

**01:377:480 Current Topics in Exercise Science and Sport Studies**  
**Course Subtitle: Service learning and sustainable lifestyle in Greece**

Credits	Language	Term	Year	Start Date	End Date
3	English	Summer	2020	May 15	May 27

**Course Description:**

The current economic crisis in Greece hassled to an alarming rise of the poverty and social exclusion rates. This economic crisis has shaped a complex social status quo in which the vulnerable social groups have been the first “victims”, living in high risk of poverty and social exclusion. The vulnerable social groups (persons with special needs, elderly people, minorities, drug users, etc.) have been enriched with the single-parent families and the in-work poor. At the same time, 1.3 million people fleeing conflict and persecution have traveled through Greece in search of safety and a better life in Europe. With the closure of the Balkan borders and the implementation of the EU-Turkey agreement in March 2016, refugees can no longer continue their journeys. Refugees have been either coming to Greece or passing through Greece for the past 20 years. As a result, more than 62,000 refugees (over half of them women and children) live in camps all over Greece and the local authorities need to deal with main humanitarian challenges like environmental health, economic recovery and development of the refugee population. Besides meeting their basic needs, vulnerable groups in Greece need to get autonomy in their lives, contribute to the local economy and start building a better future. One way to achieve all these is through educational programs. Everyone who goes without education cannot look forward to a more productive and prosperous future and is more likely to become frustrated and involved in illegitimate or military activities.

In 2015, on the other hand, the United Nations adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals. This Agenda is a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity in order to achieve sustainable development in its three dimensions – economic, social and environmental – in a balanced and integrated manner. The United Nation summit committed to provide inclusive and equitable quality education at all levels and stated that all people, irrespective of sex, age, race or ethnicity, and persons with disabilities, migrants, indigenous peoples, children and youth, especially those in vulnerable situations, should have access to life-long learning opportunities that help them to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to exploit opportunities and to participate fully in society.



Among the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (see Figure), the goals #3 “Good Health and Wellbeing”, #11 “Sustainable cities and communities” and #12 “Responsible consumption and production” are related to the concept and main characteristics of the Mediterranean Lifestyle. The Mediterranean Lifestyle is a sustainable model for the environment as it combines low environmental impact, biodiversity, seasonality, locality, moderation and sustainable type of physical activity like walking.

Figure. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Source: UN in collaboration with Project Everyone

The 2-week course “Service learning and sustainable lifestyle in Greece” combines the educational needs of the vulnerable social groups in Greece with the goals of the United Nation Agenda into a 21<sup>st</sup> century challenge service-learning experience and deals with contemporary global issues from a multidisciplinary perspective.

The course has a twofold goal:

1. to provide students with knowledge, competencies and skills related to the global goals for sustainable development using the paradigm of a sustainable lifestyle,
2. to create the opportunity for students to engage with migrants, refugees, vulnerable social groups, volunteers and NGO in Greece, to gain knowledge and consciousness on social issues and provide meaningful service.

**Pre-Requisites:**

1. Instructor’s consent
2. Minimum GPA 2.5

**Objectives:**

- Increase student’s level of consciousness regarding the effects of environmental issues on human health
- Develop an eco-way of thinking and eco-habits to adopt a more sustainable lifestyle like the Mediterranean and start to think their own green-entrepreneurship future thanks to meeting with experts, role games, lectures, visits, discussions, debates about topics as ecology, environment and biodiversity
- Explore the interdisciplinary possibilities of the course in implementing programs that consist of new ways of thinking and acting, in line with the global goals for sustainable development to preserve economic, social and environmental wellbeing
- Gain awareness and knowledge of the world refugee and financial crisis and
- Engage actively with realities on the refugees needs in Greece by communicating directly with volunteers, NGOs, vulnerable social groups and refugees/migrants themselves and construct a different approach, knowledge and consciousness on world financial crisis

**Course Materials:**

- Lectures, notes and other files relevant to the course’s learning objectives (printed and electronic material).
- Research papers relevant to the course’s learning objectives. Some examples:
  - Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Sep 2015, United Nations
  - The public health dimension of the European migrant crisis, Jan 2016 , EPRS
  - Hunter P. The refugee crisis challenges national health care systems. *EMBO Reports*. 2016;17 (4):492-95
  - Hughes D. Migrants' right to healthcare: accepting limits on what European healthcare systems can provide. *BMJ*. 2016;353
  - Suess A, Ruiz Pérez I, Ruiz Azarola A, March Cerdà JC. The right of access to health care for undocumented migrants: a revision of comparative analysis in the European context. *Eur J Public Health*. 2014;24(5):712-20.
  - Auestad N & Fulgoni VL. What Current Literature Tells Us about Sustainable Diets: Emerging Research Linking Dietary Patterns, Environmental Sustainability, and Economics. *Adv. Nutr.*2015; 6: 19–36
  - Fact Sheet No.20, Human Rights and Refugees. United Nation Human Rights
  - Dernini S, Meybeck A, Burlingame B, Gitz V, Lacirignola C, Debs P, Capone R, El Bilali H. Developing a methodological approach for assessing the sustainability of diets: The Mediterranean diet as a case study. *New Medit*. 2013;3: 28-36
  - van Dooren C, Marinussen M, Blonk H, Aiking H and Vellinga P. Exploring dietary guidelines based on ecological and nutritional values:A comparison of six dietary patterns. *Food Policy*, 2014;44: 36–46

- Germani A, Vitiello V, Giusti AM, Pinto A, Donini LM and del Balzo V. Environmental and economic sustainability of the Mediterranean Diet. *Int J Food Sci Nutr*. 2014; 65(8): 1008–1012
- Medina FX. Food consumption and civil society: Mediterranean diet as a sustainable resource for the Mediterranean area. *Public Health Nutrition*. 2011; 14(12A): 2346–2349
- Specht K, Siebert R, Hartmann I, Freisinger UB, Sawicka M, Werner A, Thomaier S, Henckel D• Walk H and Dierich A. Urban agriculture of the future: an overview of sustainability aspects of food production in and on buildings. *Agric Hum Values*. 2014;31:33–51

### **Instructors:**

**Labros Sidossis, PhD**, Department of Kinesiology and Health, School of Arts and Sciences, Rutgers University.

### **Course Requirements:**

<b>Coursework</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Possible Points</b>
Course preparation assignments (studying course materials)	May 16 <sup>th</sup>	10 points
Participation (attention and interest in the course's activities) & Professionalism (professional behavior, teamwork and communication)	Throughout the course	20 points
Group reflection sessions	Throughout the course	20 points
Daily Reflection journal	May 28 <sup>th</sup>	20 points
Project	May 29 <sup>th</sup> (presentation)/ Jun 14 <sup>th</sup> (written assignment)	30 points
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>

### **Pre-departure assignments:**

Students are expected to answer an online quiz prior to their departure in order to be introduced to the objectives of the course.

### **Group reflection sessions/Electronic forum:**

Students are expected to contribute to electronic discussion on the service-learning and course topics using Sakai forum. They have to respond to question posed by the instructor and answers posted by other students. Also, students are expected to participate to group reflection sessions where group members exchange ideas about the course topics and/or the service experiences and general or narrowly focused questions posed by the instructor.

### **Daily Reflection Journal Instructions:**

Students are expected to keep a daily journal that reflects the things that they have seen, felt and experienced and the aspects of the volunteer experience that continues to excite, trouble or impress them. Students can use the three levels of reflection as a guide to keep your writing focused. Final journals need to be edited for proper grammar and spelling.

### **Project Instructions:**

All students are expected to work in small groups (2 students) to prepare a 10-minute presentation related to the course's learning objectives. Presentation topics will be assigned at the beginning of the course. All students

are also expected to use the material from the training sessions and their service experience/reflection to submit their own project proposal (2000 words) regarding actions to address refugee crisis and goals for sustainable development.

### **Grading:**

There are 100 total points for the course.

100-90=A	89-85=B+	79-75=C+	69-65=D+	<60=F
	84-80=B	74-70=C	64-60=	

### **Preliminary Schedule:**

#### **Pre-departure instruction (3hrs)**

- Introduction to the course» (objectives, goals & requirements)
- “Guidelines on Reflection journal”

#### **Week 1**

##### **Training seminars (10 hrs)**

###### Topics:

- UN Global goals for sustainable development
- Facts on Refugee and Financial crisis in Greece
- The role of civil society in protecting refugees and vulnerable social groups
- Social justice and human rights
- Social farming
- Sustainable lifestyle (part 1)

##### **Service (30 hrs)**

Volunteer at the Organization earth, NGO (regular shifts, garden activities, cooking food and distribution, engaging with the volunteers/refugees on the ground).

#### **Week 2**

##### **Training seminars (10 hrs)**

###### Topics:

- Psycho pedagogic approach on refugees
- Urban gardens
- Cycle economy
- Connecting people to nature
- Perm culture
- Sustainable lifestyle (part 2)

##### **Service (30 hrs)**

Volunteer at the “Ark of World”, Voluntary Non-profit Organization of mother and child protection / Participate in and organize educational actions based on their training for mixed groups of refugees and vulnerable social groups.

##### **Group Reflection sessions (4 hrs)**