

SCIE 220 Introduction to Sustainability

Term 2 (January – April 2015)

Tuesdays and Thursdays | 11:00 am – 12:20 pm

What is SCIE 220?

This brand new course explores the three pillars of sustainability – science, society and economics – and examines how human behaviour and social institutions influence both what sustainability is and the decisions that follow.

Who can take SCIE 220?

This course is open to Year 2 or Year 3 undergraduate students from any faculty. However, space is limited.

"I have seen more personal growth in myself to be a responsible citizen and be attentive to environmental issues."

How is SCIE 220 different?

Most university courses focus on a particular discipline, but in fact all disciplines overlap or are influenced by others. SCIE 220 challenges you to consider interdisciplinary perspectives - from science and engineering, to economics and business, and the social sciences - in analyzing and proposing solutions to complex problems.

How will you be assessed?

Projects, quizzes, and a weekly journal (no final exam)

"For the first time at UBC, I didn't feel like I was in a course that's all about getting good grades, I felt like I was in a course to actually learn, and carry that knowledge forward for the rest of my life."

What will you learn?

You will work with students and professors to understand what sustainability is, what solutions are possible, and how to communicate your ideas orally and in writing to diverse audiences.

It's all connected, but how do we balance the perspectives?

- ✳ Peer-reviewed scientific data must be considered in assessment of sustainability and linked policy decisions.
- ✳ Spending on projects must be wisely applied and align with the needs of society. In addition, all costs and benefits must be well understood.
- ✳ Social and equity considerations should be examined alongside economic ones.

"I especially enjoyed the guest lectures and analysis of current sustainability issues and inequity."

Example topics:

- ✳ What are green technologies? How do we decide if one set of technologies is greener than another?
- ✳ What is considered a risk – to the environment, to people, and how does this vary across the global world? How do you measure this? Does it lead to a sustainable future and/or for whom?
- ✳ How can research address questions that arise around new developments such as pipelines? What are the implications of decisions for Canada's economy?