This is the third year this course has been offered. The class membership is impressive including persons with a wide variety of backgrounds from the humanities, social sciences, and many branches of the natural sciences. This blend provides us all with an opportunity to learn much from each other.

As a concept that is fundamental to all humans and to the Earth as an integrated whole, there can be no doubt of the critical importance of sustainability. As a subject for academic study and investigation, it offers major challenges. Is there agreement about what we mean by sustainability? What are its essential components? How do we assess sustainability in a variety of situations? What is the current status of sustainability in the world at large, in various countries and cities, in the industrial, agricultural and domestic practices in which we all engage?

It is these kinds of questions that we will examine together in the course. Here are some of the arrangements and logistics.

Instructor
Gary W. vanLoon
Chernoff Hall – Room 405
Phone – 533 2633; Email - vanloon@chem.queensu.ca
I do not set aside scheduled office hours, but welcome visits for discussion at any time. Call or email in advance if you wish to be sure that I am in my office.

Teaching Assistants
Andrew Sacret (full time)
Policy Studies Building – Room 505
Email - 9aas1@qlink.queensu.ca; Home Phone (Emergencies ONLY) – 542-1715
I am in my final year of a Master’s program in the School of Urban and Regional Planning. I graduated from Queen’s in Environmental Science (Biology) in 2003. I can meet with students directly after Monday and Wednesday classes, but please try to make an appointment with me either in person or by email beforehand. Thanks!

Grant Bishop (part time)
Biosciences – Room 3125
Phone – 483 9646 Email - bishop@geoladm.geol.queensu.ca
Grant graduated in Geological Engineering and is now pursuing a Master’s degree in Environmental Studies (this program has not been officially sanctioned, but certification is in the works).

Classes
Slot 002; Monday 9:30, Wednesday 8:30, Thursday 10:30
All classes will be held in McLaughlin Hall (Mechanical Eng) 306
The classes will take a variety of formats including presentations by GWvL, AS and GB, guest lectures, audio and video tapes, and discussions. Student (group) presentations will take up some classes in the final weeks of the course. Throughout the course, discussion will be encouraged.

Resources
Web resources will be the major source of reading material. Because sustainability is a subject of importance to many active government and non-governmental organizations, there are several valuable web resources. Examples are the International Institute for Sustainable Development (http://www.iisd.org/) and Earthscan (http://www.earthscan.co.uk/). There are many others and these will be noted from time to time. To aid in discussions during the second and third classes, we are asking you to read the article entitled ‘What is sustainability, anyway?’ located at http://www.worldwatch.org/pubs/mag/2003/165/

We welcome information about any important resources with which you may be familiar. This is a fast-developing field, with new information appearing every month.

Evaluation
Evaluation will involve three aspects – an individual poster presentation, on fundamental issues related to SD (25 %); a series of round table discussions (25 %), and a final examination. The examination will take the form of pre-assigned questions/issues.

All this information is subject to minor modification, with full class participation in deciding on any changes. The exciting, evolving field of sustainability cannot be slotted easily into a neat set of compartments and we will learn much by working together to contribute to its development.