

Honors: The Greening of RIT – ENVS 152H – Fall 2023

Instructor: Neha Sood (she/her), Director of Sustainability, hxspro@rit.edu

Class Meeting Time and Location: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:30 – 10:45 a.m. | WAL-3530

Instructor office hours:

- TBA – by the second week of classes.
- By appointment – email hxspro@rit.edu

Course Description: Environmental issues are often difficult to address because stakeholders have different values, backgrounds, culture, risk perception, and understanding of science. This class will empower students to be effective advocates by helping them to learn about different viewpoints and considerations surrounding environmental issues. Students will have an opportunity to improve their problem-solving abilities by addressing interdisciplinary environmental, ecological, and sustainability problems in miniature on the campus of RIT. During the semester, students will research methods and strategies used by other colleges and universities to minimize environmental impacts in areas such as energy use, solid and hazardous waste management, transportation, landscaping and construction, preserving green space and natural systems (ecosystem functions and services), storm water runoff, food production and consumption, and purchasing. Student solutions to campus issues and projects will address the concept of sustainability and the tradeoffs it requires.

Course Topics:

1. Sustainability through the lens of UN Sustainable Development Goals
2. Thinking Local – RIT, the Landscape, and the RIT Environmental Footprint
 - a. Feeling Swamped – Ecosystem Functions and Services of the RIT Natural Systems
 - b. Snug as a Bug – Issues Surrounding the Restoration of RIT's Ecosystems
3. Feeding the Campus – How much land does it take to feed the student body?
4. Waste Not, Want Not – Trash, Recycling, and Re-Use issues
5. Let's Get Moving People – Ideas for Reducing Transportation Environmental Impacts
6. If These Walls Could Talk – Creating Sustainable Buildings
7. Water, water... everywhere? – Water consumption at RIT and beyond
8. Stormy Weather – Controlling runoff from large storm events
9. The Role of Citizen Scientists in Environmental Science
10. Creating a Sustainable Campus, One Step at a Time

Grading Structure:

1. Class assignments (reflection papers, worksheets, other assignments) – 80%
2. Class participation (showing up, showing up on time, general preparedness) – 20%

General Course Policies:

Honors: The Greening of RIT – ENVS 152H – Fall 2023

- **Active Participation:** Through this class you will be exposed to leaders at RIT that your peers may not know. You'll understand the "behind the scenes" workings of RIT. You'll meet representatives from various operational units at RIT (dining, housing, transportation, facilities management, strategic planning, and more!). I expect that you will come prepared for the day in any of the following ways:
 - Be prepared to engage in conversations! I would rather talk WITH you than talk AT you!
 - Complete any pre-readings
 - Actively listen to what the guest speakers have to say
 - Come prepared with questions you have for the speakers OR ask questions as you think about them! Taking notes when they speak might also help you think of ways to engage in dialogue.
 - Please do not hesitate to ask questions! Dialogue makes for a more robust experience than lectures alone!
 - We'll be taking LOTS of field trips to various places on campus (and the occasional place off campus). Please come prepared with closed-toed/walking shoes when I indicate as such. Please also communicate any questions or concerns with me ahead of time.
 - Did I mention you should ask questions? ☺
- **Late Assignments:** Your assignments may include deliverables such as reflections, story maps, formal papers, presentations, reading responses, interpretive dances, etc. You will have sufficient time to produce a high-quality deliverable, but not time to waste – so, typically, about a week for each assignment. It is important that you submit your assignments on time. Any late submissions will receive a 10% deduction for each day it is late. Any assignments received one week or later from the original due date will earn a 0%.
- **Absence from class:** Attendance and participation is a critical part of your grade and it is important that you attend every class! That being said, if there are extenuating circumstances, it is your responsibility to reach out to me BEFORE class if you need to be excused. Additionally, if you are experiencing COVID-19 –related symptoms, please send me a note and do not come to class! More information on this is provided below.
- **WARNING!** There are official procedures for dropping or withdrawing from a course. If you simply stop attending, you have done neither!
- **Email Policy:** I will send you important class materials or time sensitive announcements throughout the semester. It is important that you check your email throughout the "work" week (Monday-Friday). I will show you the same courtesy – if you do not receive a response from me within 24 hours, please assume I did not receive your email and re-send it. Responses over the weekend may be delayed.

Odds and Ends

Honors: The Greening of RIT – ENVS 152H – Fall 2023

- **Mental Health:** Like physical health, mental health can be affected by current life events. The college years are a time in life when many young people are dealing with new complexities and stresses, sometimes without immediate support for the first time, and mental health problems sometimes arise or get worse. This can be deeply frightening, or at least confusing. First and foremost, know that you are not alone. If you are feeling overwhelmed, if you experience what seems like depression or anxiety, or if you are feeling victimized, RIT has people to help you. The most effective way to manage these challenges and minimize their effect is to recognize and talk about them before they become more intense.
 - For counseling and psychological services, click on the URL <https://www.rit.edu/studentaffairs/counseling/>
 - During business hours (Monday—Friday, 8:30 AM—4:30 PM), walk-ins are received (i.e., without appointment) the office at 2100 August Center above the Student Health Center, or call (585) 475-2261, or email caps@rit.edu to schedule an appointment.
 - For urgent matters, Counseling and Psychological Services takes walk-ins without an appointment during business hours.
 - For emergency matters that cannot wait for business hours, call 1-855-436-1245 to speak with a mental health provider or call Public Safety at 475-3333.
- **Honesty and Integrity:** The honor code is a cornerstone of our learning community. As an institution of higher learning, RIT expects students to behave honestly and ethically at all times, especially when submitting work for evaluation in conjunction with any course or degree requirement. The RIT Honors Program encourages you to become familiar with the RIT Academic Integrity Policy at <https://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/policiesmanual/d080>, and the RIT Honor Code at <https://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/policiesmanual/p030>
- **Copyright:** All course materials that you receive or to which you have online access are protected by copyright laws. You may use course materials and make copies for your own use as needed, but unauthorized distribution and/or uploading of materials without the instructor's express permission is strictly prohibited. For example, uploading completed homework assignments, quizzes, or exams to any study site constitutes a violation of this policy. Students who engage in the unauthorized distribution of copyrighted materials may be held in violation of the University's Code of Conduct, and/or liable under Federal and State laws. RIT Policy C03.2 Copyright Policy addresses this issue. You can find it at <https://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/policiesmanual/c032>

Honors: The Greening of RIT – ENVS 152H – Fall 2023

- **Title IX:** RIT is committed to investigate complaints of sexual discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault, and other sexual misconduct to ensure that appropriate action is taken to stop the behavior, prevent its recurrence, and remedy its effects. Title IX violations are taken very seriously at RIT, and can be reported at <https://www.rit.edu/reporting-incident>
- **ADA Accommodations:** The Disability Services Office is dedicated to facilitating equitable access to the full RIT experience for students with disabilities. It works in collaboration with campus partners to foster a welcoming, diverse, and inclusive campus community. Any RIT student with a permanent or temporary disability can register and request accommodations with the Disability Services Office. Accommodations are determined on a case-by-case basis via a student-centered process, taking into account what is most appropriate and reasonable for an individual student. Visit www.rit.edu/dso to learn more.

COVID-19 Classroom Protocols:

Health, safety, and well-being is my highest priority as your instructor. Our class is synchronous and in-person and we will be following the guidelines and instructions set by [RIT Safety Plan](https://www.rit.edu/ready/rit-safety-plan) (<https://www.rit.edu/ready/rit-safety-plan>) to determine practices in the classroom. If you are sick with COVID-related symptoms, please do not come to class! I will find another way to help you make up for the missed lecture. I encourage you to seek out assistance from the Student Health Center or other resources as stated in the safety plan: <https://www.rit.edu/ready/rit-safety-plan#for-students>