Course Information
Days/Time: 12:30-1:45, Tue and Thur., Quad Rm. 114.
Pre-requisite for undergraduates: ISC 1500, Introduction to Sustainability
Instructor: Dr. K. Lindeman, Professor, Dept. of Education & Interdisciplinary Studies
Office and Hours: Rm 103 Shepard Bldg., Tue: 1400-1600; Wed, 1300-1700; Thur 1400-1630

Course Description:
The goal is to learn and further explore combinations of tools that can advance innovations in sustainability among complex socio-economic and environmental systems. Principles of governance are examined and integrated using tools that include complexity theory, cybernetics, resiliency, behavioral economics, political ecology, social networks, and risk-based decision assessment. Practical applications towards managing self-organizing systems including functioning socio-political systems will be made at local through international scales.

Operational features of system sustainability are emphasized including stocks and flows, feedback loops, limits, response delays, orderly and chaotic perturbations, networks and modularity, resiliency and adaptive capacity, system traps, shifting dominance of feedback, tipping points, and post-transition system behaviors. Best practices in maintaining systems through non-equilibrium processes including resilience, complex adaptive theory, and learning organizations are examined. The management of emergent properties and other guaranteed surprises is evaluated using examples from economic, environmental, and social capital. Means to identify, measure, adapt and communicate performance indicators of sustainability are examined in government, business, and non-profit systems.

Primary reading:

The course will also include journal research articles; government, industry, and NGO reports; and some current articles from web and print media. These readings and assigned chapters from the books will be posted on Canvas.

Grading:
30% Homework, much is in support of the systems analysis project
20% Midterm
20% Systems analysis project, with triple bottom line planning
20% Final exam
Student Learning Outcomes include
- Familiarity with the history and principles of system dynamics and associated fields as applied in sustainability and governance.
- Understanding of challenges and opportunities for applications of system sciences and cybernetics in real-world governance.
- Recognition of the inherent non-linear and chaotic properties of complex adaptive systems and tools for resilience.
- Ability to interpret the roles of cultural conditioning and other socio-economic drivers in complex systems decision-making.
- Knowledge of basic political components of governance, and factors that may or may not limit the application of sustainability sciences.
- Experience with the measurement of system performance utilizing indicators and other tools.
- Improved critical reading and writing skills for complex, interdisciplinary system management.
- Improved skills for the analysis of complex systems and paths towards more efficient governance.
- Experience with building and giving presentations on systems-based sustainability challenges and solutions in governance systems.

Fundamental writing skills are of considerable value in this course and in many jobs. Students should sharpen your writing skills with this or other useful tutorials: http://www.bristol.ac.uk/arts/exercises/grammar/grammar_tutorial/index.htm

Also, highly recommended for developing your writing, a lifetime pursuit, is the little classic by Strunk and White titled The Elements of Style; it is very inexpensive on Amazon.