

Sustainability Component for GLST 1000

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This fall, I will expand a sustainability unit in GLST 1000 to include more hands-out components that will engage students beyond mere readings on the topic. The unit will be subdivided into 4 classes, spread out over 2 weeks:

Session 1: Introduction to the Global Environment

Homework: As an introduction to the topic of sustainability within the global context, students will read the first half of a chapter on the Global Environment from *Introduction to Global Studies (IGS)*, chapter 13, pp. 285-295).

In-class: Students will be reflecting on their own environmental concerns and lay the groundwork for next three sessions by exploring key environmental issues, such as air quality, water quality, waste, natural resources, energy, and biodiversity.

Session 2: Film *Plastic China* (Wang Jiuliang, 2016)

Homework: In preparation for our viewing and discussion of Wang Jiuliang's film *Plastic China* (2016), students will be watching two videos on "The Environmental Cost of China's Growth" and "China's Pollution Dilemma - Inside Story." Students will be answering embedded questions on Canvas.

In-class: After an brief introduction into the topic of environmental issues in China as well to the director Wang Jiuliang, students will be watching excerpts from the film *Plastic China* and responding to questions on a handout, which will help them zoom in on human and environmental cost of waste production as well as the impact of Western waste on other regions in the world.

Session 3:

Homework: In preparation for our discussion of the film *Plastic China*, students will be reading the two articles, "What Are the Consequences of China's Import Ban on Global Plastic Waste?" and "Piling Up: How China's Ban on Importing Waste Has Stalled Global Recycling." They will also complete a personal plastic waste report, where they will record every single plastic waste they produce throughout one day (including anything they recycle). At the end of the day, they will review this report and reflect upon strategies of minimizing their plastic waste. Finally, each student will be asked to bring in one waste item to class.

In-class: First, we will discuss the film *Plastic China* and its implications for waste production, distribution, and disposal around the world. Then, students will discuss their plastic waste reduction strategies in small groups and share their insights. Finally, students will be asked to drop their waste item into containers set up in the front of the class, which will be labeled either as "recyclable" or "non-recyclable." We will then discuss these choices and correct any misplaced items. The aim is to teach students what can, in fact, be disposed of as recyclable, while also making them aware of the fact that

much of our plastic waste cannot be recycled and will thus end up in landfills, be burned etc.¹

Session 4:

Homework: Students will read the second part of the chapter on the Global Environment (*IGS*, chapter 13, pp. 295-304). They will also complete a Carbon Footprint Calculator, upload the results and reflect upon ways in which they can reduced their footprint.

In-class: This session will focus on ways to address environmental problems generally and climate change specifically, both on a global as well as a personal scale.

Honors Section Project:

GLST 1000 has an Honors section and students can choose between a selection of projects as a way to enrich the course content. One such project will be to research what happens to their own, personal waste, which they dispose of in Greenville. The idea is to create small groups or students who will subdivide the waste into smaller components, such as “Household Garbage,” “Recycling,” and “Yard Waste.” As part of this project, students will be asked to contact waste management facilities responsible for waste processing in Pitt County as well as beyond. During the last week of classes, students will present their research to the class.

¹ This idea took hold during our Sustainability Workshop, when our group was told how few items should, in fact, be recycled. Though our group of participants were environmentally conscious, most of us seemed surprised by this information, so I believe that it will be meaningful to pass this on to our students through a hands-on activity.