

MINORS

SUSTAINABILITY MINOR

Our Mission:

Recognizing the innovative role artists and designers can play in solving pressing challenges, the Sustainability Minor provides students with a broad understanding of the social, political, economic and environmental issues impacting the future of humanity and our planet. Students will study and develop strategies and systems, as applicable to art and design, which can meet the needs of current generations without compromising those of future generations. Courses fulfill requirements in Integrated Learning and Liberal Arts and Sciences, as well as electives across all studio departments.

Participating Departments:

Program Learning Outcomes

Otis College Interdisciplinary Studies: Sustainability Minor Program Learning Outcomes are action words describing our approach to learning, and what we commit to our students.

Sustainability Minor Students Will:

Grow

Sustainability Minor student work will demonstrate: Disciplinary knowledge and skills Understanding and application of the practices, theories and science of sustainability. Proficiency in industry-standard skills, technologies, and processes • Capacity to identify and solve creative problems Proficiency in both creative and conventional research methodologies, including material and form exploration, interviewing, observation, and data analysis to define, investigate and solve sustainability-related problems from multiple perspectives. Cross-disciplinary awareness and practice • Audience-focused research, historical context, and field-specific discourse Understanding of the social, political, economic and environmental issues that impact the future of our planet and all its inhabitants, and the role artists and designers can play in securing sustainable futures.

Dare

Sustainability Minor student work will demonstrate: Innovation • Experimentation and play • Challenge to the status quo Produce works of art and design that address or solve sustainability issues in ways that are innovative, environmentally conscious, socially responsive, culturally relevant, and economically viable. Bravery in their work and their interactions with others Bravery in using their positions as artists and designers to advocate for a more just and sustainable world.

Reflect

Sustainability Minor student work will demonstrate: Capacity to communicate (orally, written, and/or visually) about their practice Ability to clearly articulate the relationship between their major and sustainability concerns and how these studies will help them achieve personal and professional goals. Capacity to seek, assemble, evaluate, and ethically apply information and ideas from diverse sources Including data and evidence that support their arguments for social and environmental change. Analysis of both ethical and aesthetic impacts of art and design Evaluate the impacts of human actions, including one's creative practice, on the environment and other beings.

Connect

Sustainability Minor student work will demonstrate: Understanding of themselves as parts of a larger whole made up of human and non-human beings. Understanding the interconnectedness of everything on the planet, advocating for equitable access to resources and opportunities for all members of society, human and non-human. Awareness of positionality – in the world, their field, their communities. Understanding of how one's own lived experiences, geographic locations and cultures shape one's understanding of sustainability challenges locally and globally. Ability to work well, collaborate, and build relationships across differences in identity, perspective, aesthetics and disciplines Collaboratively using art and design to solve complex problems related to issues of social and environmental justice. Integration of skills and concepts: Successfully integrate skills, information and concepts between their majors and Sustainability minor, while understanding and articulating their positionality in their chosen fields.

Shine

Sustainability Minor student work will demonstrate: Ability to define aspirations, future goals and their role within the creative economy. Defined aspirations, future goals and their role within the creative economy through the lens of sustainability. Awareness of audience and ability to cultivate relationships with others in their chosen fields. Compelling presentation and exhibition skills, through Annual Exhibition, Capstone, and portfolios. Successful completion of sustainable and impactful projects that resonate with specific audiences and promote meaningful dialogue and action. Career readiness, as evidenced by strong interpersonal skills, self-advocacy, adaptation, autonomy, initiative, and willingness to both receive and offer feedback. Ability to take initiative, adapt, and contribute meaningfully to discussions and collaborations, while assessing strengths, weaknesses and areas for growth personally and professionally.

Course Descriptions

CAIL 201 - Human Ecology (3.00)

The course provides an introduction to the relationship among cultural, social, and ecological systems. A course goal is to advance awareness of how artists and designers can problem solve the issues collaboratively, beyond the confines of any one discipline. Required for Sustainability Minors. Online Partner: Transition Mar Vista *OLSY - 100% of instruction is online. Some online classes may also include 1 - 2 weeks of an on-campus meeting. A component of the instruction will require meeting virtually with the instructor the same day and time through the web-conference platform, Zoom. The virtual course contact will occur synchronously (at the same time).

NSCI 305 - Science Sustainable Design (3.00)

With the shift toward more sustainable forms of art and design, the task facing artists and designers is uniquely challenging from previous eras. Sustainable design is concerned with the processes and outcomes to meet a world that is growing increasingly conscious of the significant impacts of art and design on the world's ecological systems and humankind. Through a predominantly science-based approach, students will study approaches to sustainability including, but not limited to, climate change, biodiversity, biomimicry, cradle to cradle, and life cycle analysis. It will emphasize the interdisciplinary nature of sustainable design and how it is defined, measured and tracked, looking at concepts like design for use, dematerialization, substitution, localization, and design for reuse. Through a combination of online lectures and discussion, field trips and hands-on exercises students will learn about the broader issues of sustainability as they pertain to the global context, and also how as individuals they are personally affected by these issues on a daily basis. After providing a thorough scientific background to the subject of sustainability through case studies and activities looking at the natural world as inspiration for design-based problems and solutions, students will be asked to identify and explore a specific design based sustainable project of their own using the biomimetic solution concept. Through this process it is intended that they will begin to understand the relevance of

sustainability to the practice of art and design, and the necessity of its integration into their individual practices as they go forward in their career. Required for Sustainability minors.

LIBS 441 - Capstone: Sustainability (3.00)

The Sustainability Capstone is designed as a culmination of the Sustainability minor; it is an opportunity for students to synthesize what they learned in Human Ecology, Science & Sustainable Design, and their Sustainability electives by developing a research paper that addresses a topic related to their disciplinary field. The goal is to give students an opportunity to a) apply what they have learned and b) to have a clear sense of their knowledge and skills as a sustainability minor so that when they enter the workforce they can adequately speak to their specialization. Required for Sustainability Minors. A minimum grade of C- or better on the Capstone paper and course is required to pass. Students who earn a D will automatically be enrolled in the 1-unit Spring semester Continuation class to raise their grade to passing. *Prerequisite: CAIL201 Human Ecology - 3.0 credits, NSCI305 Science and Sustainable Design - 3.0 credits. Students who have a dedicated capstone for their major will complete one capstone course that combines both their major and minor.

SUST 299 - Sustainability Electives (3.00)

A limited choice of Creative Action, Liberal Arts and Sciences, and Studio Elective courses across the college will count towards the Sustainability minor Electives, as determined each semester by the Interdisciplinary Studies Director, Sustainability Minor Area Head, and Department Chairs. Examples include Photographing an Inconvenient Truth, Call to Action, and Post-Apocalypse, Otis Goes Green, Costal Stories, Human Nature, Futuristic Foodways and Avoiding Climate Change.

SUST 299 - Sustainability Electives (3.00)

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Electives

Course Title	Course Number	Credits
Human Ecology	CAIL 200	3.00
Science & Sustainable Design	NSCI 305	3.00
ST: Design Lab	INTR 330	3.00
Collaborating with Catastophy	CAIL 301	3.00
Rise Above Plastics	CAIL 301	3.00
Birding in Winged Los Angeles	CAIL 301	3.00
Phot Genres: Steal This Class	PHOT 335	3.00
ST: Sustainability	SUST 300	3.00
Otis Goes Green	CAIL 301	3.00
Artists &Environmental Justice	SSCI 210	3.00
Human Nature	LIBS 314	3.00
Food Memoir	LIBS 314	3.00
Food & Community Garden	CAIL 200	3.00
Trees in Paradise	CAIL 200	3.00

Elective Descriptions

CAIL 200 - Human Ecology (3.00)

Course Catalog Description: The course introduces the relationship among cultural, social, and ecological systems. A course goal is to advance awareness of how artists and designers can problem-solve the issues collaboratively, beyond the confines of any one discipline. Required for Sustainability Minors. Creative Action/Integrated Learning (CAIL) Statement (another overseeing department) Creative Action is an integrated learning program that introduces students to compelling social and environmental issues within their community through a series of core courses. We partner with local and international community organizations to identify and solve real-world environmental problems and social issues. In a project-based course, you'll engage your research, leadership, and collaboration skills with a multidisciplinary team of classmates. Art and design fields are increasingly being called upon to address nontraditional, complex projects and issues. Our program provides every student with academic experiences that contextualize the multidisciplinary nature of the modern workplace through collaborative teamwork and community engagement. Interdisciplinary Studies - Sustainability Minor Statement (another overseeing department): Recognizing the innovative role artists and designers can play in solving pressing challenges, the Sustainability Minor provides students with a broad understanding of the social, political, economic, and environmental issues that impact the future of humanity and our planet. Students study and develop strategies and systems, as applicable to art and design, which can meet the needs of current generations without compromising those of future generations. Courses fulfill requirements in Creative Action and Liberal Arts and Sciences, as well as electives across all studio departments.

NSCI 305 - Science & Sustainable Design (3.00)

With the current shift toward more sustainable forms of art and design, contemporary artists and designers are uniquely challenged by issues unfamiliar to artists in previous eras. Sustainable design is concerned with the processes and outcomes needed to respond to the growing consciousness surrounding various impacts of art and design on the world's ecological systems and humankind. Through predominantly science-based methods, students will study approaches to sustainability including, but not limited to climate change, biodiversity, biomimicry, cradle to cradle, and life cycle analysis. Content will emphasize the interdisciplinary nature of sustainable design and how it is defined, measured, and tracked by looking at concepts like

design for use, dematerialization, substitution, localization and reuse. Note: At least a 1/3 of instruction (5-8 weeks) is delivered online rather than via face-to-face contact. The virtual course contact will occur asynchronously (not at the same time). Required for Sustainability Minors.

INTR 330 - ST: Design Lab (3.00)

Upper division studio courses that facilitate student work across media, genres and disciplines, while also developing skills in interdisciplinary thinking in a supportive community. Topics vary each semester. Examples include: Design Lab, Interdisciplinary Practices, Interdisciplinary Career Pathways Fulfills studio electives.

CAIL 301 - Collaborating with Catastrophy (3.00)

In line with disaster design projects such as the 2008 Post-Disaster Design Competition in which New York City sought innovative ideas for providing provisional housing for residents who may lose their homes as the result of a catastrophic coastal storm, Collaborating w/ Catastrophe: Disaster Design will engage in a site-specific, conceptually dynamic approach to disaster design. This course will take into consideration pre-disaster and post-disaster potentials and engage a variety of design processes to develop emergency housing solutions, survival products or other cultural engagements with how we, as a society, cope with catastrophe. Students will be put into work groups that take into account varied experiences and skill sets. These work groups will spend the first part of the semester doing research into the cultural ideas surrounding disaster. Field trips to outside sites and institutions, such as the El Segundo Fire Department, are planned so that students will have a chance to meet with individuals and organizations involved with "disaster". The same groups will then begin the design process of their final projects, which will be completed by the end of the semester.

CAIL 301 - Rise Above Plastics (3.00)

Students develop creative ideas and strategies to support the mission of the class partner to help reduce global single-use plastic pollution and microplastics from cosmetics and textiles. The class will educate students in understanding how plastic pollution fits into the broader issues of social and environmental justice, climate change, and the context of the gas and oil industries. Starting with research on the impact plastic trash has on our local oceans, wildlife, and communities, they will then work in multidisciplinary teams to develop and execute project proposals to educate and encourage the reduction, reuse, and refusal of single-use plastics such as plastic bags, bottles, and packaging and create awareness around microplastic and nanoplastic pollution.

CAIL 301 - Birding in Winged Los Angeles (3.00)

Birding is exploding in popularity, and the city of Los Angeles is well positioned as a bird's paradise with 500+ native species recorded, more than any county in the United States. But bird populations are under threat. The 2025 US State of the Birds reported continued widespread declines in American bird populations across all mainland and marine habitats, with 229 species requiring urgent conservation action, including the much-loved Allen's hummingbird found nesting throughout Southern California. This class will explore and learn about the birds of Los Angeles, their habitats, and habits, and will partner with a local Audubon organization to promote and support conservation efforts for LA's feathered friends.

PHOT 335 - Phot Genres: Steal This Class (3.00)

What is appropriation, and what are its rules? Who is permitted to borrow from whom? At what point does imitation become theft, and reuse into ripping-off? Is the "taking" of a photograph ever not an apprehension of something else? Is there even such a thing as an original? In this class, we will search out society's rules in order to break them. Students will investigate the long legacies of appropriation, citation, parody, and pastiche within photography and fine art, and find new frontiers of possibility. We will embezzle each other, ourselves, and our favorite photographic forebears. We will consider how context and gesture have the unique power to "move us to tears." Students will be expected to produce and share presentations on relevant artists, generate their own work in response to thematic assignments, and contribute to group discussions.

SUST 300 - ST: Sustainability (3.00)

Come collaborate with and learn from fungi, algae, yeast, bacteria, and other living materials in this new hands-on studio class. Study with artists and designers working with a range of biomaterials to create living textiles, sustainable building materials, bio pigments, and multimedia interspecies installations. Hands-on workshops will include mycelium brickmaking, bioplastic textiles, SCOBY leather, botanical ink making, and digital sonification. Where possible, students will work with site-specific materials gathered from Otis' campus and the surrounding community to enrich our engagement with our local ecosystem. Students will be introduced to experimental methods and processes throughout the class and empowered to develop their own material recipes through research and experimentation. Students will apply the knowledge they gain in class to develop art and design proposals using their own biomaterials. Class will culminate with an exhibition of student work.

CAIL 301 - Otis Goes Green (3.00)

This course provides art and design students with the knowledge and tools needed to make ecodesign an integral part of the design process. Students in this course will have an opportunity to discuss Green Design with top Green Designers and work with Otis College's Environmental Steering Committee to create green solutions for the campus. We believe it is at the design education level where we have the best opportunity to create a sustainable future. Sustainability minor elective. Partner: Environmental Steering Committee, Otis College

SSCI 210 - Artists & Environmental Justice (3.00)

Do artists have a role to play in discussions of climate change, toxic waste in BIPOC communities, and police violence against Black Americans? You bet they do! In fact, artists have historically been on the forefront of change-making actions, and we explore these activist stances through the lens of critical environmental justice studies. This course provides foundational ideas that a) inform an understanding of the interconnections between environmental and social causes, but also b) inspire action. It is important for students to a) learn how to inform themselves and b) develop confidence to take action in support of human and more-than-human rights, equity for all, and earth care. This course aims to empower everyone in class to take action for change whether that be individual daily actions or public art practice and installations. In turn, this class seeks to inform, but also to give students practical tools for application. The class is divided into three parts; the first 4 weeks students learn about the environmental justice movement in the United States, who the leaders of the movement have been, and what issues were championed. Next, students are placed in groups so they can select a case study to research and report on to the class. Lastly, students apply what they have learned to the development of an artistic intervention they can do to address an environmental justice concern in their own communities. An informed artist is a liberated artist with the power to take action for change whether big or small. Sustainability minor elective. Modality: OLAY *OLAY - This course provides 100% of instruction online. Some online classes may also include 1 - 2 weeks of an on-campus meeting. Students will work independently for a predetermined set of time to complete coursework by the due date. The virtual course contact will occur asynchronously (not at the same time)

LIBS 314 - Human Nature (3.00)

Western culture's relationship with nature is one of exploitation, conquest, industry, and waste, but it's also empowerment, mythology, conservation, and wonder. In Human Nature, LIBS 314, students examine their own relationship with the natural world. How do fiction, film, science, industry, religion, politics, and advertising shape our connection to our environment and our selves? By studying fiction from indigenous and environmentalist authors as well as cross-genre film about nonhuman species, we will see how stories shape our relationship with nature. From the sustainability and environmental justice movements, we will identify our particular concerns about the planet and make strides to recover our birthright: moving from estrangement with the natural world to integration, from despair to hope, from apathy to care. Or, if we already have a practice of climate resilience—we will fine tune our mission. We will compose narratives and analysis that demonstrate an understanding of how storytelling, language, and the visual realm inform our

many roles in this altering ecology. Finally, we will reflect on a plan for future engagement with the natural world, be it protective measures through civic engagement, integration through professional practice, or simply more time spent outdoors.

LIBS 314 - Food Memoir (3.00)

Food writer Michael Ruhlman says that two activities are unique to us as humans: cooking and storytelling. If you eliminate either of these activities from our lives, he says, our species will cease to exist, "So telling stories about food and cooking is not only natural, it's necessary for our survival." This online asynchronous course invites you to explore the food memoir and learn of its ability to present authentic stories about family and culture, history and nature, trauma and justice--all through the lens of food. You will examine food autobiographies in various formats--such as books, essays, articles, comics and graphic novels--written by authors of diverse backgrounds. By semester's end, you will write and workshop a collection of personal stories of your own that use food as a vehicle for storytelling.

CAIL 200 - Food & Community Garden (3.00)

Food and Urban Gardening: Food justice is defined by three principles: 1. Access to fresh, healthy, locally grown, and culturally appropriate food 2. Living wages and fair working conditions for all food system workers 3. Community control over food systems, through community-based agriculture, cooperatives, faith-based initiatives, etc (Los Angeles Community Garden Council). Moreover, food justice as a theoretical concept recognizes that "food choice" is impacted by intersecting factors such as race, class, and gender at all levels: production, distribution, and consumption. A food justice framework shows how inadequate access to nutritious and whole food options leads to chronic ailments that could be prevented if people had affordable, healthy choices in their neighborhoods. Corporate control of food, along with real estate practices, have contributed to the development of food deserts, which further impacts BIPOC women and children's right to access affordable and healthy food options. This class will therefore explore food justice through partnership with Holy Nativity Community Garden in Westchester, which has been helping to address food injustice since 2008. Through meetings with the garden manager/master gardener, students will learn why the garden was started, the community it serves, and other ways they contribute to food justice in the city. Students will use ethnographic fieldwork techniques (e.g., observation and mapping) to understand how the places where we live fundamentally impact our health. Fieldwork practices will be complemented by collaborative games and a group project that will challenge students to develop socially responsible, culturally relevant, and sustainable responses to food injustice in their communities.

CAIL 200 - Trees in Paradise (3.00)

"Trees in Paradise asks students to consider the landscaped and endemic history of California by researching both native and non-native trees and plants in local Los Angeles ecosystems. Through a series of fields trips, lectures and group research students will understand the role these plants and trees play in the current state of climate change in the state of California, and how we can manage them to help create an environmentally sustainable future for the state. Working with Friends of Ballona Wetlands, students will have the opportunity to take part in plant restoration and creek clean-up projects to protect one of LA County's only remaining wetlands and use their knowledge and skills to create tools to assist the organization in educating and raising awareness of the environmental importance of the Ballona wetlands and the restoration and preservation of native species. Partner: Helper Foundation"

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