



Global Sustainability and Earth Literacy Studies (GSELS) Learning Network
A Collaborative Effort of Miami Dade College's
Earth Ethics Institute (EEI) and Institute for Civic Engagement and Democracy (iCED)

The Global Sustainability and Earth Literacy Studies (GSELS) Learning Network is a curriculum enhancement designed to create communities of engagement in support of the following Miami Dade College (MDC) Learning Outcomes:

- #3—Solve problems using critical and creative thinking and scientific reasoning
- #5—Demonstrate knowledge of diverse cultures, including global and historical perspectives
- #6—Create strategies that can be used to fulfill personal, civic, and social responsibilities
- #7—Demonstrate knowledge of ethical thinking and its application to issues in society
- #10—Describe how natural systems function and recognize the impact of humans on the environment

GSELS provides inclusive educational opportunities for the Miami Dade College community to explore **Earth Literacy, global citizenship, ecological sustainability, and civic engagement** through understanding **planetary challenges and by developing values, skills, and behaviors that promote prosperity and communities of well-being**. In addition, GSELS will share successful processes that can serve as a national model.

Guiding Philosophy and the Eight Characteristics of a 21st Century Engaged Global Citizen

GSELS draws on several international documents, including the **four pillars of life-long learning** detailed by UNESCO, **The Earth Charter**, and Thomas Berry's "**12 Principles of Understanding the Universe and the Role of the Human in the Universe Process.**" Additionally, GSELS is grounded in **environmental, sustainability and global education concepts, as well as the principles of ecology**. GSELS course criteria provide the basics to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to be 21st century engaged citizens, including these eight guiding principles of global citizenship (from a consensus of experts in nine countries, East and West, as cited in *Sustainable Education* by Stephen Sterling):

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| 1. Looking at problems in a global context | 5. Solving conflicts non-violently |
| 2. Working cooperatively and responsibly | 6. Changing lifestyles to protect the environment |
| 3. Accepting cultural differences | 7. Defending human rights |
| 4. Thinking in a critical and systemic way | 8. Participating in political process |

Faculty Participation: Once a faculty member has taken one EEI/Center for Institutional and Organizational Learning (CIOL) workshop or meets any of the criteria below, he/she may designate a course(s) as part of the GSELS Learning Network. The faculty member then has three years to earn GSELS certification. To be GSELS certified, faculty will fulfill ONE of the following requirements:

- Complete 36 hours of EEI/CIOL workshops, including a minimum of 4 hours of EEI/CIOL Faculty Immersion
- Complete any Earth Literacy/sustainability graduate class in collaboration with EEI (offered by FIU or STU)
- Demonstrate an expertise in Earth Literacy and/or sustainability through publishing, course creation, etc.
- Faculty may also be certified by the EEI director or the Earth Ethics Institute National Advisory Board.

There are two levels of class designation in GSELS:

1. **GSELS-focused courses** will address all course objectives through the lens of GSELS criteria. These courses will concentrate on key components of sustainability, including social, economic, and environmental dimensions, or examine an issue or topic using sustainability as a lens.
2. **GSELS-related courses** will include at least one module addressing GSELS criteria. These courses might incorporate GSELS principles as a distinct course component or module, or they might concentrate on a single sustainability principle or issue.

Faculty who teach a GSELS-designated course agree to promote and explain to students how to participate in the GSELS Learning Network. Experienced GSELS faculty may serve as mentors; contact the EEI director if you are interested.

Criteria for inclusion in a GSELS course:

In order to determine if a section of a course qualifies for designation as GSELS-focused or GSELS-related, faculty will assess whether the course section helps students build skills and act on at least three of the 20 objectives below.

Students will be able to:

1. Explain the principles and ethical implications of the Earth Charter.
2. Describe the roles of personal and social responsibility in protecting Earth's abundance and beauty for future generations.
3. Justify the significance of upholding the right of all living beings to a natural and social environment supportive of dignity, health and well-being in bringing about global sustainability.
4. Describe the relationship between respect for Earth, including life in all its diversity, and human and/or ecological health.
5. Explain how cultural diversity, tolerance, compassion, nonviolence and peace contribute to global sustainability.
6. Outline the history of Earth and the evolution of life.
7. Examine situations and issues from a systemic perspective.
8. Explain how feedback loops affect systems.
9. Explain how humans can learn from nature to create resilient and efficient solutions.
10. Discuss how access to education, health care and economic prosperity affect global sustainability.
11. Illustrate how uncontaminated air, water, and soil are fundamental to healthy living systems.
12. Analyze the interdependence of society, economics, and nature at local, regional, and global levels.
13. Discuss the relationship between poverty, ethics, health, society, and the environment.
14. Compare and contrast human actions and attitudes toward the community of life and their impact on global well-being.
15. Evaluate economic activity and institutions by their contribution to society in the larger ecological context.
16. Diagnose/research the impact of human activities on living systems, with consideration for these systems' limits, complexity, and diversity.
17. Explain the precautionary principle and identify how it can be employed to prevent unintended impacts on human and/or ecological systems.
18. Document democratic principles that enhance global sustainability and peace.
19. Apply knowledge to engage in behavior that fosters ecological sustainability.
20. Display personal and social responsibility toward achieving global sustainability through service learning/civic engagement.

Student Participation: Once a student is registered in a GSELS-designated course, he/she will have access to the GSELS Learning Network, a group of participating faculty and students college-wide. Students may search for [GSELS-designated courses](#) on the EEI website.

GSELS Scholar Recognition: Students may apply for **GSELS Scholar** designation once they have met the following requirements:

- Complete at least 12 credits in GSELS courses, of which a minimum of 3 credits must be GSELS-focused
- Earn a minimum grade of 'B' in their GSELS courses
- Complete a service learning/civic engagement project (10 hour minimum) related to your GSELS studies and registered through MDC's iCED office

Students are also encouraged to create an electronic portfolio of course work, syllabi, and other GSELS-related accomplishments, with assistance from the GSELS community. Students should contact GSELS Campus Coordinators with any questions about GSELS procedures or requirements.

For more information on GSELS, visit www.earthethicsinstitute.org/GSELSHome.asp