

Chesapeake Project 2015

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As a result of the Chesapeake Project Sustainability Workshop I plan to revise the course BSGC101 “Globalization.” This course is an overview of the history, development, and ongoing debates over globalization. I have always incorporated some environmental issues into the discussion, but participating in the Chesapeake Project workshop convinced me to think more in terms of the over-arching concept of sustainability. One of the major changes I plan to make is to organize the course around the big question: Is globalization sustainable? This will require students to learn the definition and characteristics of both globalization and sustainability, and think about what it means for globalization to be sustainable—economically, politically, socially, culturally, and environmentally.

Globalization is defined as a process of growing *interdependence* and *interconnectedness* across borders—and these are also two of the big ideas in sustainability. The debates over globalization address many of the other sustainability big ideas which we discussed in the workshop, such as good governance, the tragedy of the commons, systems thinking, cultural diversity, consumerism, and the global-local nexus. One of the key challenges posed by globalization is that it is uneven, with every country experiencing it very differently. This makes collective action to address sustainability problems very challenging. I plan to revise the course to incorporate some of these key concepts in sustainability.

The students do two group projects for this course. In one of them, they literally map the interdependence and interconnectedness of a particular country, focusing in particular on food and agriculture. This year, I will revise the group project to incorporate an assessment of sustainability for that country.

The second project is an on-line negotiation simulation offered by the University of Maryland ICONS Project (www.icons.umd.edu). There is a simulation on “Confronting Globalization,” in which students represent a diverse set of countries that are part of a UN Working Group on Globalization. The Working Group has to look at how globalization affects countries differently with respect to economic, political and sustainability issues, and identify ways that globalization can be made to benefit all. This simulation helps students understand two things: that countries are situated very differently due to uneven globalization; and that their conflicting interests make collective action extremely challenging. I intend to emphasize sustainability in this simulation, and integrate key concepts such as collective action, good governance, the tragedy of the commons, and the global-local nexus.

The learning objectives for sustainability in this course are:

1. Students will be able to define the character and significance of the concept of sustainability in all its dimensions.
2. Students will be able to identify multiple ways in which globalization affects sustainability, and use key concepts related to sustainability.

Student assessment will take two forms. At the beginning of the semester, I will ask students to answer a short survey on what they know about globalization and sustainability. I will then repeat this survey at the end of the semester, to identify areas of learning. In addition, during the semester students will be assessed through their group projects and exams.