



GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY AND EARTH LITERACY STUDIES (GSELS) LEARNING NETWORK

A Collaborative Changemaking Initiative at Miami Dade College

The **Global Sustainability and Earth Literacy Studies (GSELS) learning network** is a curriculum enhancement supporting 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.**

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

GSELS draws on several important documents, including UNESCO's the **four pillars of life-long learning, The Earth Charter**, and Thomas Berry's "**12 Principles of Understanding the Universe and the Role of the Human in the Universe Process.**" GSELS is grounded in **environmental sustainability and global education concepts, as well as ecological principles.** GSELS course criteria foster the acquisition of the knowledge and skills needed to be 21st century engaged citizens, including these **eight guiding principles of global citizenship** (Sustainable Education, Sterling, S. 2001):

1. Looking at problems in a global context
2. Working cooperatively and responsibly
3. Accepting cultural differences
4. Thinking in a critical and systemic way
5. Solving conflicts non-violently
6. Changing lifestyles to protect the environment
7. Defending human rights
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, they may designate GSELS classes, with the understanding that they will complete the GSELS certification process within three years. **GSELS certification is based upon fulfilling just ONE of the following:**

- 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 GSELS Class Designation:

GSELS-Focused

These classes will address all course objectives through the lens of GSELS criteria. They will concentrate on key components of sustainability, including social, economic, and environmental dimensions, or examine an issue or topic using sustainability as a lens.

GSELS-Related

These classes will include at least one module addressing GSELS criteria. They 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 GSELS-designated classes agree to promote the program and explain to students how to participate in the GSELS learning network. Experienced GSELS faculty may serve as mentors. Please contact the EEI director if you are interested.

GSELS Criteria for Inclusion:

Faculty will include a minimum of three GSELS Criteria for Inclusion in each GSELS class section. These criteria serve as GSELS learning outcomes or objectives.

1. Explain the principles and ethical implications of the Earth Charter.
2. Describe the roles of personal and social responsibility in securing Earth's resources and beauty for present and future generations.
3. Defend the rights to dignity and health of all living beings and/or the ecosystems in which they are embedded.
4. Explain how respect for Earth and biodiversity is essential for human and ecological health.
5. Explain how cultural diversity, inclusion, compassion, nonviolence and peace are critical for global sustainability.
6. Outline the history of Earth, the evolution of life, and humanity's place in this timeline.
7. Analyze situations and issues from a holistic systems thinking perspective.
8. Explain how biomimicry can inform resilient, sustainable solutions.
9. Consider how access to education, healthcare and economic prosperity are important for global sustainability.
10. Illustrate how uncontaminated air, water, and soil are fundamental to healthy ecosystems.
11. Analyze the interdependence of society, cultural diversity, the economy, and the environment.
12. Describe how ethics influences poverty, the environment, and health in society.
13. Compare the impact of different human actions and attitudes on global sustainability and ecosystems.
14. Contrast business practices and economic models and their impact on global sustainability.
15. Explain the precautionary principle and how it can prevent unintended consequences on human and ecological systems.
16. Examine democratic principles that promote peace and global sustainability.
17. Apply knowledge and skills to engage in behavior that fosters global sustainability.
18. Participate in service-learning or other civic actions that model sustainability and resilience.

Student Participation: Once a student is enrolled in a GSELS-designated class, they will be participants in the GSELS learning network and may be eligible for other opportunities such as the Narrow Ridge Earth Literacy Field Experience summer immersion for students. Students may search for [GSELS-designated classes](#) on the [EEI website](#): www.earthethicsinstitute.org

GSELS Scholar Recognition: Students may apply for **GSELS Scholar** recognition upon achieving the following:

- Complete at least 12 credits in GSELS-designated classes, of which a minimum of 3 credits must be GSELS-focused
- Earn a minimum grade of 'B' in their GSELS classes
- Complete a [GSELS Civic Engagement Project](#), for which there are **two options**:
 - 10-hour Service-Learning Project through the [Institute for Civic Engagement and Democracy \(iCED\)](#), or
 - Score a minimum of 100 points on the [Civic Action Scorecard](#), with at least 50 of those points scored from the Environment & Sustainability section

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, visit www.earthethicsinstitute.org/GSELHome.asp or contact Earth Ethics Institute Director Mike Matthews at (305) 237-3796 or mmatthew@mdc.edu.