

University of Arkansas
Undergraduate Sustainability Minor
Capstone Experience

Summary

The Sustainability Capstone Project is the final requirement of the UA Foundations of Sustainability Minor. It provides students with practical experience through community service, an internship, and/or research in sustainability. Engagement in this kind of hands-on, relevant work on sustainability offers students opportunities to integrate and synthesize sustainability principles learned from prior coursework toward advancing sustainability across society.

Prerequisites

You must complete SUST 1103, SUST 2103, and at least 6 hours of elective coursework in sustainability to enroll in SUST 4103. Enrollment is by instructor permission only.

Preparation

The capstone experience in sustainability is intended to be an intensive project resulting in a final written report documenting project results and a poster describing the overall outcomes of the project for public presentation as part of Earth Day observances on the University of Arkansas campus. Students should begin brainstorming ideas for projects or searching for internships as early in their academic program as possible, but no later than the summer preceding their final year. All students are invited to discuss ideas for these experiences with the director of sustainability academic programs or other suitable faculty mentors in order to guide project development. You will be expected to enroll in SUST 4103 Capstone Experience in Sustainability in the spring semester of your junior or senior year in order to complete the written report and poster presentation. During the fall semester, students should decide what the project will be and outline the work necessary to complete it, with emphasis on methods to be used, specialized equipment or resources needed to complete the project, expected outcomes and relevance of the project to sustainability, and a timeline for project management. If you are conducting a research project that will involve human or animal parameters, you *must* obtain approval from appropriate university governing bodies to ensure compliance with federal protocols for research integrity and ethics prior to initiation of the project. If you are seeking an internship, adhere to the application timeline and begin developing a relationship with the host organization. Continue to discuss your progress regularly with the mentor(s). Doing this preliminary work will ensure that you have adequate time to complete your project in the spring semester by anticipating obstacles, planning your activities, and setting goals for yourself.

Expectations

- While enrolled in SUST 4103, you must attend weekly class meetings
- During SUST 4103 you will prepare a 15-20 page report articulating your experience and establishing its connections to sustainability. This report should be of a publishable format and quality. ***The report must be your original work (see Academic Integrity below).***
- You will produce a poster presentation based on your report, to be displayed in the Arkansas Union for Earth Day. Past student posters are permanently displayed online at:
http://sustainability.uark.edu/academic_programs/minor/capstone.php

Guidelines

- Based on your areas of interest in sustainability, you may wish to choose a mentor in addition to an advisor. A mentor is someone with experience in your area of interest who can help you develop professionally, plan your Sustainability Capstone and connect you to unique resources.
- Students may formally petition the University of Arkansas Sustainability Curriculum Steering Committee to use sustainability-oriented senior design projects, Honors College research theses, other service learning courses, or equivalent internship experiences for SUST 4103 to satisfy the capstone requirement. This option still requires that you enroll in SUST 4103 for course credit, as you will need to tailor your experience into a separate report specifically exploring its applications to the field of sustainability. Additional research may also be required by the instructor.

Service Project

A service learning project brings together community service and focused academic learning development. The student will perform community service in the field while meeting with their advisor to discuss, assess and reflect on their experience in response to a specific, well-defined learning framework. Service learning offers the opportunity to critically address a wide range of theoretical frameworks presented in class.

Internship

An internship experience is a work-integrated learning program. Through field-based experience, students have the opportunity to strengthen their qualifications and gain a valuable learning experience in the sustainability field. Internships are to be supervised by a qualified on-site mentor or supervisor who will give structure and parameters to the field experience for specific learning outcomes. Students engaging in an internship to satisfy SUST 4103 will be required to complete documentation available at Sustainability House.

Research Project

A research project is work that is developed by the student with direction from a mentor that enables a student to develop an approach for learning about a particular issue of sustainability. Students may choose to conduct work that is purely literature based or the result of field experiments, surveys, observations, and a variety of acceptable standard research protocols. If necessary, students will be required to obtain institutional approval of their project if their work addresses sustainability issues under human and animal subject parameters.

Academic Integrity

The University of Arkansas defines plagiarism as “offering as one’s own work the words, ideas, or arguments of another person without appropriate attribution by quotation, reference or footnote” (University of Arkansas Catalog of Study; section on Academic Regulations: Academic Honesty). Academic Integrity is expected at the University of Arkansas and in Sustainability Academic Programs. The consequences of Academic Dishonesty, intentional or otherwise, can result in failed coursework, expulsion from the program and dismissal from the University of Arkansas. The library has a comprehensive description of plagiarism, how to avoid it and additional links for your consideration at: <http://libinfo.uark.edu/reference/citingyoursources.asp#plagiarism>

When you have read and understood the above materials, complete the form below and return this page to Sustainability House when you are ready to enroll in SUST 4103. By signing this page, you acknowledge that you have read and understood the attached information and have met with the SUST 4103 instructor to discuss your project and ask questions.

Student Printed Name: _____ ID# _____

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Instructor Signature: _____ Date: _____

Brief Project Description: _____

Grading Basis: ___ Regular (Graded) ___ Pass/Fail

Will IRB approval potentially be required? ___ Yes ___ No

Pass/Fail Option

SUST 4103 may be taken on a regular grading basis or on a pass/fail basis. Under the pass/fail option, students who submit satisfactory work will receive a grade of "CR" and will receive the credit hours, but the mark will not count in grade point average. Students who do not submit satisfactory wrk will receive a grade of "F," which will be counted in grade point average.

Return to:

Sustainability Academic Programs
Sustainability House
238 Harmon Ave.
479-575-3715
sust@uark.edu