

Class Preparation & Participation

Objectives:

- **Ensure that you gain a thorough understanding of key concepts, frameworks, issues and processes of sustainable community development**
- **Ensure that you can apply the higher cognitive skills associated with critical thinking to your academic and professional work in sustainable community development**
- **Extend your knowledge beyond the core required materials for this class**
- **Engage in collaborative learning with other students to improve the quality of the learning experience for all students**

In most weeks, I ask you to complete specific preparations for class. These are indicated at the webpage for each week. In some cases, I ask that you post these preparatory materials on Canvas so that we can all share our contributions more quickly and fluidly in class. In these cases, I will review what you post. I also always assess preparation based on your demonstration in the classroom of how well you have prepared. I provide the specific kinds of evidence that I look for in the table below. I use these criteria to assess the degree to which your preparation has gone beyond simple “reading for general content” to include higher-level cognitive preparation. The latter provides evidence that you have read material in detail (reading for comprehension, analytic reading, critical reading) and that you have analyzed and synthesized the material. Think about how your area of interest is related to the required readings for each week and demonstrate that you have thought about critical linkages between the different components of a sustainable approach to community development. This is part of critical thinking – your ability to synthesize and see the connections between different concepts and approaches and to bring your own expertise and experience to bear.

I assess this portion of your grade based on the degree to which you play an active role in class activities, including discussions. Class activities will build upon and extend your competence in each topical area, not cover the basics. My lectures will be limited to covering material or concepts that are **not** covered in the required readings. I will ask you to participate in several kinds of class activities. Many of them will require your active participation in class discussions. Each of you will probably have different kinds of interests and will explore different aspects of the literature about sustainable community development. I want you to share what you are learning through your individual work with the class.

I grade both preparation and participation on a scale from 1 (poor) through 3 (good), using the criteria listed in the table below. I expect the average level of preparation & participation to satisfy the criteria for a “3”. If you score a “3” on average over the semester, you will receive 300 points total for class preparation and participation.

Score	Grading Criteria for Preparation
0	Fails to submit required preparations
1	Contributions consist mostly of repeating verbatim or paraphrasing information in the readings Contributions do not synthesize key concepts and ideas in the readings for the week (e.g. tends to be an “article by article” analysis rather than a synthesis) Contributions fail to demonstrate that the student has developed his/her own conclusions based on analysis of the concepts or findings in the readings

2	Contributions states the authors' concepts and ideas in the student's own words (does not rely on paraphrasing or direct quotes) Contributions synthesize the key ideas and concepts in the readings for the week Contributions include a few of the student's own conclusions based on analysis of the concepts or findings in the readings, such as critiques of the author's ideas
3	Contributions consist largely of synthesis of the readings for the week, and draw upon the full range of materials covered at the time of the contribution; e.g., synthesize beyond the readings for the week Contributions challenge and/or extend upon the ideas presented in the required materials, compare and contrast key concepts, and when appropriate present alternative interpretations or conclusions. Student develops his/her own concepts by extrapolating ideas and information beyond the examples or applications covered in course materials and draws attention to other applications or related concepts from other classes
Score	Grading Criteria for Class Participation
0	Absent (no score awarded for class period)
1	Offers responses or contributions to activities primarily when asked, called on, or assigned to a group Participates sporadically, rather than throughout the activity or discussion Provides little or no leadership for group processes in the classroom
2	Consistent, active involvement in all aspects of classroom activities Listens respectfully and responds to other students' points thoughtfully, makes substantive comments, and questions others in a constructive way. Offers and supports suggestions that may be counter to the majority opinion in group work and discussions to stimulate discussion Helps identify goals and formats for group processes and helps keep groups on task during group activities.
3	Consistent, active involvement throughout class activities without dominating the group Plays a leadership role for classroom activities by facilitating group processes, for example, encourages colleagues to participate and is alert to who wants to participate and helps them do so Contributes to group's understanding of materials by encouraging higher level critical and creative thinking (examples could be suggesting alternative ways of analyzing a reading, summarizing ideas that emerge during discussions, and formulating questions that help the group move from simpler to more complex ideas)