

SUSTAINABILITY STUDIES

ADVISING AND DEGREE PROGRAM GUIDE

COLORADO MOUNTAIN COLLEGE

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Sustainability Studies students and instructor celebrate the 'Totally Free Farm Stand', where they give away the food and flowers they grow in the greenhouse to students and staff.

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Overview of the Sustainability Studies Program

The Bachelor of Arts in Sustainability Studies at Colorado Mountain College (CMC) offers you an opportunity to learn about and begin to address some of the most pressing challenges of our day related to the environment, economics/business, and social justice. Sustainability Studies is a transdisciplinary major, meaning that you will, not only learn important ideas and theories related to understanding and actualizing sustainability, but also have a chance to take relevant action on the ground. As a transdiscipline, Sustainability Studies recognizes that sustainability challenges and opportunities don't typically fit neatly into boxes associated with single fields of study and work. Sustainability crosses boundaries. Efforts to address water quality, for example, may require solutions that combine knowledge and efforts from the fields of politics, economics, business, biology, chemistry, communications, and ecology, to name a few. Therefore, as a student in our program, you'll develop knowledge and skills that are diverse and deep enough to allow you to synthesize ideas and work with people from many walks of life to address lynchpin challenges for the future of humanity and the earth. Through cutting edge coursework, extracurricular activities, internships, research projects, and more, CMC provides you a platform to become a successful sustainability professional. If all this intrigues you, you're in the right place! Welcome!

Sustainability Studies courses are concentrated in the junior and senior years, though CMC does offer two Sustainability Studies courses – Introduction to Sustainability (SUS 1001) and Issues in Sustainability (SUS 2001) – that we highly recommend you take as electives during your freshman/sophomore years (if available at your campus). You can transfer to CMC with an Associate of Arts or Associate of Science degree from any institution and be admitted to the program at the junior level. You can also pursue the degree over the course of four years at CMC, during which time you can choose to earn both an Associate's and a Bachelor's degree or simply pursue the B.A. degree from the outset. By pursuing your degree through any of these pathways, you'll learn the ideas, values, and practices you'll need to enrich your life, launch your career in sustainability, and begin to change the world.

Sustainability Studies Program Mission, Vision, Values, and Learning Outcomes

Mission

Through active intellectual and experiential learning, we prepare students to meet the pressing local and global challenges of sustainability.

Vision

The Bachelor of Arts program in Sustainability Studies at Colorado Mountain College engages students in active learning, critical and creative thinking, and on-the-ground experiences that help prepare them for dynamic careers and lifelong engagement with communities and the natural world. Our courses focus on integrated understanding of the three Es of sustainability (healthy environment, vibrant economy, and social equity) and on applying that understanding to real-world contexts. Our program offers students a unique opportunity to develop personal and professional identities, knowledge, and skills that prepare them for meaningful and productive work in a rapidly changing world. Our students develop a deep understanding of local and global sustainability challenges. They are also encouraged to develop the knowledge, skills, and deep motivation to effectively address these challenges in their personal and professional lives.

Values

In addition to the three Es of sustainability, the Sustainability Studies program faculty values the following:

Diversity of approaches to knowledge making. Our program includes insights drawn from the arts, humanities, social sciences, and sciences. Our courses include the ideas and voices of thinkers, activists, and creative professionals from both Western and non-Western traditions whose work draws upon a wide variety of disciplinary frameworks.

Resiliency. Our program prepares students to consider best practices for ensuring the long-term health and happiness of people while also ensuring ecosystem health.

Rigor. Our coursework challenges students to learn and synthesize knowledge from diverse areas of study that range from science to philosophy, from literature to economics, and more. Our content is both broad and deep because our graduates must be prepared to take action on complex problems in diverse social and ecological settings.

Place-centeredness. Our students learn that sustainability as a concept and practice can only take shape within the context of specific places. What is sustainable in one place may not be so in another, and sustainability practitioners must engage with people in culturally diverse settings. Therefore, we value diverse approaches to sustainability that are responsive to specific cultures and environments.

Empathy. We believe education is a matter of both mind and heart. People are motivated to live more sustainably because they care about other people and the planet. We therefore promote the development of a deep sense of empathy in our students – a sense of connection with people and nature that can underpin both motivation for action and a sense of personal fulfillment.

Efficacy. Our students have the distinct opportunity to develop critical and creative thinking abilities as well as intellectual and practical capabilities that prepare them to be articulate and effective sustainability thinkers and practitioners.

Partnerships. We see sustainability as both an individual and a collective enterprise. Our students learn to integrate sustainability concepts and practices into their own lives. In an effort to also provide our students with valuable experiences working with others, we develop partnerships with businesses, nonprofit organizations, governments, and other people and organizations that are engaged in sustainability work. We seek service learning and internship opportunities that benefit our students, our communities, and the planet.

Program Learning Outcomes

Our students develop critical and creative thinking abilities as well as intellectual and practical capabilities that prepare them to be articulate and effective sustainability thinkers and practitioners. The learning outcomes for each of our courses contribute to these overarching program goals.

To determine the extent to which students are meeting these overarching learning goals, student work in the Sustainability Capstone course (SUS 489) is evaluated according to the following program-wide learning outcomes. In his/her Capstone work, each student should:

1. Articulate the concept and practice of sustainability as it relates to the self, community, and the wider world.

2. Analyze, synthesize, and interpret complex adaptive systems.
3. Conduct and communicate sustainability research that draws upon, integrates, critiques, and/or transcends disciplinary frameworks.
4. Demonstrate how qualitative/quantitative measures can be used in collaboration with diverse stakeholders to assess, report, and design approaches that address sustainability challenges and opportunities.
5. Demonstrate professional skills and career development abilities in the field.

Program Admission

You may select Sustainability Studies as your major at any time, beginning with your freshman year. If you have completed significant lower division (1000 and 2000 level) coursework and have taken the required prerequisites, with instructor permission, you may be allowed to take up to 15 credits of junior level Sustainability Studies (SUS) coursework prior to completing 45 lower division credits. You must complete 45 lower division credits to continue to take junior and senior level SUS courses beyond the initial 15 credits.

Advice for Sustainability Studies Students about Personal and Professional Development

Welcome to what promises to be a most exciting personal and professional journey! You're joining force with others in a highly dynamic, creative, and meaningful field. The world needs you!

If you take advantage of the many career and professional development opportunities available to you as a CMC student, you'll be better prepared to put your education to work in the world beyond graduation. The notes in this section will help you consider how you can best prepare yourself for professional opportunities after graduation including employment in a relevant career, starting your own enterprise or nonprofit organization, or pursuing graduate-level education. If you're new to the program, know that you don't have to know right away exactly what you want to do with the rest of your life, but you should remain attuned for ideas and practical applications of sustainability that interest you most. Throughout your studies, you'll have considerable freedom to learn about and gain experience related to many areas of potential work. If you weave at least several of these opportunities together, you can develop significant expertise and perhaps also the relevant hands-on experience that can open doors beyond graduation. *So, be alert to opportunities for developing yourself as a future sustainability professional!* Following are some notes about how to do this.

Get to Know Your Professors, Your Advisor, and Other Students: Making connections with others is one of the most effective ways to learn and to find out about opportunities in sustainability. It's also socially rewarding! Your professors, your advisor, and other students in Sustainability Studies can open new worlds to you that can enrich your studies and your professional opportunities. So, don't be a stranger! Talk with your professors -- visit them during their office hours. As you consider your path through your studies and your future professional life, talk with your professors and your advisor outside of the required advising times for pre-registration. Use group work in classes as a significant opportunity to develop your personal and professional network, and be an active participant in group work so that you prove yourself to be a reliable and valuable person with whom to collaborate. Yes, your reputation matters as a student, both with your professors and other students. When you want to apply for graduate school or for jobs, you'll need references from your professors. Be the kind of person that deserves excellent references. You're building your life path one step at a time.

Participate in Student Clubs: Student clubs are a particularly effective way to develop your personal and professional network and gain project and leadership experience. Clubs are also fun! They offer you a way to connect with other students who have similar interests to your own, and clubs are vehicles for doing

sustainability work that's personally enriching and professionally relevant. If there is a club fair at your campus, be sure to attend so you learn about all of the clubs related to sustainability that are active on your campus. Ask your professors and other students about opportunities to participate in student clubs. Club participation and leadership are excellent professional development experiences that are valuable to include on your résumé.

Develop Your Writing and Communication Abilities: Sustainability is simple concept at its core, but because it relates to just about everything, it can also be challenging to explain to others. As a future professional in sustainability, it is incredibly important that you learn to communicate effectively about sustainability concepts and practices. Written, visual, and verbal communication skills will be important to your effectiveness in just about any career you choose. So, pay special attention to developing these skills as a student. Pay attention to the advice you receive about improving your writing, and act on it. Learn to present ideas well visually and verbally, too. Consider taking extra classes in video production, computer graphics, webpage design, creative writing, and more in order to become someone who stands out for your excellent ability to communicate.

Complete One or More Internships: Although an internship experience is not required for graduation, an internship can be an especially valuable way to develop your professional skills and résumé. A number of our graduates have obtained paid employment with organizations for which they served as interns. Others have landed sustainability jobs with organizations based on skills they developed or networks they created as interns.

Choose Your Elective Courses According to Your Developing Interests and Expertise: Students in the program are required to take nine credits of upper division elective coursework. It's a good idea to use your elective courses to develop areas of knowledge and experience that you hope to apply in your professional life beyond graduation. Of course, simply learning about a fascinating area of sustainability thinking and action, regardless of its relevance to future work, is always an option as well. Careers and Professional Skills in Sustainability (SUS 416) is a highly useful course that calls upon you to prepare a professional résumé, polish your interview skills, learn about entrepreneurship and graduate school opportunities, and develop effective job seeking skills. This course is highly recommended for all Sustainability Studies students.

Pay Attention to Developing Your Research Abilities: Since sustainability is such a rapidly growing and changing field, it's almost certain that your future work will require some sort of research. You're probably already familiar with Internet research, and that can be an important starting point. Use your time at CMC to gain an understanding of important scholarly databases of research articles available through the CMC library. Also learn about library book borrowing services. You have access to literally millions of high quality articles and books through the CMC library. It's also likely that most anyplace you live in the U.S. will have a public or college/university library nearby. Public libraries and public colleges and universities allow access to many subscription databases on site, even for those who aren't students. What you learn about library research at CMC will be valuable to you throughout your life.

Additionally, during your final year or term of study at CMC, you'll have an opportunity to develop a capstone research project of your own choosing. You may choose to apply your research to an action project – something you want to accomplish on campus or in the community. You might also use this experience to develop your research skills in preparation for graduate studies. In any case, you can develop significant professional experience through your research work in the Capstone course, so be sure that you're considering some research possibilities even before taking the class.

Note to Students about Program Communications

As a student at CMC, you are provided with a CMC student e-mail account. Be sure to check your CMC e-mail account every day. Your CMC e-mail is considered an official means for contacting you, and your

professors and other college officials will share important information with you via your CMC account and through CMC's Canvas app. You must assure that your Canvas emails are forwarded to your CMC email. Sustainability Studies faculty and advisors will share important program information about advising, new courses, and more via these emails. They will also share announcements about job opportunities, internships, events, club activities, scholarships, and other information that can be incredibly useful to you as a student. So be sure that you're paying attention to these opportunities by checking your CMC and Canvas emails regularly!

Requirements for a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Sustainability Studies

A full listing of degree requirements is available via the CMC website for both the B.A. in Sustainability Studies and the B.A. in Sustainability Studies with a Business Minor (<https://coloradomtn.edu/programs/sustainability-studies/curriculum/>). You can access full descriptions for each class by following the links from course titles. These online listings are updated annually to reflect changes in course descriptions and degree requirements.

Your Catalog Year

When you enter the program, you will be assigned a catalog year for degree completion purposes. You will need to fulfill all program requirements for that catalog year, even if the program changes at a later date.

If you become aware of a new Minor area or program change that appeals to you in a newer catalog year, you can move to that new catalog year by working with your advisor or counselor. Please note that, when you switch catalog years, you must adhere to *all* degree requirements listed in the newly chosen catalog.

Freshman and Sophomore General Education Requirements

Freshman and Sophomore level requirements for the B.A. in Sustainability Studies and the B.A. in Sustainability Studies with a Business Minor are listed in the curriculum website linked above. While most students who have earned an Associate's degree from an accredited institution can be readily admitted to the Sustainability Studies program, there are several specific freshman and sophomore level courses that are required as prerequisites for taking some of the junior and senior level courses in Sustainability Studies. **If you're a student at CMC** who's considering the Sustainability Studies major, it is highly recommended that you take the following courses as part of your general education requirements:

1. Philosophy 2018, Environmental Ethics (3 credits)
2. Communication 1150, Public Speaking (3 credits); OR Communications 1250, Interpersonal Communication (3 credits)
3. Biology 1005, The Science of Biology (4 credits); OR Biology 1111, General Biology with Lab (5 credits); OR Biology 1122 General Biology II with lab (5 credits)
4. Environmental Science 1111, Environmental Science w/ Lab (4 credits)
5. Economics 2001 Principles of Macroeconomics; OR Economics 2002, Principles of Microeconomics; OR Economics 2045, Issues in Environmental Economics (3 credits). Economics 2045 is the most relevant course for Sustainability Studies majors.

If you're a student who's taking courses at another college or university and planning to transfer to CMC to complete the Sustainability Studies degree, consult with an advisor at your current institution to ensure that you register for the appropriate prerequisites.

If you're an out-of-state student who's completing freshman/sophomore level courses, consult with an advisor about the courses at your current institution that are that most similar to the required courses listed above.

If you want to be sure that the courses you take will satisfy program prerequisites, consider taking the courses listed above at CMC. A CMC advisor can assist you with locating and registering for courses. To register, you will also need to be admitted to CMC.

Recommended Associate Degree Programs for Sustainability Studies Majors

CMC offers many Associate's degree programs that provide good foundations for the SUS degree. Below is a list of recommended programs that could be especially useful for a student pursuing Sustainability Studies. The two interdisciplinary degrees listed below are especially relevant to Sustainability Studies, though you can study almost anything at the lower division level and apply that learning well to Sustainability Studies. Just be sure to complete all of the lower division pre-requirements for the required upper division SUS courses (they are listed in the previous section and the table in the next section)

- *Environmental Science*: Studying environmental science can provide a foundation for the natural and physical sciences components sustainability.
- *Environmental Studies*: This field offers a solid introduction to the basic concepts of sustainability and also introduces students to holistic and systemic approaches to study and practice that integrate knowledge from many fields.
- *Liberal Arts*: CMC offers several human-focused Associate's degrees that will give students a strong foundation for the social side Sustainability Studies (<https://coloradomtn.edu/programs/academic-pathways/liberal-arts/>).

Pre- and Co-requisites for Sustainability Studies Courses

The following webpage show the prerequisite courses required to be taken prior to registering for specific Sustainability Studies courses: <https://coloradomtn.edu/programs/sustainability-studies/>

For some courses, if a required prerequisite course has not been taken previously, it may be taken concurrently with the listed course (this is a "co-requisite"). Courses listed as co-requisites may be taken *either* prior to *or* concurrently with the Sustainability Studies course for which they are required.

Suggested Course Sequencing for Junior and Senior Years

The Sustainability Studies major is designed to allow flexibility in the order in which you take your courses. Each CMC campus offers SUS courses on different schedules, so be sure to check our website or with a campus program leader on availability. Some courses are offered in distance modalities. The following recommendations will help you to get the most out of your studies and be well prepared for each class you take:

- If, at the start of your junior year, you still need to take freshman/sophomore level prerequisite courses or any courses required for the completion of your Associate degree, take these courses right away so you won't be blocked from taking required junior and senior level courses.
- Take most of the 3000-level courses in your junior year and the 4000-level courses in your senior year.
- Take at least one of the following courses in the first term of your junior year: SUS 3000, Foundations of Sustainability, or SUS 3010, Systems Thinking and Sustainability.
- Take SUS 3100 Ecology, before taking SUS 4100, Conservation Biology.
- Take SUS 4300, Sustainable Business, before taking SUS 4310, Social Entrepreneurship.

- Take SUS 4889, Capstone Research, and SUS 4160 Careers and professional Skills in Sustainability, in your final term of study.
- Spread upper division elective courses across your junior and senior years.
- Take internship credit once you feel you have a good grasp on sustainability as a concept you are committed to putting into practice. Internships are not required but are highly recommended for personal and professional development.

The Upper Division Electives Requirement

All Sustainability Studies students are required to take nine credits of upper division (junior/senior level) elective courses. If you're interested in honing your business knowledge and skills, consider making your required electives also count as courses for the Business Minor (see below). Also consider using your elective course selections to develop your knowledge and skills in other areas that can prepare you for future work in your personal and professional life, such as permaculture design (SUS 3500 and 3510, 7 credits total). CMC offers a Certificate of Completion in Permaculture Design that consists of these two courses (see below). If you are interested in careers in stewardship, conservation, and sustainable use of our federal public lands consider applying for CMC's Rocky Mountain Land Management Internship Program, a competitive two-year paid internship program co-designed by the U.S. Forest Service (see below). Undertaking an internship can also be especially helpful in developing your skills for employment.

The Capstone Research Experience

All majors are required to take SUS 4889, Sustainability Capstone (4 credits). This course requires you to learn about and apply ethical standards to conducting original research in an area of your choice. The capstone course is an excellent opportunity for you to prepare yourself for graduate-level studies and/or to learn highly practical research methods that can support you in the nonprofit or business realm or help you obtain grants or other funding for sustainability projects.

You also have the opportunity in this class to deepen your understanding of sustainability theory by developing your own line of inquiry that can lead to future work. Because this course requires you to build upon the program coursework and experiences, it is highly recommended that you take it in your final term of study. **Because this course is demanding, taking an excessive number of credits while also taking the capstone course is strongly discouraged.** Plan to get the most out of your experience by allowing yourself the time you'll need to focus on your research project as the culminating experience of your studies.

SUS 4160, Careers and Professional Skills in Sustainability (2 credits), is a co-requisite of SUS 4889, Sustainability Capstone (4 credits). 4016 is an important opportunity to develop your résumé, your job searching and interviewing skills, your ability to locate and apply for graduate level education, and/or your sustainable entrepreneurship plans in the nonprofit or for-profit realm.

Elective Certificate Tracks

The Sustainability Studies program requires nine credits of 3000/4000 level elective coursework. The remaining electives can be satisfied from nearly any credit course offered at CMC. Using your elective credits to complete a certificate is a great way to make your electives more meaningful! Following is a list of suggested certificates that would enhance your Sustainability Studies experience and provide you with an Minor area within your degree. Such certificates can add important skills to your professional preparation, and they are often highly appreciated by employers.

- The **Permaculture Design Certificate of Completion** consists of two upper-division elective courses (7 credits) within the Sustainability Studies Program: Permaculture Design I (SUS 3500, 3 credits) and Permaculture Design II (SUS 3510, 4 credits). Permaculture is a vision, set of ethical and practical principles, design system, and practice. Permaculture is aimed at supporting human needs equitably in culturally and environmentally diverse communities while simultaneously promoting the long-term health and integrity of both nature and culture. It is sustainability in action with a special focus on creating food systems that mimic the dynamic stability of healthy ecosystems. The Permaculture Design Certificate of Completion is offered at the Steamboat Springs and Spring Valley campuses. Further information is available online: https://catalog.coloradomtn.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=10&poid=1325.
- With the growing diversity of communities throughout the U.S., language skills beyond English are increasingly important to being an effective professional and community member. The **Spanish Proficiency Certificate, Conversational Track or Comprehensive** consists of 17-18 credits. Coursework for these certificate programs will assist you to become a competent user of the Spanish language in reading, writing, and speaking. A Spanish language certificate could be a first step toward learning how to apply Spanish language skills to sustainability in a community context. Further information is available online: https://catalog.coloradomtn.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=10&poid=1315. This certificate is offered at the Edwards campus.

Business Minor

Business knowledge and skills are useful in many realms, including the nonprofit sector and entrepreneurship. Understanding how to develop, manage, and track an organization's budget is a highly useful set of skills in many areas of work. Knowing how to effectively market events, products, and services is also highly useful to sustainability professionals, and understanding economic processes is important to work in nearly any organization.

The Business Minor in Sustainability Studies is designed help those interested in developing these skills the opportunity to do so through taking 17 additional credits of business-oriented courses. When you take junior and senior level business courses required for this Minor, these courses also count toward fulfilling the upper division credit requirement for the Sustainability Studies degree (9 credits total required). If you plan your degree carefully, you need not take more total credits to complete the Business Minor than you need to complete the major in Sustainability Studies. A detailed description of course requirements for the Business Minor is available online (http://coloradomtn.edu/programs/sustainability_studies/curriculum/).

Special Note on Transcripts and Diplomas: If you plan to complete the Business Minor, make sure that you have declared this minor to the college. You may need to complete a program change form. Your major on this form should read "Sustainability Studies, Business Minor." **Without this specific declaration, the Business Minor will not be noted on your transcript and diploma.**

The Sustainability Leadership Certificate of Completion

This certificate facilitates the application of sustainability concepts and strategies to local communities. If you already hold a Bachelor's degree or higher, the Sustainable Leadership Certificate (SLC) may be a good option for you. The SLC offers an option for students to enhance their current professional careers, become more marketable as they pursue new careers, and enrich their personal knowledge base by taking 15 credits within the

Sustainability Studies degree program. A Bachelor's degree or higher is required for admission to the SLC, and your degree can be in any area of study. Because employees can apply much of the information acquired in their coursework to their current work, many employers are willing to pay for their employees to earn the certificate.

Required courses for the SLC are:

- SUS 3000, Foundations of Sustainability (3 credits)
- SUS 3010, Systems Thinking in Sustainability (3 credits)
- SUS 3210, Leadership, Ethics, and Social Responsibility (3 credits)
- SUS 4500, Sustainability Assessment and Reporting (3 credits)

The remaining class that makes up the certificate can be any SUS-prefix courses that interest you.

Before planning to complete this certificate program, please check with your local campus to ensure that this certificate of completion is offered at your site.

The U.S. Forest Service Internship Program and Certificate of Completion

The *Rocky Mountain Land Management Internship* Program is a two-year paid internship created by the U.S. Forest Service in partnership with the Sustainability Studies Program at Colorado Mountain College. CMC students-interns will work part-time with the Forest Service (960 hrs.) while pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Sustainability Studies and/or a Certificate of Completion in Public Lands Stewardship (60 credits of full-time coursework). Upon completion, graduates will be eligible for non-competitive hiring authority with the Forest Service or other federal land management agencies, including the National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, and Bureau of Land Management.

More information on the RMLMI can be found here: <https://coloradomtn.edu/academics/internship-program/usfs-internship/>

Before planning to apply to this competitive internship program, please check with your local campus to ensure that this internship is offered at your site.

Careers in Sustainability

The Sustainability Studies Program and the Career Services Office at CMC have developed a helpful website about career options for Sustainability Studies graduates (http://coloradomtn.edu/programs/sustainability_studies/careers-sustainability/). If you're approaching graduation—or if you're considering becoming a Sustainability Studies major—this site will help you to get a feel for the wide variety of career options and graduate school opportunities open to Sustainability Studies graduates. The site also includes a continual feed of relevant job listings from the CMC Student Jobs site (<http://cmcstudentjobs.com>), including listings for internships and part-time or full-time employment for students and graduates.

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Note to Administrators and Counselors Regarding Assigning Faculty Advisors

If at all possible, when assigning advisors for lower or upper division students interested in the Sustainability Studies degree, make sure the advisor teaches in the Sustainability Studies program or is very familiar with it. Preferably the advisor should have some professional connection to sustainability. If no such person is available at your campus, please connect the student with one of the program leaders listed above from a different campus – we will be happy to work with them!