Master of Science in Sustainability Management

SUMA5250 Building a Sustainable Detroit: A Case Study in Urban Resilience
Online via Zoom. Tuesdays, 6:10pm to 8pm
3 Credits
Elective

Instructor:	Donna Givens Davidson, dg3211@columbia.edu, 313-673-2653
Office Hours:	By Appointment via https://doodle.com/bp/donnagivens/donna-givens-davidson-scheduling-page
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Facilitator/Teaching Assistant:	**TBD**

Course Overview

Detroit's present condition is rooted in a protracted and uninterrupted history of racist laws, policies, and practices that deny full citizenship to Black Detroiters, undermine democracy, and position the city as a poor colony within a thriving metropolis. Racism has disfigured the social, physical, and economic landscape of Detroit to produce profound levels of neglect, abuse, and exploitation of its residents, resulting in wealth extraction, housing insecurity, healthy food and water scarcity, educational malpractice, and environmental destruction, all within the framework of wealth attraction, tax incentives, subsidized growth, and capital accumulation in the greater downtown. Detroit serves as an American example of depopulation, de-industrialization, suburbanization, blight, abandonment, and concentration of risks within rustbelt cities. We will explore grass-roots efforts to address root causes, community development efforts to build sustainable communities, and alternative approaches to restructuring local economies.

Through this course, we will examine the thesis that sustainability and racism cannot co-exist; that sustainability is rooted in inclusive social wellbeing now and in future generations, whereas racism is rooted in hoarding of power and resources for one dominant group. This hoarding of resources for a favored population impairs preservation for future generations.   Furthermore, environmental racism disconnects the consequences of environmental destruction from its beneficiaries and therefore interferes with feedback loops that are needed for course correction.

This full-semester online course is offered as an elective that is available to cross-regiments from other fields and/or university programs, as space allows. There are no pre-requisites to taking this course.

Learning Objectives
L1. Evaluate how racist laws, policies and practices undercut urban sustainability and the role of citizenship in building sustainable systems.
L2. Examine the evolution of Black power in 20th Century Detroit and how this power has been harnessed and sustained over time, through social, civic, economic and political institutions to strengthen community resilience.
L3. Describe evolving patterns of white resistance to racial inclusion and social equity and correlate this resistance to specific sustainability impacts.

L4. Evaluate and critique competing explanations for contemporary urban crisis from the perspectives of impacted communities as well as external institutional, political and corporate power brokers.

L5. Design strategies for building resident equity and formulate an equity initiative to address specific sustainability issues.

Readings

Required Text:

Kurashige, S. (2017). *The fifty-year rebellion: How the U.S. political crisis began in Detroit*. University of California Press.

Bates, B. T. (2012). *Making of Black Detroit in the age of Henry Ford* . Chapel Hill, NC: University Of North Carolina Press

Rector, J.J. (2022). *Toxic Debt: An Environmental Justice History of Detroit.   Chapel Hill, NC*: University of North Carolina Press

Readings:

Barreto, A. A., & Lozano, K. (2017). Hierarchies of belonging: Intersecting race, ethnicity, and territoriality in the construction of US citizenship. Citizenship Studies, 21(8), 999-1014. doi:10.1080/13621025.2017.1361906 (15 pages)

Darden, J. T., & Thomas, R. W. (2013). Historical causes and consequences of the 1967 civil disorder white racism, Black rebellion, and changing race relations in the post–civil disorder era. In *Detroit Race Riots, Racial Conflicts, and Efforts to Bridge the Racial Divide*, (pp. 1-135). East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press (135 pages)

Peck, J., & Whiteside, H. (2016). Financializing Detroit. *Economic Geography, 92*(3). doi:10.1080/00130095.2015.1116369 (29 pages)

Atuahene, B. (2020). Predatory Cities. *California Law Review, 108*(1), 107-182 (75 pages)

McDonald, K. (Director). (2014, September 24). How Detroit has streamlined its fight against blight [Video file]. In *PBS Newshour*. Available from www.youtube.com/watch?v=43ldAQhjkdY (9 minutes)

Stafford, K., & Tanner, K. (2020). Children were at risk so Detroit promised to halt demolitions. But that didn't happen. Retrieved from https://www.freep.com/in-depth/news/investigations/2020/10/16/detroit-demolitions-stopped-neighborhoods-lead/5975230002/ (22 pages)

Stafford, K. (2019, November 08). Detroit demolition program mismanaged, riddled with problems, auditor says. Retrieved from

https://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/detroit/2019/11/08/detroit-demolition-auditor-general-report/2522761001/ (5 pages)

White, M. M. (2011) Environmental reviews & case studies: D-Town farm: African American resistance to food insecurity and the transformation of Detroit. *Environmental Practice, 13*(4), pp. 406–417., doi:10.1017/s1466046611000408 (11 pages)

Taylor, D. E., & Ard, K. J. (2015). Food availability and the food desert frame in Detroit: An Overview of the City's Food System. *Environmental Practice, 17*(2), 102–133, doi:10.1017/s1466046614000544 (31 pages).

Poething, E. C., Schilling, J., Goodman L., Bai, B., Gaster, J. Pendall, R., & Fazilli, S. (2017). The Detroit housing market: Challenges and innovations for a path forward. *Urban Institute* (66 pages)

Clark, C. (2020). Race, austerity and water justice in the United States. *Water Politics: Governance, Justice, and the Right to Water*, by Farhana Sultana and Alex Loftus, Routledge, an Imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, 2020, pp. 175–185. (10 pages)

Meerow, S., & Newell, J. P. (2016). Spatial planning for multifunctional green infrastructure: Growing resilience in Detroit. *Landscape and Urban Planning, 159*(29), 62–75, doi:10.1016/j.landurbplan.2016.10.005 (13 pages)

Gould, K. A., & Lewis, T. L. (2017). Making urban greening sustainable. In *Green Gentrification: Urban Sustainability and the Struggle for Environmental Justice* (pp. 151-172). Routledge (21 pages)

Niekerk, A. J. (2020). Inclusive economic sustainability: SDGs and global inequality. *Sustainability, 12*(13), 5427. doi:10.3390/su12135427 (17 pages

Assignments and Assessments

1. **Participation in 8 online discussions – 40% (Individual grade - L1, L2, L3, L4).** This will include posting 250 to 300 word Canvas discussion posts in direct response to detailed questions and response and engagement with at least two other student responses. Posts will be evaluated based on critical thinking and analysis, application and synthesis of lecture/discussion and reading topics, as well as thoughtful consideration and responsiveness to posts by other students. Each post counts for 5% of the grade.
2. **Completion of two essays, evaluating problems described in case studies – 30% (Individual grade - L4, L5).** Students will be asked to assess issues of citizenship and justice, sustainability impacts, and power relationships between primary actors. Minimum of 1,000 words, double spaced. Essays will be evaluated based on writing mechanics, organization of information, evidence of case analysis, synthesis of lecture/discussion and reading content, and personal reflections demonstrating awareness and sensitivity to competing narratives about Detroit and its residents.
3. **Final project, proposing a policy change, program, or initiative that addresses a sustainability issue relevant to Detroit residents – 30% (Group grade - L5).** Students will select from one of the following sustainability management program areas: stormwater management, air quality, water access, renewable energy, or food systems and work in small groups to propose an intervention that will be presented as a

group.   One student from the group should submit a summary of the group proposal in a written document, of between 4,500 to 5,000 words. Proposals will include the following elements:

    a. Description of need, using available quantitative and qualitative data
    b. Discussion of race equity concerns
    c. Brief historical description,
    d. Type(s) of intervention
        i. Direct Action
        ii. Community Organizing
        iii. Political Action
        iv. Research
        v. Community Development
        vi. Other
    e. Program Objectives
    f. Expected Outcomes
    g. Resource Requirements

Final projects will be evaluated for the group based on quality of group presentation which will comprise ⅓ of the final grade. Written responses will be evaluated based on responsiveness to outlined elements, writing mechanics, organization of information, as well as presentation of information using graphs, charts, and other tools, as appropriate. Projects should reflect analysis of racist policy and practices and correlation between these policies and practices to current sustainability issues. Proposals will be assessed based on clarity of goals and objectives, originality, fit within Detroit context, feasibility, and differentiation from existing programs/initiatives.

Grading
The final grade will be calculated as described below:

FINAL GRADING SCALE

Grade	Percentage
A+	98–100 %
A	93–97.9 %
A-	90–92.9 %
B+	87–89.9 %
B	83–86.9 %
B-	80–82.9 %
C+	77–79.9 %
C	73–76.9 %
C-	70–72.9 %
D	60–69.9 %
F	59.9% and below

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Assignment/Assessment	% Weight	Individual or Group/Team Grade
Participation in 8 Online Discussions	40%	Individual Grade
Completion of Two Essays	30%	Individual Grade
Final Project	30%	Individual or Group Grade

Course Schedule/Course Calendar

Module/Week

Module/Week & Topic with specific dates	Topic	Readings	Activities/Assignments for this module
September 3, 2024 Module 1	Course Introductions Sustainability and Race	Required: Bates, B. T. (2012). Chapters 1-2. In *Making of Black Detroit in the age of Henry Ford* (pp. 15-67). Chapel Hill, NC: University Of North Carolina Press. Suggested Viewing: Cassells, H., & Levy, K. (Directors). (2015). *A people's history of Detroit* [Video file]. Available from www.youtube.com/watch?v=qcAvvr6yYjM Required: Barreto, A. A., & Lozano, K. (2017). Hierarchies of belonging: Intersecting race, ethnicity, and territoriality in the construction of US citizenship. Citizenship Studies, 21(8), 999-1014. doi:10.1080/13621025.2017.1361906 Suggested:	Canvas Discussion Prompt

		Carmichael, S., Hamilton, C. V., & Ture, K. (1992). White Power: The Colonial Situation. In Black power: The politics of liberation in America (pp. 2-32). Vintage Books.	
September 10, 2024 Module 2	Urban Roots: Leaving the Plantation and the Rise of Black Detroit	Required: Kurashige, S. (2017). Introduction. *The fifty-year rebellion: How the U.S. political crisis began in Detroit* (pp. 14-26) University of California Press. ISBN-13: 978-0520294912 Bates, B. T. (2012). Chapters 3-5. In *Making of Black Detroit in the age of Henry Ford* (pp. 70-144). Chapel Hill, NC: University Of North Carolina Press.	Canvas Discussion Prompts Select topic for final project and identify group members
September 17, 2024 Module 3	Black Resistance and Rebellion: Building Black Political Power	Required: Kurashige, S. (2017). Chapter 1-2. *The fifty-year rebellion: How the U.S. political crisis began in Detroit*. pp. 28-67. University of California Press. ISBN-13: 978-0520294912 Darden, J. T., & Thomas, R. W. (2013). Historical causes and consequences of the 1967 civil disorder white racism, Black rebellion, and changing race relations in the post–civil disorder era. In *Detroit Race Riots, Racial Conflicts, and Efforts to Bridge the Racial Divide* (pp. 1-27). East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press. Required: Darden, J. T. (2013). The emergence of Black political power in 1967: Impact of the civil disorders on race relations in metropolitan Detroit. In J. Darden (Ed.), *Detroit Race Riots, Racial Conflicts, and Efforts to Bridge the Racial Divide* (pp. 93-135). East Lansing: Michigan State University Press.	Schedule time to meet with group members for the first time. Canvas Discussion Prompt

September 24, 2024 Module 4	Dismantling Black Detroit: Bankruptcy and Emergency Management	Required: Kurashige, S. (2017). Ch. 3-4. *The fifty-year rebellion: How the U.S. political crisis began in Detroit* (pp. 68-113) University of California Press. ISBN-13: 978-0520294912 Peck, J., & Whiteside, H. (2016). Financializing Detroit. *Economic Geography, 92*(3). doi:10.1080/00130095.2015.1116369	Case Study: Black Bottom Share topic for final project and members of Group and continue working on the final project.
October 1, 2024 Module 5	Wealth Transfers and Land Grabs	Required: Atuahene, B. (2020). Predatory Cities. *California Law Review, 108*(1), 107-182. Suggested: O'Grady, S. K. (Director). (2016). Land Grab [Video file]. Atlas Industries. Retrieved from https://www.amazon.com/Land-Grab-John-Hantz/dp/B07FYJ77NP	Canvas Discussion Prompt Continue working on the Final Project as a group.
October 8, 2024 Module 6	Deconstructing Detroit - Mass Demolitions	Required: Kurashige, S. (2017). Ch. 5. *The fifty-year rebellion: How the U.S. political crisis began in Detroit* (pp. 113-135) University of California Press. ISBN-13: 978-0520294912 McDonald, K. (Director). (2014, September 24). How Detroit has streamlined its fight against blight [Video file]. In *PBS Newshour*. Available from www.youtube.com/watch?v=43ldAQhjkdY	Case Study: Tax Foreclosures Continue working on the Final Project as a group.

		Stafford, K., & Tanner, K. (2020). Children were at risk so Detroit promised to halt demolitions. But that didn't happen. Retrieved from https://www.freep.com/in-depth/news/investigations/2020/10/16/detroit-demolitions-stopped-neighborhoods-lead/5975230002/ Stafford, K. (2019, November 08). Detroit demolition program mismanaged, riddled with problems, auditor says. Retrieved from https://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/detroit/2019/11/08/detroit-demolition-auditor-general-report/2522761001/	
October 15, 2024 Module 7	Urban Food Systems	White, M. M. (2011). D-Town Farm: African American resistance to food insecurity and the transformation of Detroit. *Environmental Practice 13*(4), 406–417, doi:10.1017/s1466046611000408. Taylor, D. E., and Ard, K. J. (2015). Food availability and the food desert frame in Detroit: An overview of the city's food system. *Environmental Practice 17*(2), 102–133. doi:10.1017/s1466046614000544.	Canvas Discussion Prompt Continue working on the final project as a group
October 22, 2024 Module 8	Water Rights	Required: Kurashige, S. (2017). Ch. 6. *The fifty-year rebellion: How the U.S. political crisis began in Detroit* (pp.136-167) University of California Press. ISBN-13: 978-0520294912 Clark, C. (2020). Race, austerity and water justice in the United States. In F. Sulana & A. Loftus (Eds.) *Water politics:*	Submit Project Outline

		Governance, justice, and the right to water. Routledge (pp. 175–185). Suggested: Rector, J. J. (2017). Accumulating risk: Environmental justice and the history of capitalism in Detroit, 1880-2015. *Wayne State University Dissertation*, pp. 20–75, 305-368	
October 29, 2024 Module 9	Affordable Housing	Poething, E.C., Schilling, J., Goodman L., Bai, B., Gaster, J. Pendall, R. & Fazilli, S. The Detroit Housing Market: Challenges and Innovations for a Path Forward**.** Urban Institute	Canvas Discussion Prompt Continue working on the Final Project as a group.
November 12, 2024 Module 10	Air Quality and Soil Contamination	Rector, J. J. (2017). Accumulating risk: Environmental justice and the history of capitalism in Detroit, 1880-2015. *Wayne State University Dissertation*	Canvas Discussion Prompt Continue working on the Final Project as a group.
November 19, 2024 Module 11	Green Infrastructure and Stormwater Management	Meerow, S., & Newell, J. P. (2016). Spatial planning for multifunctional green infrastructure: Growing resilience in Detroit. *Landscape and Urban Planning, 159*(29), 62–75, doi:10.1016/j.landurbplan.2016.10.005	Case Study: Intensive Industrial Zoning Continue Working on Final Project
November 26, 2024 Module 12	Building Power	"Making Urban Greening Sustainable." *Green Gentrification: Urban Sustainability and the Struggle for Environmental Justice*, by Kenneth Alan Gould and Tammy L. Lewis, Routledge, 2017, pp. 151–172.	Continue Working on Final Project

| December 3, 2024 | Practitioners Panel Discussion | No Readings | Continue Working on Final Project |
| December 10, 2024 | Final Presentation | No Readings | Finalize Paper |

Course Policies

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Participation and Attendance
You are expected to complete all assigned readings, attend all class sessions, and engage with others in online discussions. Your participation will require that you answer questions, defend your point of view, and challenge the point of view of others. If you need to miss a class for any reason, please discuss the absence with me in advance.

Work that is not submitted on the due date noted in the course syllabus without advance notice and permission from the instructor will be graded down 1/3 of a grade for every day it is late (e.g., from a B+ to a B).]

Citation & Submission

All written assignments must use standard citation format (e.g., MLA, APA, Chicago), cite sources, and be submitted to the course website (not via email).

School and University Policies and Resources

Copyright Policy
Please note—Due to copyright restrictions, online access to this material is limited to instructors and students currently registered for this course. Please be advised that by clicking the link to the electronic materials in this course, you have read and accept the following:

> The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted materials. Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specified conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be "used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research." If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excess of "fair use," that user may be liable for copyright infringement.

Academic Integrity
Columbia University expects its students to act with honesty and propriety at all times and to respect the rights of others. It is fundamental University policy that academic dishonesty in any guise or personal conduct of any sort that disrupts the life of the University or denigrates or endangers members of the University community is unacceptable and will be dealt with severely. It is essential to the academic integrity and vitality of this community that

individuals do their own work and properly acknowledge the circumstances, ideas, sources, and assistance upon which that work is based. Academic honesty in class assignments and exams is expected of all students at all times.

SPS holds each member of its community responsible for understanding and abiding by the SPS Academic Integrity and Community Standards posted at https://sps.columbia.edu/students/student-support/academic-integrity-community-standards. You are required to read these standards within the first few days of class. Ignorance of the School's policy concerning academic dishonesty shall not be a defense in any disciplinary proceedings.

Diversity Statement
It is our intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that the students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. It is our intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender identity, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, nationality, religion, and culture.

Accessibility
Columbia is committed to providing equal access to qualified students with documented disabilities. A student's disability status and reasonable accommodations are individually determined based upon disability documentation and related information gathered through the intake process. For more information regarding this service, please visit the University's Health Services website: https://health.columbia.edu/content/disability-services.

Class Recordings
All or portions of the class may be recorded at the discretion of the Instructor to support your learning. At any point, the Instructor has the right to discontinue the recording if it is deemed to be obstructive to the learning process.

If the recording is posted, it is confidential and it is prohibited to share the recording outside of the class.

SPS Academic Resources
The Division of Student Affairs provides students with academic counseling and support services such as online tutoring and career coaching: https://sps.columbia.edu/students/student-support/student-support-resources.

Columbia University Information Technology
Columbia University Information Technology (CUIT) provides Columbia University students, faculty and staff with central computing and communications services. Students, faculty and staff may access University-provided and discounted software downloads.

Columbia University Library
Columbia's extensive library system ranks in the top five academic libraries in the nation, with many of its services and resources available online.

The Writing Center
The Writing Center provides writing support to undergraduate and graduate students through one-on-one consultations and workshops. They provide support at every stage of your writing, from brainstorming to final drafts. If you would like writing support, please visit the following site to learn about services offered and steps for

scheduling an appointment. This resource is open to Columbia graduate students at no additional charge. Visit http://www.college.columbia.edu/core/uwp/writing-center.

Career Design Lab
The Career Design Lab supports current students and alumni with individualized career coaching including career assessment, resume & cover letter writing, agile internship job search strategy, personal branding, interview skills, career transitions, salary negotiations, and much more. Wherever you are in your career journey, the Career Design Lab team is here to support you. Link to https://careerdesignlab.sps.columbia.edu/

Netiquette
[Only applies to courses using online platforms]

Online sessions in this course will be offered through Zoom, accessible through Canvas. A reliable Internet connection and functioning webcam and microphone are required. It is your responsibility to resolve any known technical issues prior to class. Your webcam should remain turned on for the duration of each class, and you should expect to be present the entire time. Avoid distractions and maintain professional etiquette.

Please note: Instructors may use Canvas or Zoom analytics in evaluating your online participation.

More guidance can be found at: https://jolt.merlot.org/vol6no1/mintu-wimsatt_0310.htm

Netiquette is a way of defining professionalism for collaborations and communication that take place in online environments. Here are some Student Guidelines for this class:

- Avoid using offensive language or language that is not appropriate for a professional setting.
- Do not criticize or mock someone's abilities or skills.
- Communicate in a way that is clear, accurate and easy for others to understand.
- Balance collegiality with academic honesty.
- Keep an open-mind and be willing to express your opinion.
- Reflect on your statements and how they might impact others.
- Do not hesitate to ask for feedback.
- When in doubt, always check with your instructor for clarification.