When the last tree is cut, the last fish is caught, and the last river is polluted; 
when to breathe the air is sickening, 
you will realize, too late, that wealth is not in bank accounts and that you can't eat money.

Native American Saying

Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without 
compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

UN Bruntland Commission

The future is green energy, sustainability, renewable energy.

Arnold Schwarzenegger

Professor: Sabine von Mering, Professor of German and Women’s, Gender and Sexuality Studies and Director, Center for German and European Studies (CGES)

Note: This is a preliminary description of the syllabus and may be subject to some change.

Students are encouraged to contact me with any further questions

Course Description:
“World Overshoot Day” for 2016 was on August 8. This means that in 2016 humans consumed
the resources that earth requires one year to regenerate in less than eight months. This is not
sustainable. Through increasing greenhouse gas emissions, deforestation and toxic waste humans
are systematically destroying the very planet we need to live. Congruently, our numbers keep
growing, and more and more people around the globe are adopting an unsustainable “American
lifestyle”. From climate change to biodiversity, from consumer culture to sustainable
development – this experiential learning practicum is designed to familiarize you with the facts
and help you develop the tools and creative ideas to live sustainably and to excite others to do the
same.

Questions to be addressed include: What is sustainability? What is climate change? How can
economic development be sustainable? What does climate justice entail? Why is biodiversity
important?
Over the course of the year you will
• develop a basic understanding of sustainability
• explore, analyze, and discuss potential solutions and how to communicate them
• meet sustainability experts from Brandeis and beyond to learn from and engage with them.
• make strong connections, both during guest lectures and in other ways, that will help you make the most out of your time at Brandeis.
• speak out – by honing writing and speaking skills and working to get them published.
• discuss campus and local community issues students are passionate about, and work together to design projects to address them.

Course Materials:
Below is a partial and non-finalized list of materials for the course. Excerpts from books will be assigned, not full books. The final list will be larger and may change, but this should give students an idea of what we will be looking at:

• Current news articles about sustainability
• Naomi Klein: This Changes Everything. Capitalism vs the Climate. Simon & Schuster 2015.

Guest Speakers:
Throughout the course leading faculty and administration members will join the students to discuss the issues in question. Guest lectures fulfill two objectives: Provide expertise essential to exploring issues of sustainability, while allowing students to get to know exceptional campus figures on a personal level and begin building relationships with them.

Below is a list of likely guest lecturers. The list may change, but you can expect several guest speakers each semester.

- Joseph Assan, Assistant Professor of Political Economy of Sustainable Development, Heller
- Linda Bui, Associate Professor of Economics
- Mary Fischer, Brandeis University Campus Sustainability Manager
- Laura J. Goldin, Professor of the Practice of Environmental Studies
- Jennifer Gutsell, Assistant Professor of Psychology
- Eric Olson, Senior Lecturer, Heller School for Social Policy and Management
- Lawrence J. Wangh, Professor of Biology

**Expectations:**
As a two-credit course, class will meet once a week for 80 minute session and students will be expected to spend 4.5 hours per week working outside the classroom.

Times and locations TBD.

The grading criteria are yet to be finalized, but students can expect an emphasis on class participation and demonstrated engagement with the topics.

Assignments will likely include weekly responses, class presentations, potentially one short paper and a project plan towards the end of the semester.

I look forward to meeting you!

Sabine von Mering
vonmering@brandeis.edu