



# GOUCHER COLLEGE

Welch Center for Graduate and Professional Studies

## SYLLABUS – Introduction to Cultural Sustainability

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Term and Dates.....Spring 2024  
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### Welcome to our Course!

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*The human heart is the first home of democracy. It is where we embrace our questions. Can we be equitable? Can we be generous? Can we listen with our whole beings, not just our minds, and offer our attention rather than our opinions? And do we have enough resolve in our hearts to act courageously, relentlessly, without giving up—ever—trusting our fellow citizens to join with us in our determined pursuit of a living democracy?*

- Terry Tempest Williams

This course introduces cultural sustainability both through its interdisciplinary theoretical foundations in ethnography, anthropology, public folklore, poetics, economics, social theory, and community arts, and through reflection on cultural activism and inquiry. It serves as an entry point for the Cultural Sustainability program. What practices, orientations, and frameworks are helpful and important to effectively work with communities to support the culture that matters to them? This question can have no single answer; rather we see cultural sustainability as a process and an experiment, which takes meaning from the efforts of practitioners guided by a passion to make a difference.

This course is an open collective inquiry. We will explore the concept of culture as a lens, as a tool, and as a framework through which to understand human behavior, particularly cultural identity and our relationships to each other. You will investigate the traditions and practices that shape your own culture and examine the forces of contemporary society that impact, or even threaten, those cultures. You will explore practices and strategies to sustain the cultural practices we treasure and value, with an eye toward cultural equity in our communities.

We will engage in critical reflection on texts that guide and animate this emerging field. You will begin developing an e-portfolio and professional voice that will serve as a compilation and refinement of the work you are considering undertaking. You will begin to identify the topics, themes, and communities you plan to engage with in the course of your Graduate studies. You

will start to develop an articulation of this subject by crafting a preliminary essay, developing a set of resources, and reviewing the literature on your topics of interest.

**About me:** I am a folklorist who has been working for more than 30 years with artists and communities to bring attention to their artistic and cultural traditions to meet community needs. Much of that work has been at the intersection of culture and tension, where paying attention to culture can serve to mediate social justice concerns. In particular, I have worked with newcomer communities creating exhibitions, theater productions, and educational programs that use stories to break down barriers of misunderstanding. I am excited to bring these practical experiences into this course to puzzle through the challenges and make sense of the work.

**About you:** The structure of the class is intended to create space for us to collectively expand our conceptions of who and what cultural sustainability and cultural activism are and might be. You come from varied backgrounds and experiences, all of which are relevant and valued. I encourage you to bring yourselves and identities to this course; don't be shy about bringing up and naming content and perspectives that may be missing from this syllabus and the course generally. We are all teachers and learners

### Main Course Topics

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1. The landscape and language of Cultural Sustainability
2. Cultural sustainability as a form of activism that serves to sustain cultures in the face of local and global forces of change
3. The complexities of culture and community
4. Ethnography as a methodology for cultural equity and inquiry
5. Community identity and creative expression through the lens of folklore
6. Ethical considerations in research and public applications of Cultural Sustainability
7. The centrality of artistic practice in community engagement and cultural sustainability

### Program Objectives

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This course is aligned with two departmental learning outcomes, listed below. Students will meet departmental learning outcomes through successful completion of assignments and activities in core and elective courses. A list of all departmental learning outcomes can be found at: <http://www.goucher.edu/graduate-programs/ma-in-cultural-sustainability/curriculum>

**Community-Based Research:** Design and implement projects using diverse methods that apply knowledge of cultural practices to contemporary issues in cultural sustainability with results that are meaningful and valued by communities. (MACS2)

**Ethical Action:** Evaluate ethical actions, programs, and policies that honor local voices, foster community self-determination, and empower community efforts towards cultural sustainability. (MACS3)

### Course Learning Objectives

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At the conclusion of this course, you will be able to:

1. Synthesize the foundational theories of culture as they relate to the field of cultural sustainability.
2. Analyze issues and themes regarding cultural sustainability as a conceptual framework for cultural activism.
3. Apply critical, theoretical, personal, and ethical considerations to your own community-based work, according to best practices in the field.
4. Conduct annotated bibliographic research using the tools available through the Goucher Library.
5. Formulate strategies for building a collegial community of practice in support of your cultural sustainability work.

### Required Readings

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See the file called *Required Course Readings* under **Before the Semester** for a full list of the readings. Beyond listing the books to purchase, the document provides live links to the additional articles, reports, and websites required for each day. The books you will want to purchase are also available as Ebooks through the Goucher Library.

- Groth, Charlie. 2019. *Another Haul: Narrative Stewardship and Cultural Sustainability at the Lewis Family Fishery*. University Press of Mississippi.
- Kovach, Margaret. 2009. *Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations and Contexts*. Toronto: UT Press.

### Course Format

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This course combines synchronous and asynchronous learning over the course of a 16-week semester.

We will have a webinar orientation via Zoom a few weeks prior to the start of residency (TBD) to acquaint you with the course expectations. A link to the Zoom room can be found on our course website. Once the semester begins, we will meet 14 times via Zoom or Teams over the course of the 16-week semester. These class meetings will be 2 hours each, with a break in the middle to rest your eyes and brain. It is expected that students will have completed all the readings for each class.

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The course is designed to help you develop the final components of an annotated bibliography and groundwork paper articulating your current ideas about the professional work you hope to do.

**Assignments:** Your final grade will be based on your demonstration of engagement and growth through the following elements of the course. See the separate *Schedule of Assignments* for details.

- Assigned readings (2 books, 14 articles/reports, and 3 websites) with additional readings of interest.
- 7 Asynchronous essays/postings with discussion; 1 reflection post
- 2 leadership facilitations
- 2 critical reviews of an article from the Additional Readings of Interest
- Regular journal writing
- 14 Zoom meetings; one advising session
- 1 Final Groundwork paper
- 1 partially annotated Bibliography of readings, online links, and other resources

### **Assignment Instructions: (Details can be found on the course website in the relevant module)**

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- *Participation (15% of your grade):* Participation is measured by your active engagement in discussions, in response to discussion forum posts, and during our Zoom meetings. Active engagement is understood as being present, asking relevant and thoughtful questions, and sharing your perspectives and experiences in ways that move the conversation forward. Examples include responding to something another student says (including answering a question asked by a student), constructively disagreeing with something in the text or said in class while honoring the right to differing opinions, encouraging contributions from students who are less vocal than you. Things to avoid include: not listening, pretending to be listening while texting or checking your social media, speaking without being recognized, dominating the conversation at the expense of other perspectives, making fun or otherwise berating something said by another person. My preference is to allow the conversation to flow naturally, but I will occasionally call on students who have not participated in the discussion.
- *Student Leadership Discussions (15% of grade):* Each student will facilitate a discussion about the readings assigned for a particular day. Pick 2 days for which you would like to lead that discussion. You might base this on the topic or the readings. Sign up for these sessions on the Student Leadership Page posted on the course website. It is under the module called **Before the Semester**. Follow the instructions to sign up BEFORE the semester begins. As a student leader, you will be responsible to:
  - a. Prepare and post in advance, a 5-10 minute presentation (using Studio or a Discussion Forum) of the key points in the readings and their connection to the topics for the day;

- b. After showing your presentation in class, facilitate a discussion on the key themes, issues and ideas that cut across all the articles for that day.

For this assignment, you will be assessed on your demonstrated ability to **analyze the readings, find the threads that connect them** to each other and to the topic for the day, **design effective questions** that generate a thoughtful conversation, and **summarize the key ideas** generated by the discussion with your peers.

- *Critical Reviews (2 per student – 5% of grade):* You will select two articles from among those listed as *Additional Readings of Interest* and write a critical analysis of one or two pages (see helpful hints for this review in the course website). Post your analysis to the Discussion Forum prior to the class for which it was assigned. Your classmates will have access to download the review for future reference. You may choose to select an article for the day you are facilitating, but it is not necessary. Either way, you will provide the class with a 5-minute overview of your review and how the article links to our topic for that day. For this assignment, you will be assessed on your **ability to think critically** about what you are reading; to **understand the key ideas** being presented in the reading, to **analyze and interpret those key ideas**, understand their implications for your work, and **apply them to cultural sustainability**.

4. *Discussion Forums (30% of grade):* Write (7) Discussion Forum posts of varying lengths (between 300 and 600 words each) responding to prompts about specific questions or readings assigned during the residency or online. These may be in-class or online. You will post these to the assigned Discussion Forum (as directed) on the course website. The 8<sup>th</sup> discussion post is a reflection and is ungraded. See detailed instructions for each Discussion Forum assignment within the appropriate module in Canvas. Your posts are designed to develop your thinking for the final paper and serve as drafts for various sections of the Groundwork paper. They might include the following.

- Introductions to websites and other resources of value to your work
- Thoughtful reflections and critical responses on the readings
- Discussion of substantive questions raised by the readings
- Reflective mini essays on themes that pertain to leadership in your particular community of interest

Discussion Forum activities include submitting the required postings, reading your classmates entries and offering thoughtful comments. Your responses should provide constructive critiques that will help your peers improve and advance their work. Think about the Discussion Forum as if you are having a conversation in the classroom. Talk with each other, be respectful of each other's ideas, critique without criticizing, use a professional writing style, stay on topic, and participate in a timely manner so others can read your work and respond. Tip: Write your response in a word document before you post. This allows you to review your response before you "go live" so you can check for spelling, tone, and quality. Then use cut-and-paste to post your final response. Because most of these posts are drafts for the final paper, consider the following questions as you read them.

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- What is the biggest unresolved question in this post?
- What do you want to read more about in this essay?
- What are the essay's biggest strengths?

**Your comments to your peers should include at least** one of the following:

- Share and/or compare a connection with a peer's response.
- Explore a difference of opinion related to a peer's response.
- Exchange resources and information related to a peer's response.
- Generate a solution to a problem related to a peer's response.

**Your comments to peers should have the following effect** on the discussion:

- Broaden the scope of the discussion.
- Reference assigned readings or other resources.
- Communicate respectfully with those who express dissenting views.
- Promote sustained dialogue with peers.
- Demonstrate ability to provide feedback to peers.

Please be aware that all of your postings and responses are contributing to your discussion forum and participation grades. I will read the responses but, just as in the classroom, I may not respond to every post. I will engage as we would in the classroom, offering resources or additional insights, pushing you a little further, and keeping you on track. Your participation will be assessed on the basis of Content, Critical Thinking, Originality, and Professionalism. See the Discussion Forum Rubric for clarification of these terms. Grades for each Discussion Forum assignment will be posted in the Grade Book within four days of the closing of that Discussion.

- *Bibliography (15% of grade)*: Compile a research bibliography of at least 50 sources including at least 12 annotations. See instructions in the Canvas modules. You will have an opportunity to submit a sample annotation to make sure you are on track.
- *Final Paper (20% of grade)*: Complete a Groundwork Paper of 12-15 pages (double spaced), that describes and discusses the topics, themes, issues, and community or communities in which you would like to work. See instructions in the Canvas modules. See the Writing Rubric to know how your paper will be assessed.
- *Portfolium (no grade)*: Familiarize yourself with Portfolium (accessible in Canvas), create your e-Portfolio account, and begin adding information and artifacts that reflect your work in the MACS program. Your portfolio reflects your best work in the program and is one the assessment tools used to clear you for graduation. Get in the habit of returning to it at the end of each semester and posting your best work for that semester.

## Grading

Course Elements – all are graded on a scale of 1 – 100 points	Percent of Final Grade	Late Work
Participation -- includes attending all course-related activities, engaging in class discussions, responding to your classmates' discussion forum posts, and participating in Zoom meetings.	15%	3 points deducted for any missed class without prior approval
Session Leadership – Discussion Facilitation (2 sessions; 5% each)	15%	N/A
Session Leadership – 2 Critical Reviews of an Article (2.5% each)	5%	1 point deducted for each day late; 2-day grace period with advance notice.
Discussion Forum posts with feedback (5% each)	30%	2 points deducted for each day late on a discussion post or feedback; 2-day grace period with prior approval
Final Annotated Bibliography	15%	3 points deducted for each day late
Final Groundwork paper	20%	3 points deducted for each day late
<b>TOTAL</b>	100%	

## Grading Scale

A	93 or more points	Completed all work With Excellence
A-	90 - 92 points	Completed all work but may have missed one assignment or class
B+	87 - 89 points	Completed most of the work, needs some improvement
B	83 - 86 points	Completed most assignments, missing some elements
B-	80 - 82 points	Completed most assignments, missed more than one class or assignment
C+	77 - 79 points	Completed a majority of assignments, did not attempt improvement
C	73 - 76 points	Completed a majority of assignments, did not attempt improvement, missing work
C-	70 - 72 points	Several incomplete assignments, not well presented, did not attempt improvement
F	69 points or below	Majority Incomplete, no effort for improvement

## Grading Rubrics

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Assignments during the semester will be graded on a scale of 1-100. The following thumbnail sketch outlines the expectations for performance in this class. Please refer to the Grading Agreement for more information about how your final grade will be determined.

**A:** Excellent attendance and participation in class activities, thoughtful feedback consistently offered to classmates in peer reviews and comments, all work turned in on time, discussion and informal writings are excellent in quality overall, comprehensive, creative, and make contributions that move the learning forward. The writing and discussion shows serious engagement with the material, including thoughtful introspection on field encounters, detail, good observation, and respect for diverse ideas. Oral presentation of work is compelling, serious and insightful.

Work in the A range demonstrates a high degree of mastery over the material and advances an interesting, arguable thesis. It establishes a clear rationale or motive to suggest why the thesis is original or worthwhile; employs a logical and progressive structure; analyzes evidence insightfully and in depth; draws from well-chosen sources; and is written in a clear, sophisticated style. All claims contribute to developing the idea, exploring its complexities (raising interesting complications) and subtleties of interpretation. The essay progression matches the essay's purpose with elegance of expression. Imagination is demonstrated in the carving out of topic and the development of the thesis. No errors of grammar, usage, punctuation, or typography will be found. By definition, the grade of "A" is reserved for superior work, and in the context of this program, such work may actually break new ground or represent truly original ideas.

**B:** No problems with attendance, good participation in class discussions and in peer feedback. B-level participation consists of less insightful and less detailed comments to peers; exercises and journals are judged to be good in quality overall. Oral presentation is adequate. Participation that is B level often does not demonstrate a willingness to take intellectual risks, to expand or challenge one's perspective, or to offer contributions that moves the conversation forward. May receive Incomplete as a grade, with the option for resubmitting.

An essay in the B-range may present an interesting idea in an organized manner, with carefully laid-out claims and well-chosen use and placement of examples and evidence. The language is clear and effective, with no pervasive errors of sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, or usage. The B-range essay's weaknesses generally relate to what has not been done sufficiently; namely, the thesis may not be especially ambitious or be fully focused; claims may not be fully elaborated; analysis or interpretation may stop short or not go deeply enough. Some sentence structures may be repetitive or wooden. A B-range essay is one that may be ambitious but only partially successfully, or one that achieves modest aims well. May receive Incomplete as a grade, with the option for resubmitting.

**C:** Participation in class and in peer review work is absent without prior notice, mediocre or weak, showing little enthusiasm for thinking critically; exercises are judged to be only passable in quality overall. Forum entries and journals are perfunctory. Oral presentation is lackadaisical. A C-range paper resembles a B-range paper in some ways, but may also feature a confusing, simple, or descriptive thesis. It may provide a simplistic motivation or none at all; lack a coherent structure; fail to present enough evidence, or present evidence that is insufficiently analyzed. Resources may be used without properly contextualizing or citing them; and be written in a generally unclear, simplistic, or technically flawed style.

**F:** The bulk of a student's participation is substandard, student misses class more than permitted, does not turn in work at all or on time. Discussion forum entries and journaling are disrespectful of the process. Unethical practice may be involved at all levels, and in the final research project in particular.

## Course Policies

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### **ACADEMIC ADVISING:**

Goucher's Success Advisors strive to promote student success by enhancing the academic advising and student support experiences of all Goucher College students. Every first-year student at Goucher is assigned a Success Advisor who works with each advisee from before they step foot on campus and remains a key contact point throughout their undergraduate career. <https://www.goucher.edu/learn/academic-support-and-resources/ace/success-advising/>

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:**

All final work products are to be the independent work of each student original to this course. Suspected violations of the [Academic Honor Code](#) will be referred to the Academic Honor Board.

### **ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES:**

Please inform your instructor about any accommodations you need to participate fully in the course. Goucher College makes reasonable academic accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Students requesting accommodations must make their request and provide appropriate documentation to the Office of Accessibility Services (OAS). Because classes change every semester, eligible students must obtain a new accommodation letter from the Disabilities Specialist every semester and review this letter with their professors so the accommodations can be implemented. The Director of OAS is available by appointment to answer questions and discuss any implementation issues you may have. For more information, please visit Goucher College's [Academic Accommodations](#) site.

### **COMMUNICATION:**

- Faculty will be available at their Goucher email address and will respond to queries within 24 hours.

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- Course participants are responsible for maintaining continuous involvement with faculty, fellow students and student groups. In particular, participation in all online discussions is required. Ongoing communication allows you to gain deeper insights into the content, activities and assignments in the course. Please give notice of any obstacle that prevents this.
- You are encouraged to ask questions whenever information needs clarifying.
- For questions pertaining to your assignments: send an email directly to the instructor (please do not post personal questions in a discussion forum).
- For questions about assignments that may be interesting and helpful to other class members: please use a discussion forum.
- For problems with technical aspects of the Canvas course website: chat with [Canvas Support](#).

### **E2CAMPUS EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION SYSTEM:**

In an ongoing effort to better disseminate information during emergencies and campus closings, Goucher has implemented the e2Campus Notification System. The notification system will only send information regarding emergencies and campus closings as text messages to your mobile phone. To receive these messages, you must be registered in the system. Click the following link for information about how to create your [E2Campus account](#).

### **GRADUATE VIRTUAL WRITING CENTER**

The Welch Center provides free writing support for all graduate students. Visit the [Graduate Virtual Writing Center](#) for information on requesting a writing tutor and accessing drop-in tutoring to assess and improve your academic writing. Services include:

- Initial writing assessment with free ongoing tutoring for up to four hours per semester
- Free drop-in tutoring for specific assignments
- Free half-semester writing course - GRW601: The Writing Studio

Writing assistance may include any or all of the following components: planning, organizing and using evidence in academic writing and thinking; making supported arguments; reading for content by workshopping writing; and proofreading, editing, revision, and reviewing writing for clarity and effectiveness.

### **INCLEMENT WEATHER:**

Online courses will not be cancelled for inclement weather when the college campus is closed. Students and faculty are expected to access their courses just as they would if the campus were open. Each faculty member and student is expected to have a contingency plan for attending online courses in case their primary computer is unavailable or out of service. Additionally, the online component of a residency or hybrid course is not affected when the college campus is closed for inclement weather, although if the residency or hybrid course has a face-to-face meeting scheduled on the closed campus, the meeting will be rescheduled for another day. The course instructor will notify students of the makeup day and time. Only in extreme situations, such as wide spread power outages, may exceptions to this policy be made by the Office of the

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Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs. In such severe cases, an official statement concerning online activities will be issued via normal emergency channels.

### **LATE POLICY:**

For proper graduate student learning to occur, pacing of content mastery is critical. Therefore, assignments are to be completed on time. If extreme circumstances prevent an assignment to be completed in a timely fashion, please **notify me before the assignment is due** so a new date can be negotiated. You will have a two-day grace period to complete the work. Only follow-ups completed by the due date can be accepted. Late assignments without such notification will be docked according to the chart above.

### **LIBRARY:**

Our librarians help students through the research process: choosing a research topic, accessing different search tools, finding information sources, and evaluating sources. There is a lot of information out there and librarians can help you sort through it. Get started with your research by visiting the library homepage at <https://www.goucher.edu/library/>; and/or get help from librarians via email: [library@goucher.edu](mailto:library@goucher.edu), text: 410-609-5539, or schedule a research appointment using this link: <https://libraryguides.goucher.edu/researchappointment>.

### **MISSED WORK:**

You are responsible for material covered in the course. It is your sole responsibility to obtain any materials missed. You are expected to attend all Zoom meetings and will lose participation points if you miss one, unless you notify the instructor at least 48 hours **in advance**. Advanced notice will allow us to record the meeting for future review.

### **NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY:**

Goucher College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, sex, age, disability, marital status or genetic information in its programs and activities. The college has adopted a [Nondiscrimination Policy](#). Further details and contact information for the college's Title IX coordinator can be found on [Goucher's Nondiscrimination Notice and Policy page](#).

### **RELIGIOUS OBSERVATION POLICY:**

If you need to request accommodation for religious observance, fill out the [Religious Observation Form](#) and submit it to your instructor as soon as possible and at least two weeks before the observance. If you communicate in a timely manner and complete any mutually agreed upon make-up work, any such absences or schedule changes will be excused and will not adversely affect your grade.

### **RESOURCES:**

Students in Goucher College's graduate programs are provided with and encouraged to use the following resources:

- [Academic Accommodations](#)
- Academic Assistance and Advising - contact your program director

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- [Scott Farquhar](#) Financial Aid Counselor  
410-337-6142
  - [Career Education](#)
  - [Student Support and Outreach - Cameron Cox](#)
  - [Writing Center](#)
  - [myGoucher](#) Registration, Classes, Schedules, Transcripts
  - [Distance Learning Resources](#)
  - Student Tutorials and Resource
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