

A few moments of [video](#) from the final synthesis session of the 4th year seminar course BIOL 510 (Fall 2022).

Context: This short clip from near the beginning introduces the argument that the ultimate cause of humanity's current environmental and social sustainability crisis is human behaviour, which is fundamentally influenced by the same genetically-endowed traits that all species exhibit (growth, resource accumulation, waste production, competition, survival, reproduction, etc.). Therefore, it is not at all surprising that humans have reached a point where we are living unsustainably – in theory, any species could reach it under the appropriate conditions.

The central theme of the final synthesis session in this 'Biology of Sustainability' course is that in addition to those basic biological traits and their associated impacts, our species also has consciousness. This seemingly unique trait provides us with the potential to cope with, and constructively respond to, the sustainability crisis we face. By acknowledging and embracing the fundamental realities of our biology and of our existential predicament, consciousness (i.e. deep awareness) could lead us to suppress the influences of our more basic genetically-endowed traits so as to live in a more environmentally and socially sustainable (and possibly more contented) way.