

General Studies Gold Request Form

Consult the [General Studies Request FAQ](#) for more information and quick answers.

New permanent numbered courses must be submitted to the workflow in [Kuali CM](#) before a General Studies request is submitted here. The General Studies Council will not review requests ahead of a new course proposal being sent to the Senate.

Submission Information

College/School

New College of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences (CAS)

Department/School

School of Humanities, Arts, and Cultural Studies (CHUMARTCLT)

Submission Type

New Request

Requested Effective Date

Fall 2025

ASU Request

Is this request for a permanent course or a topic?

Permanent Course

Subject Code

WST

Course Number

469

Units/Credit Hours

3

Course Information

Enter the course catalog information, found in the [web course catalog](#) or [Kuali CM](#).

Course Title

Abject Bodies and the Politics of Trash (new proposed title: Trash Talk)

Course Catalog Description

Examines the possibilities inherent in "theorizing from the gutter"; looking at the world not from a lofty "Ivory Tower" but from the slime, the muck, the dumpster, the trash heap, the wasteland, the discarded and the downtrodden. Takes its theoretical framework from a radical 1960s manifesto called SCUM Manifesto by Valerie Solanas and from the French feminist philosophies of Julia Kristeva, who theorized the abject as a relationship with the grotesque that reveals the deep-seated fear of death. Uses these theoretical positions to examine trash, both abstractly and literally. Works through a variety of concepts ranging from actual trash, garbage, waste, toxic sludge, pollution and dirt, and tackles more abstract notions of trash such as the knowledge produced on the fringe in circuses, amusement parks, "trailer trash" zones, freak shows and the bodies of those marked as "Other" or different.

Enrollment Requirements (Prerequisites, Corequisites, and/or Antirequisites)

Prerequisite(s): ENG 102, 105, or 108 with C or better; minimum 36 hours; Credit is allowed for only AMS 469 or ETH 469 or JHR/MAS 598 (Abject Bodies and the Politics of Trash) or WST 469 OR Visiting University Student

Is this a crosslisted course?

Yes

List all crosslisted courses by subject code and number.

ETH 469, AMS 469

Is this course offered by (shared with) another academic unit?

No

Shared or Crosslisted Departments/Schools

School of Humanities, Arts, and Cultural Studies (CHUMARTCLT)

Statement of Support #1

Statement of Support #2

Statement of Support #3

No Response

No Response

No Response

If this course or topic already carries a different General Studies Gold (not Maroon) designation than the one being requested, please check this box.

General Studies Gold Designation Request

Requested Designation

Sustainability (SUST)

Attach a representative syllabus for the course, including course learning outcomes and descriptions of assignments and assessments.

[WST 469 SYLLABUS GENERAL STUDIES VERSION.pdf](#)

Sustainability (SUST)

The Sustainability requirement will provide students with an interdisciplinary understanding of socio-ecological systems in relation to global challenges and opportunities. The learning objectives emphasize systems thinking, where human and non-human systems are understood as intimately connected, with human actions affecting all life on a planet with limits and boundaries. Students should also become familiar with how cultural, political, economic, social, and ethical beliefs, practices and systems are related to and impact planetary systems. Students will use course concepts and systems and futures thinking to address contemporary questions or challenges.

Instructions: In the fields below, state the assignment, project, or assessment that will measure each learning outcome, and provide a description. The description should provide enough detail to show how it measures the learning outcome. If needed, more than one can be identified.

The proposal does not need to include all course assessments that measure a given learning outcome. The provided assessment should include sufficient detail to allow the subcommittee to make their evaluation. When appropriate, the same assessment can be listed for more than one learning outcome (e.g., a culminating project).

You may provide links to a document (Google Drive or Dropbox) that includes the relevant details for the assessment. Do not provide links to Canvas shells.

SUST Learning Outcome 1: Demonstrate an understanding of the earth and its ecosphere, including the measures that indicate their capacities and limits.

The Trash Bag Assignment fits this learning outcome. It asks students to move beyond considering trash as a theoretical or abstract entity, but instead as a concrete, material part of their everyday lives. It also emphasizes reducing trash production and asks students to generate specific measures to reduce their output of trash during the course of the assignment.

The description of the assignment is the following:

Trash bag assignment

As this course addresses issues related to metaphorical and literal trash, this assignment is designed to get you thinking about the more literal side of trash. There are three parts to this assignment. For the first part, you will collect the trash that you personally produce for two days and you should carry the bag of trash with you at all times for this 48-hour period. (We will all do this at the same time, from 4:30 PM on Saturday, September 24th to 4:30 PM on Monday, September 26th). This means that you will carry around every piece of trash you personally produce with the exception of used toilet paper and trash produced for your workplace (e.g., gloves if you work as a nurse). Product wrappers (e.g., tampon wrappers, granola bar wrappers), anything produced as a result of the food you eat in or out of the home, and all personal trash items—cups, lids, straws, plastic bags, containers, cans, bottles, gum wrappers, Ziploc bags, packaging, mail, magazines, cigarette butts, tissues, napkins, paper towels, and any and all other trash items you produce must be carried by you for this 48 hour period and then brought to class on the designated day. You should be careful to produce the “normal” trash you typically produce for this period of time. You are also REQUIRED to carry your trash to social events, work, other classes you may attend, and throughout your house as you move from room to room (as needed). You should not leave the house without your bag of trash for this 48-hour period. You will then bring this bag of trash to class when we meet on Zoom and present it, somewhat formally, in our collective “display of trash.” This presentation will require you to assess what your trash production reveals about your habits, needs, lifestyle, and consumption habits.

Part two of this assignment will be a 48-hour period of time where you consciously attempt to produce as little trash as possible. During these two days, you will try earnestly to use as little as possible and to produce trash minimally. This may take some preparation ahead of time so that you have reusable items on hand. We will all do this at the same time, from 4:30 PM on Saturday, October 1st to 4:30 PM on Monday, October 3rd. Please bring your bag of trash to class when we meet on Zoom again on October 3rd and present it to the class, assessing the difficulty/ease of limiting your consumption and trash production habits.

After showing the class your trash on these two occasions and “excavating” what you produce, your next task will be to write a 3-4 page single-spaced paper analyzing the predictable, surprising, and challenging aspects of this assignment. What sorts of trash were you conscious of producing and what sorts of trash were hidden or obscured? What trash did you feel the most shame or embarrassment about? What trash did you expect to produce more of? Less of? How does your production of trash map onto others’ production of trash? And, finally, identify at least three lifestyle changes you would like to make to produce less trash in your life? As sustainable living will become more and more important and necessary over time, what specific changes do you anticipate making? What could you reuse? What could you consume less of? What could you imagine going without? How could you rearrange your habits or sense of your own needs (or your family’s needs)? This paper is due to the Canvas link no later than Friday, October 7th at 5:00 PM.

SUST Learning Outcome 2: Trace historical impacts of a range of socio-economic, political or cultural choices on integrated human-environmental wellbeing.

The Redistribution of Resources Assignment fits this criteria, as students think about material inequality and resources related to trash, excess, waste, and human needs that are both socioeconomic, political, historical, and cultural in nature. The description of the assignment is as follows:

Redistribution of resources assignment

This assignment has as its central goal the redistribution of resources, specifically the redistribution of resources from “those who have too much” to “those who have too little.” One could, I suppose, nickname this assignment the “Robin Hood” assignment. Your task is not to merely academically analyze such practices, but to enact such practices directly in your community. You will be given a group of 3-4 students within which you will work and collaborate. Your task is to design a socioeconomic class based intervention where you purposefully redistribute resources. This could be a project where you contact grocery stores about their expired food policies and make sure that the food goes somewhere other than the dumpster. It could mean that you repurpose used clothing into reusable menstrual pads. It could mean that you redirect resources from your work (supplies, “excess” funds, and so on, depending on what your work place has too much of) and redistribute it to those who need it more. This should go far beyond simply giving money to those who need it (though that could be a part of it), and should instead show a social justice sentiment about the importance of equality about resources. Money is insufficient. The ideal intervention would require those with “too much” to go with less.

Please note that you should not engage in anything illegal or in anything that would jeopardize your health and safety in any way. Your task is to think about how to work on redistribution of resources on a number of fronts: policy changes, guerilla tactics, disguise, petitions, and so on. There are many ways to make resources more equitable and to deal with the notion of excess and imbalance. I want to see you get creative and to have a clear strategy about the political intervention you are doing.

You will write up this project as a group in the form of a 4-6 page single-spaced paper detailing: 1) the academic articles and scholarly texts that inspired your work; 2) the journalistic and newspaper/blog/online texts that inspired your work; 3) what your goal and motives were for your project; 4) what tactics you employed; 5) the setbacks and successes of the project (all should be documented as much as possible with photos and videos!!!), and 6) what you learned from this project. Please consider the socio-economic, political, historical, and cultural implications of how resources were redistributed in this assignment, and be sure to reference your learning about how

human choices influence our material environments. You will present to the class your work as well in the form of a 10 minute presentation on Zoom that should involve photos, PowerPoints, and videos. It should be stylish, interesting, succinct, and clearly show your goals, tactics, and outcomes of the project. The presentations will take place in class on Monday, November 14th, and the paper will be due the same date (by 12:00 PM) as the presentation, to be submitted online to the Canvas link.

SUST Learning Outcome 3: Envision pathways toward futures characterized by integrated human-environmental wellbeing.

The Trash Bag Assignment asks students both to assess their own trash practices, and visualize those concretely, and to engage in activities to actively reduce their production of trash and waste. This assignment asks students to envision ways to be better stewards of the environment and to hold themselves accountable for how their actions influence the production of trash. The description of the assignment is as follows:

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shame or embarrassment about? What trash did you expect to produce more of? Less of? How does your production of trash map onto others' production of trash? And, finally, identify at least three lifestyle changes you would like to make to produce less trash in your life? As sustainable living will become more and more important and necessary over time, what specific changes do you anticipate making? What could you reuse? What could you consume less of? What could you imagine going without? How could you rearrange your habits or sense of your own needs (or your family's needs)? Please envision ways to be better stewards of the environment and how you can hold yourselves accountable for how your actions influence the production of trash. This paper is due to the Canvas link no later than Friday, October 7th at 5:00 PM.

SUST Learning Outcome 4: Articulate an approach to addressing contemporary questions or challenges that employs concepts or practices of sustainability.

In both the midterm and final exams, students are asked questions that engage issues of addressing contemporary questions or challenges of sustainability. Some examples of these exam questions include:

Question 1

The Puente Hills landfill in Los Angeles has regularly held, until its closing, an "Earth Day Event" celebrating conservation and eco-friendly policies and practices. Monsanto, which was bought by Bayer, has put out numerous public relations documents about its "environmental responsibility," including this one: <https://www.bayer.com/en/sustainability>. Phillip Morris, a huge cigarette conglomerate, has frequently said it promotes smoking cessation as the best possible outcome: <https://www.pmi.com/who-we-are/designing-a-smoke-free-future>. Discuss these three examples of outright corporate hypocrisy and explain, using discussions, readings, lectures, and films, what these say about environmental justice, consumers/waste producers, sustainability practices, and the politics of "eco-friendliness." Next, outline some ideas for how to combat these blatant examples of corporate hypocrisy.

Question 2

Making serious changes in our production of waste often inspires, as Bea Johnson and her family found out, serious backlash, anger, and public skepticism. Pretend you are an environmental activist being asked by a reporter to explain to the public answers to the following questions. Keeping in mind a framework of sustainability, you should use language that is well informed and clearly related to our course materials but you should speak in a way that others could understand in the "lay public." Please still document your use of lectures/readings/films throughout your answer in parentheses.

- a) If plastic is so bad, as you allege, then why is everything "sanitary" wrapped in plastic? Isn't it unsanitary to not use straws, coverings, wrappers, and bags? Isn't plastic good for our health?
- b) Christmas should be a time of giving. If you're saying to cut back on Christmas trees, gift wrapping, presents, boxes, and cards, won't that ruin the meaning of Christmas?
- c) Studies have never definitively shown any differences between rBST milk and regular milk. It even says so on the milk labels. Why should I believe you that rBST is a problem? Independent studies have verified otherwise.

d) We can't worry about dioxin, garbage production, and air pollution because individuals can't make any differences. It has to come from corporations and government policies. What you and I do is not important. Wouldn't you agree?

Question 3

Conspicuous consumption may be one of the most serious pathologies of our time, revealing much about the relationship between people and interlocking systems of power and oppression. First explain what conspicuous consumption is and how you personally participate in it. Then, drawing from readings/lectures/discussions/films, critically analyze the following four examples in terms of what each form of conspicuous consumption says about gender/race/class/sexuality/nation and why this form of conspicuous consumption continues to exist:

- 1) Hummer vehicles
- 2) The city of New Delhi, India expressing pride at its ability to pollute without regulation (landing it a top spot as the world's most polluted city)
- 3) Stylish clothing (new designs each season) modeled during New York City's Fashion week
- 4) Vitamix blenders and Dyson vacuums

List all course-specific learning outcomes. Where appropriate, identify the associated SUST learning outcome(s) in brackets (see below for example). Note: It is expected that a majority of course-specific learning outcomes will be associated with a SUST learning outcome.

By the end of this semester, you should be able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding, via exams and writings, of how issues of sustainability intersect with ideas about social identities like race, class, gender, sexuality, and ability. [SUST LO2]
2. Be able to discuss the histories of abjection and the connection between affect/emotion and social inequalities.
3. Examine your own practices of producing trash as connected to both micro and macro issues of power and social hierarchies, just as you should also have a better understanding of how to reduce your production of trash and engage in more sustainable life practices. [SUST LO4]
4. Demonstrate an understanding of how resources and privileges are distributed throughout our culture, and how we can work to ensure more equitable practices of resource distribution. [SUST LO3]
5. Show critical engagement with how bodies marked as "Other" are socially constructed to have different access to power and privilege compared to those bodies marked as "typical" or "normative."

No Response

Form Submission - Proposer

Submitted for Approval | Proposer

Breanne Fahs - August 28, 2024 at 11:45 AM (America/Phoenix)

Department Approval

Sent Back

Morgan Johnson

James Corbeille - September 4, 2024 at 11:42 AM (America/Phoenix)

Sending back to update per faculty request

Form Submission - Proposer

Submitted for Approval | Proposer

Breanne Fahs - September 9, 2024 at 6:02 PM (America/Phoenix)

Department Approval

Approved

Morgan Johnson

James Corbeille - September 16, 2024 at 10:30 AM (America/Phoenix)

GSC Coordinator Review

Approved

Alicia Alfonso

April Randall - September 17, 2024 at 12:10 PM (America/Phoenix)

Assistant Vice Provost Review

Approved

Tamiko Azuma - September 17, 2024 at 12:52 PM (America/Phoenix)

All required components confirmed.

Pre-GSC Meeting

Approved

Alicia Alfonso

April Randall - September 17, 2024 at 2:55 PM (America/Phoenix)

Sustainability (SUST) Committee

Acknowledgement Requested

Kevin Dooley

Jose Lobo - September 22, 2024 at 9:58 PM (America/Phoenix)

The SUST subcommittee recommends revising and resubmitting the proposal. The subcommittee is concerned about using the same assignment for two different LOs and about the overall match between the learning outcomes and the content of the assignments.

Evan Berry

Treavor Boyer

General Studies Council Meeting

Waiting for Approval

Alicia Alfonso

April Randall

Registrar Notification

Notification

Courses Implementation

Implementation

Approval

Rebecca Flores

Lauren Bates

Alisha Von Kampen

Proposer Notification

Notification

Breanne Fahs

College Notification

Notification

James Corbeille

Morgan Johnson

ATCS Notification - ASU Course

Notification

Bryan Tinlin

Jessica Burns

Michele Devine

DARS Notification

Notification

Leticia Mayer

Peggy Boivin

EdPlus Notification

Notification

Sarah Shipp

Bronson Cudgel

Erica Green
