

## ***New course teaches sustainability***

By Evan Magura

*A new sustainability course teaches WMU students about sustainability-related topics in both an in-class setting and a real-world setting.*

[ENVS 3000: Introduction to Sustainability](#), according to the official course description, teaches students “the modern concept of sustainability.”

Steve Kohler, director of the [Environmental and Sustainability Studies Program](#) at Western Michigan University, said the course was first taught in the Fall 2014 semester. Kohler said the importance of teaching a course on sustainability is because that topic deals with issues, such as the increase in the human population, which has long-term repercussions.

“We have to think about future generations and long-term perspectives,” Kohler said.

[Lynne Heasley](#), an associate professor of Environmental and Sustainability Studies and History, said she understands the importance of providing a sustainability course for Western Michigan University students. Heasley said a sustainability course, such as ENVS 300, covers vital topics that affect the planet and people, including global warming and social justice/injustice.

“For students, I think of sustainability as being both a way of thinking and learning across disciplines and a more optimistic approach to the most important problems of our day,” Heasley said.

However, Heasley said one problem the concept of sustainability has is that it is not an easy concept to define.

“The concept of sustainability is hard to define for others who are not part of that community of thinkers, scholars, practitioners or community members,” Heasley said.

Considering the future of sustainability courses at Western, Heasley said she hopes new students will be interested to take the Introduction to Sustainability and other sustainability-related courses in future semesters.

“We would be thrilled to attract freshmen to these [classes],” Heasley said.

Also, Heasley said she hopes sustainability courses in the future will be available at multiple times provided that the resources are available.

“Yes, most departments like ours would love to be able offer additional sections of high-demand and high-impact courses, especially if there are resources to staff these courses while still meeting the needs of all our students,” Heasley said.

Heasley said Western Michigan University, as a university, has a duty to the students to teach them about sustainability. The reason is because problems, such as global warming, affect our future, she said.

“Universities have a profound responsibility to guide our students towards those hard but improved futures,” Heasley said.