

Students at the University of Guelph-Humber learn about biodiversity and sustainability from world leaders

This article is about a three-minute read.

Professor and course director, Dr. Sarah Duni (she/her), has previously taught sociology-related electives and courses in the [Family and Community Social Services](#) program at the University of Guelph-Humber (U of GH). Presently, Sarah teaches Food Studies and [Food for Thought - A Study Tour of Italy](#).

In [Food Studies](#), Sarah presents students with a compelling examination of society's relationship with food and how society can envision a more sustainable food system.

In this course, Sarah covers biodiversity, water, soil energy and food in society. The course content refers to nutrition, food security and food sovereignty, food aid, food consumption, and food governance through food systems governance and collective action.

Sarah strives to intertwine sustainability and social justice issues into all of her courses. For example, in a previous course on ethics, Sarah focused on ethical practices, human services, and integrated a module on social movements, social change and the environment.

Sarah explains, "When looking at sustainability, there is [a lot of food-related] controversy, which highlights how often there is no one correct answer to the problems faced. Almost always different viewpoints are needed to be weighted alongside each other, to find solutions that are workable."

"There's always a need for the ability to embrace different perspectives and paradigms so that we can have an open dialogue about these differences on how to build a more [fair] and sustainable food systems," says Sarah.



Above: Dr. Sarah Duni (she/her)

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Students learn about biodiversity in Italy

As an educator of the [Study Abroad program at U of GH](#), Sarah had the opportunity to take undergraduate students on a 10-day tour to Italy, from Rome to Florence to Pisa. Students had the unique opportunity of learning about food sustainability and biodiversity from an international perspective.

"I use Italy as the central focus point of looking at biodiversity because they're the number one in the world for biodiversity," Sarah explains.

Sarah believes that Italy is at the forefront in the world for biodiversity and sustainability due to its distinct geographical distribution.

Sarah notes, "Italy has the most biodiversity, with only 0.5 per cent of the world's surface; there are over 7,000 edible vegetables species, 58,000 animal species, 1,200 local vineyards and 140 wheat crop varieties."

Getting involved on and off-campus

"Search for opportunities available in front of you; begin in your community or on campus," Sarah emphasizes. "In the past few years, there have been a number of different food-related initiatives, such as seed libraries, food recovery programs and community gardens." Sarah encourages students and staff to reach out to local municipalities to learn about current programs.

Sarah also advises students and staff to get involved with the [Greenhouse](#) at North Campus, purchase [fair trade](#) products, learn about proper composting and/or contact the [Office of Sustainability](#) to get involved with campus engagements and advocacy efforts.

"From my own background, I really see the importance of building partnerships between campus and community, locally and internationally. It's integral to building networks and promoting social solidarity," Sarah concludes.



Above: U of GH students in Rome



Above: U of GH students in Venice