

**USP 171GS: International Sustainable Development
Global Seminar Summer 2026**

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Source: United Nations

Course Overview

This course examines the historic evolution and current policy and practice of sustainable urban planning, development and design in an international, comparative context. We will focus on the core issues of just and equitable sustainability for human and natural systems including: transportation, housing, energy, infrastructure and finance, habitat and ecological function, land use, public health, food systems and climate mitigation. We will frame our investigation through the broader lens of the United Nations' *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* which was adopted by all 193 UN Member States in 2015. The Agenda includes 17 goals and a 15-year plan to achieve these goals. Among the Agenda's 17 goals, Goal 11 will be our main focus in this course. *Goal 11 Sustainable Cities and Development* acknowledges that half of our global population currently inhabits cities and models forecast continued urbanization. As such, the UN calls for efficient and equitable urban planning to respond to these challenges. This summer we will explore these challenges and innovative responses in a global context with the Netherlands as our main focus.

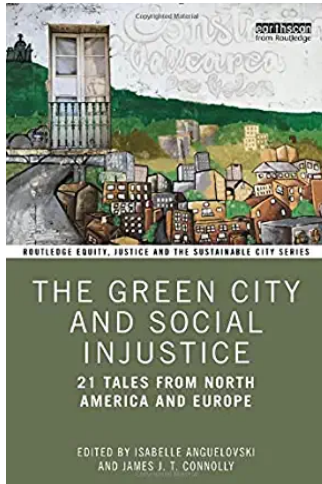
Course Learning Objectives

By the end of the course you will:

1. Understand and articulate how the principles of sustainability are addressed in the contemporary practice of urban planning and urban development in a comparative global context;
2. Critically evaluate the United Nations' *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*;
3. Apply systems thinking and frameworks to sustainable planning and development issues;
4. Identify exemplars and innovative best policies and practices from the Netherlands;
5. Identify exemplars and innovative best policies and practices from other countries;
6. Contextualize the course content by visiting and critically exploring Dutch neighborhoods and cities;
7. Communicate research findings in written, visual, and oral formats;

Course Texts and Readings

Required Books



The Green City and Social Injustice: 21 Tales from North America and Europe

Anguelovski, A. & Connolly, J. (Eds.)
Routledge (2022)

An electronic version of the book is available on Canvas.

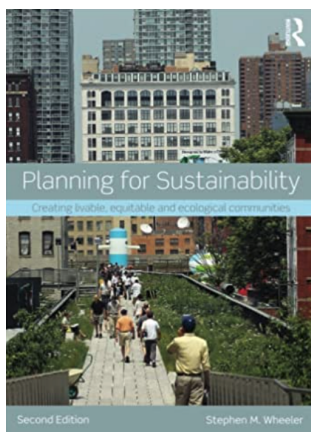


Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

United Nations (2015)

PDF available at the link below and on Canvas:

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/21252030%20Agenda%20for%20Sustainable%20Development%20web.pdf>



Planning for Sustainability

Wheeler, S.

Routledge (2025) 3rd edition (please use this version)

An electronic version is available on the library's website. You will need to log into the library using your VPN. From there, you will be able to save it as an Adobe digital book.

Course Requirements, Assignments and Grading

Late assignments will be marked down five points for each day they are late, up to 20 points. Plagiarism is against university policy and will be dealt with severely. The course grade will be based on the assignments below. All assignment prompts are available on Canvas.

Important: All *Green City* case studies and sustainability videos will be presented in class and uploaded to both our class Google site and Canvas. Please make sure to upload your work to the Google site on the day that you are scheduled to present your work.

ASSIGNMENT	DUE DATE	MAXIMUM VALUE
Class Attendance and Participation	N/A	20 points
Green City Case Study Presentation 1 (Europe)	Varies	30 points
Green City Case Study Presentation 2 (North America)	Varies	30 points
Sustainability Video	Date TBD at 11:59pm	70 points
Sustainability Memo	Date TBD at 10:00 a.m.	100 points
Total Points Possible		250 points

Course Attendance Policies

Students are expected to attend each class session in-person for its entire duration unless you are feeling unwell. This is a hands-on, interactive class. If you are unable to attend class, please let me know as soon as possible. Everyone will receive two excused absences. Travel should not be planned during Monday - Thursday. You will have three-day weekends every week and, if you want to travel outside of Amsterdam, this is the time for you to travel.

Course Format

In-class lectures and activities will take place in person every Monday- Wednesday at our IES classroom, unless otherwise noted. Wednesday afternoons will be set aside for museum or site visits and Thursdays will be our excursion days. Attendance is expected unless you are sick. Lectures will not be recorded.

Principles of Community

My aim is to create a supportive learning community that will foster rich discussions through the sharing of personal ideas, experiences, and relationships to course material. Honesty, listening, a willingness to share your ideas, and respect for self and others are basic guidelines that can help create a positive learning environment. Your participation and feedback are important to the success of the course and I welcome your thoughts throughout the summer on how we might improve class processes that will encourage effective communication and dialogue. We will spend a lot of time together this summer, and it is important to me that everyone feels welcome. Please don't hesitate to reach out to me if you want to talk about course or non-course related issues.

Course Schedule (*note that the correct dates for 2026 will be updated)

DATE	DAILY PLAN	IN-CLASS WORK & ASSIGNMENTS	REQUIRED READING
Week 1	Unless noted otherwise, class will meet from 10:00 a.m. - noon		
Sunday June 30	Welcome to Amsterdam! Neighborhood Tour		
Monday July 1	Morning - free time IES Orientation @ IES (2:00 – 3:30 p.m.) Canal Cruise (4:00 – 5:00 p.m.) Welcome Dinner (5:30 p.m.) Restaurant-Café De Waag Nieuwmarkt 4, 1012 CR	Here is the IES address: Geldersekade 101 D, 1011 EM	
Tuesday July 2	Lecture -Course Introduction -Overview of assignments -Definitions of Sustainability	What does a sustainable city look like?	Wheeler, Ch. 1, 2 UN, <i>Transforming our World</i> (all)
Wednesday July 3	Lecture (class will meet from 10 – 11:30a.m.) Definitions of Sustainability & Sustainability Frameworks: <i>The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development</i> Museum Tour: Rijksmuseum	Class Guide for <i>The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development</i>	Wheeler, Ch. 4
Thursday July 4	Excursion Urban Cycling Institute Workshop with Dr. Meredith Glaser -Meet at IES @ 8:45am -This is a full day workshop and it will conclude at 5:30 pm		
Week 2			
Monday July 8	Guest Lecture <i>History of Amsterdam Planning and Development</i> Dr. Jaap Evert Abrahamse, Senior Researcher, the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands		
Tuesday July 9	Lecture The Green City and Social Injustice	Green City Presentations Chapters 1, 2 & 3 Policy Memo Discuss assignment	<i>Green City</i> , Introduction, Ch. 1, 2, 3 Wheeler, Ch. 15

DATE	DAILY PLAN	IN-CLASS WORK & ASSIGNMENTS	REQUIRED READING
Wednesday July 10	Lecture (class will end at 11:30 a.m.) Climate Change Planning The City at Eye-Level Workshop (afternoon) Hans Karssenbergh, Partner, STIPO	Green City Presentations Chapters 4, 5, 6 Sustainability Video Discuss assignment	<i>Green City</i> , Ch. 4, 5, 6 <i>Wheeler</i> , Ch. 7, 8
Thursday July 11	Excursion - Rotterdam <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Floating Farm (morning) - Lunch - Walking tour (afternoon) - MVRDV visit (afternoon) 		
Week 3	Unless noted otherwise, class will meet from 10:00 a.m. - noon		
Monday July 15	Lecture Land use, growth and sustainability	Green City Presentations Chapter 7 & 8	<i>Green City</i> , Ch. 7 & 8 <i>Wheeler</i> , Ch. 10
Tuesday July 16	Lecture Land use, growth, and sustainability	Green City Presentations Chapter 9 & 10	<i>Green City</i> , Ch. 9 & 10 <i>Wheeler</i> , Ch. 13
Wednesday July 17	Lecture (class will meet from 10 – 11a.m.) Green infrastructure Afternoon Site Visit and Tour De Ceudel + N. Amsterdam (Depart IES at 2:00pm)	Green City Presentations Chapter 11 & 12	<i>Green City</i> , Ch. 11 & 12 <i>Wheeler</i> , Ch. 9
Thursday July 18	Excursion - The Hague <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TNO (morning) - Lunch - Mauritshuis (afternoon) - Consider staying later and visit the beach for a walk/dinner 		
Week 4			
Monday July 22	Lecture Sustainability and green building	Green City Presentations Chapter 13 & 14	<i>Green City</i> , Ch. 13-15 <i>Wheeler</i> , Ch. 14 & 25
Tuesday July 23	Lecture Sustainability & housing	Green City Presentations Chapter 15 & 16	<i>Green City</i> , Ch. 16-18
Wednesday July 24	Lecture (class will end at 11:30 a.m.) Sustainability and mobility Museum Tour: Het Schip Museum (Depart IES @ 2pm)	<i>Green City</i> Presentations Chapter 17 & 18	<i>Wheeler</i> , Ch. 12
Thursday July 25	Excursion - Utrecht <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Architectural Walking Tour of Utrecht University (morning) - Lunch - Utrecht U. Green Office (afternoon) 		

DATE	DAILY PLAN	IN-CLASS WORK & ASSIGNMENTS	REQUIRED READING
Week 5			
Monday July 29	Lecture Food systems, water & sustainability	Green City Presentations Chapter 19, 20 & 21	<i>Green City</i> , Ch. 19-21
Tuesday July 30	No Lecture Video presentations	Video Presentations	
Wednesday July 31	Lecture (class will end at 11:30a.m.) Sustainability lessons and action plans for the future Museum Tour: Anne Frank House (Depart IES @ 2:30)	Discuss sustainable planning & development lessons learned	Wheeler, Ch. 26
Thursday August 1	Program Debrief Meet at IES @3:00pm. Group discussion and debrief (Depart IES @ 4:30pm) Farewell dinner (5:30 p.m.) Indrapura Restaurant Rembrandtplein 40, 1017 CV		
Friday, August 2	No Class	Final policy memos due by Friday, August 2 at 10:00 a.m. Tot ziens and safe travels home!	