



Department of  
**Community Sustainability**

**Spring 2026**

**CSUS 824**  
**Sustainable Development**  
*3 credits*

The study of sustainable development reveals a tension between a concern for human needs and for the scale of the impacts of human demands on nature. This graduate course explores the challenges of environmental sustainability and social justice in the context of global economic development. We will review the principles of sustainable development in both theory and practice, with a focus on measuring social and economic welfare at national and local scales. The course will examine the extensive literature and policy frameworks associated with conventional notions of sustainable development along with divergent concepts and models that challenge mainstream thinking. Drawing on theories of development, sustainability science, and economic growth, we will examine traditional and alternative indicators of sustainable development, encompassing the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of human well-being. Students will apply their understanding of sustainability indicators in a specific developmental and environmental context related to their interests. The course will include theoretical and empirical readings, reflective discussions and essays.

This course is approved as a substitution for ESP 802 for the doctoral dual major in Environmental Science and Policy.

*For more information, contact the instructor:*

Maria Claudia Lopez ([mlopez@msu.edu](mailto:mlopez@msu.edu))

Professor

*Course meets:*

Wednesdays      3:00 – 5:50 p.m.