virtual Library has its doors open 24/7, providing access to thousands of online journals and newspapers, e-books and art images, downloadable videos and audiobooks, career resources, and practice tests.

**Login Instructions:**

Use the CMC Libraries link from Canvas course menu to access the CMC libraries web site. The link will pass authentication credentials to the server that will allow you to use online library collections. It will also take you directly to the libraries’ home page.

**Ask a Librarian:**

If you need assistance with a research project, you can ask a librarian online. Select the AskAcademic chat box on the libraries’ home page, and type in your question. This service is available 21 hours a day, 7 days a week. You can also email [reference@coloradomtn.edu](mailto:reference@coloradomtn.edu) or call the library staff at 800-621-8559, extension 2926.