UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

UBST 494.XX LEC01: Sustainable Cities I: Spring 2026
Tentative (Subject to Change before May 1st 2026)
GFC Hours (3-0)

Section	Days	Time	Location
LEC 01		TBA	Southeast Asia

Instructor: Dr. Aaron Williams	Office: Field Study Course
Telephone: Accessible through TEAMS	Email: awill@ucalgary.ca
Email communication will be through your UCalgary email address.	Office hours: TBA

Please note: This course is taught off-campus.

Description

Field exploration of cities on the cutting edge of urban sustainability and smart innovation. Historical urban development and economic, cultural, political and regional processes are addressed, laying the groundwork for understanding how innovation in sustainability and smart planning are achieved. Resources, housing, food security, transportation, energy, and governance issues are considered.

Course Objectives

Economic, political, and cultural aspects of sustainability and technology will be considered with respect to urban form, social geography, and mobility systems. Theoretical and practical links between urban, municipal, and national policies, on the one hand, and global sustainability discourses, on the other, will be made.

Prerequisite: Consent of the Department

Required Readings:
Readings will be assigned throughout the course. Bibliography and accessible links will be posted on TEAMS.

Course Learning Outcomes:

The Department of Geography is committed to student knowledge and skill development. The table below lists the key learning outcomes for this course, the program-learning outcomes they facilitate and the expected level of achievement. By the end of the course students should have achieved each of the learning outcomes.

Course Learning Outcomes	PLO(s)	Level(s)
Explain the economic, political, social, and environmental context of selected cities	1,2,3,4,5	2
Explain theories of sustainable development and urban sustainability	1,2,4,5	2
Explain the roles smart technologies in sustainability policy and planning	1,2,4,5	2
Explain the relationships among urban form, mobility, and smart technologies	1,2,3,4,5,7	2
Explain social, economic, and environmental aspects of sustainability	1,2,3,4,5,7,8	2
Apply ethical reasoning to complex issues and problems	1,4,5,8	2
Evaluate information from different sources	8	2
Collect topically relevant spatial data	3	2
Create multimedia and written presentations using GIS software	3,6,7,8	2
Demonstrate sensitivity toward individual and cultural differences	1	1

PLOs = Program Learning Outcomes: 1 = reflect and communicate diverse human-environment perspectives, 2 = identify and explain human-environment processes, 3 = implement sampling, data collection, analyses and communication methods, 4 = analyze spatial and temporal aspects of human-environment systems, 5 = employ knowledge, arguments, and methodologies for solving human-environment problems, 6 = evaluate geospatial data and manipulate it to create cartographic products, 7 = communicate geographic concepts using oral, written, graphic, and cartographic modes, and 8 = demonstrate literacy skills. **Levels:** (1) Introductory, (2) Intermediate, (3) Advanced.

Grading (weighting)

In-field project (1)
   Story Maps   30%
 Field notebook
    Mini assignments   30%
    Daily Field entries   30%
Final reflection in Field Notebook   10%

It is **not** necessary to pass each component in order to pass the course.
There will **not** be a final exam in this course.

Grading System

A+	100-95%	B	79.9-75%	C-	62.9-59%
A	94.9-90%	B-	74.9-71%	D+	58.9-55%
A-	89.9-85%	C+	70.9-67%	D	54.9-50%
B+	84.9-80%	C	66.9-63%	F	49.9% and less

For additional detailed course information posted by the instructor, visit the course Microsoft TEAMS site

Additional Course Information

Communication and course etiquette:
Regarding e-mail and other communication with the Instructor and other students. Please make sure your e-mails are polite and respectful. Any abusive or disrespectful e-mails or other communication deemed so will be reported and you may face non-academic or academic misconduct if they are deemed to be abusive or bullying in nature.

The Instructor expects students to show up for class and field excursions. If you missed important information it is best that you attempt to obtain that information from your peers. If it because of illness or other extenuating circumstances contact through TEAMS, or set up an alternate time to meet. Sending e-mails expecting long responses from your Instructor because of your absence may go unanswered. This is especially true immediately before exams or when an assignment is due when the information has been given multiple times in class through TEAMS to the class.

It is a student's responsibility to follow the course schedule and the readings that have been detailed in the course schedule in the outline. This schedule might change through the term so make sure you follow these changes that may be outlined in class. The material in the readings, field excursions, videos and the lectures **are all** testable material regardless if the material in the readings or videos were not covered in the lecture or the lecture covered different material that is not in the readings or videos. You will need to take notes to understand the material. If you have questions about the assignments or course material please see the Instructor through TEAMS.

Academic Accommodations
It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodations, according to the university policies and procedures listed in the University Calendar. In this field study course we may not be able to accommodate your accommodation due to facilities and the nature of the program. Please check with the instructor regarding any accommodation requests.
The student accommodation policy can be found at: www.ucalgary.ca/access/accommodations/policy.
Students needing an accommodation because of a disability or medical condition should communicate this need to Student Accessibility Services in accordance with the Procedure for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.pdf.
Students needing an accommodation based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need, preferably in writing, to the Department Head (email: geograph@ucalgary.ca).

Referencing Standard
In written work presented in this class, the accepted method for referencing the work of others will be in APA format. Please see https://apastyle.apa.org or https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/general_format.html

Resources and Writing support
Writing skills are not exclusive to English courses and, in fact, should cross all disciplines. The university supports the belief that throughout their university careers students should be taught how to write well, so that when they graduate their writing abilities will be far above the minimal standards required at entrance. Consistent with this belief, students are expected to do a substantial amount of writing in their university courses and, where appropriate, faculty members can and should consider quality of writing as a factor in the evaluation of student work. Please note writing support resources provided by the Student Success Centre https://ucalgary.ca/ssc/resources/writing-support and the library https://libguides.ucalgary.ca/guides/

University of Calgary Academic Integrity Policy
Academic integrity is the foundation of the development and acquisition of knowledge and is based on values of honesty, trust, responsibility, and respect. We expect members of our community to act with integrity. The University Calendar includes a statement on the principles of conduct expected of all members of the university community (including students, faculty, administrators, any category
of staff, practicum supervisors, and volunteers), whether on or off university property. This statement applies in all situations where members of the university community are acting in their university capacities.
University of Calgary : K. Integrity and Conduct (ucalgary.ca)

Instructor Intellectual Property
Information on Instructor Intellectual Property can be found at https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/intellectual-property-policy

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy
Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) legislation in Alberta regulates the return of term assessments. All assignments will be submitted on D2L in the format outlined in the term assignment. Assignments will be graded as a group, however if there are discrepancies in peer evaluations within the group, assignment grades may be provided on an individual bases.

Research

Human subjects
As part of a desire to improve the quality of the student experience, you will be asked to participate in a survey of the efficacy of the methods used in the course. Your participation in the research is entirely voluntary and will not play a role in determining your grade in the course. The surveys will be conducted by a university employee who is not involved in the course. The teaching staff will not see the surveys until after one month after the grades appeal period. You may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

Posting of Grades and Picking-up of Assignments
All assignments will be submitted on TEAMS.

Academic Accommodations
It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodations, according to the university policies and procedures listed in the University Calendar. The student accommodation policy can be found at:
https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/b-6-1.html

Within the first week of classes, students needing an accommodation because of a disability or medical condition should register with Student Accessibility Services Accessibility | Home | University of Calgary (ucalgary.ca)
Students needing an accommodation based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need, preferably in writing to their instructor or the Department Head (email: freeman@ucalgary.ca).

Learning Technologies and Requirements
In order to successfully engage in their learning experiences at the University of Calgary, students taking online, remote and blended courses are required to have reliable access to the following technology.
- A computer with a supported operating system, as well as the latest security and malware updates
- A current and updates web browser
- Broadband internet connection
- Optional technology: webcam (built in or external) / microphone and speaker (built in or external) or headset with microphone

Use of internet and electronic devices in class

There are no restrictions on the use of laptops and tablets in class if they are used to take notes or find information relevant to the class, and if there is no disturbance or distraction of other students or the instructor. **Students may not record in-person lectures or tutorials unless they have an academic accommodation and/or have been given permission by the Instructor or Teaching Assistant**. Phones must be turned to silent mode during class, unless you have previously identified yourself to the instructor as a health care or law enforcement professional. The use of any calculators and/or devices during examinations will not be allowed.

Guidelines for Video Sessions
Video sessions maybe used in the event of instructor absence, for work within peer groups, or for other communication related to course obligations. To help ensure video sessions are private, do not share link or password with others via any medium, including social media platforms. Links and passwords are only intended for students registered in the course. Recordings and materials presented, including any teaching materials, must not be shared, distributed or published without the instructor's permission.

The use of video conferencing programs relies on participants to act ethically, honestly and with integrity; and in accordance with the principles of fairness, good faith and respect (as per the Code of Conduct). When entering video conferencing sessions, you play a role in helping create an effective, safe and respectful learning environment.

Please be mindful of how your behavior in these sessions may affect others. Participants are required to us names officially associated with their UCID (legal or preferred names listed in the Student Centre) when engaging in these activities. Instructors/moderators can remove those whose names do not appear on class rosters. Non-compliance may be investigated under relevant University of Calgary conduct policies (e.g. Student Non Academic Misconduct Policy). If participants have difficulties complying with this requirement, they should email the instructor of the class explaining why, so the instructor may consider whether to grant an exception, and on what terms. For more information on how to get the most out of your sessions visit: eLearn @ UCalgary

If you are unable to attend a session, please contact your instructor to arrange an alternative activity for the missed session (e.g., to review a recorded session). Please be prepared, as best as you are able, to join class in a quiet space that will allow you to be fully present and engaged in sessions. Students will be advised by their instructor when they are expected to turn on their webcam (for group work, presentations, etc.).

The instructor may record online class sessions for the purposes of supporting student learning in this class – such as making the recording available for review of the session or for students who miss a session. Students will be advised before the instructor initiates a recording of a class session. These recordings will be used to support student learning only and will not be shared or used for any other purpose.

Media Recording (if applicable)
https://elearn.ucalgary.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Media-Recording-in-Learning-Environments-OSP_FINAL.pdf

Course evaluations and student feedback
Student feedback will be sought at the end of the course through the standard University Student Ratings of Instruction (USRI) and Faculty course evaluation forms.

Accessibility
Accessibility for this course offering is limited to the locations we are traveling and activities of the program.

Copyright Legislation

All students are required to read the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/acceptable-use-material-protected-copyright-policy

and requirements of the copyright act (https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html) to ensure they are aware of the

consequences of unauthorised sharing of course materials (including instructor notes, electronic versions of textbooks etc.). Students who use material protected by copyright in violation of this policy may be disciplines under the Non-Academic Misconduct Act.

Plagiarism, Cheating, and Student Misconduct

The University of Calgary is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect.

Academic dishonesty is not an acceptable activity at the University of Calgary, and students are **strongly advised** to read the Student Misconduct section in the University Calendar at: www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-3.html. Often, students are unaware of what constitutes academic dishonesty or plagiarism. The most common are (1) presenting another student's work as your own, (2) presenting an author's work or ideas as your own without adequate citation, and (3) using work completed for another course. Such activities will not be tolerated in this course, and students suspected of academic misconduct will be dealt with according to the procedures outlined in the calendar at: www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-5.html.

NOTICES TO STUDENTS REGARDING USE OF GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) APPLICATIONS AND TOOLS IN LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Many students and instructors are curious about the use of generative AI tools, such as ChatGPT, and their impacts on their courses. The following sample syllabus statements have been adapted from McMaster University (https://mi.mcmaster.ca/generative-artificial-intelligence-in-teaching-and-learning/#tab-content-provisional-guidelines) as examples for various use permissions in academic courses.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

Students may use generative AI tools throughout in this course to enhance their learning within reason. **Students MAY NOT use AI for generating answers for assignments, assessments or an other academic submissions.** Students are responsible for citing and referencing all work generated by AI tools as outlined by the course instructor. Students must be accountable for their submissions. AI generated answers to assignments will be assigned a zero grade and may be referred to the Faculty of Arts for academic misconduct discipline.

Wellness and Mental Health Resources

Mental health plays a pivotal role in physical health, social connectedness, and academic success and aspires to create a caring and supportive campus community where individuals can freely talk about mental health and receive supports when needed. We encourage you to explore the mental health resources available throughout the university community, such as counselling, self-help resources, peer support, or skills-building available through the SU Wellness Centre (Room 370, MacEwan Student Centre, https://www.ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/services/mental-health-services and the Campus Mental Health Strategy website (http://www.ucalgary.ca/mentalhealth/).

Students requiring assistance are encouraged to email the **Student at Risk line** if they or others appear to need wellness assistance: sar@ucalgary.ca For more immediate response, please call: 403-210-9355 and select option #2.

Sexual Violence Policy

All members of the University Community should be able to learn, work, teach and live in an environment where they are free from harassment, discrimination, and violence. Please see the policy available at
https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/sexual-and-gender-based-violence-policy

Contact Information for Student and Faculty Representation
- Student Union VP Academic 403-220-3911, suvpaca@ucalgary.ca
- Students Union Representatives for the Faculty of Arts – 403-220-3913, arts1@su.ucalgary.ca, arts2@su.ucalgary.ca, arts3@su.ucalgary.ca, arts4@su.ucalgary.ca
- Student Ombuds Office information can be found at: www.ucalgary.ca/ombuds/