

Syllabus of Ecotopia

Raison d'être:

Equipping economics and business students to serve planetary wellbeing with dedication and enthusiasm.

Ecotopia aims at training enlightened citizens and leaders embracing their future careers and engagements with enthusiasm and confidence in a globalized context. Ecotopia graduates will be highly skilled in the fields of economics, management, finance or business, depending on the nature of their main diploma. Additionally, they will show adaptability, substantial general culture and an enduring taste for lifelong learning and cooperation.

Ecotopia graduates will also be trained to embed sustainability in the responses they bring to the challenges they will have or choose to address throughout their careers and lives as engaged citizens of the world.

Ecotopia partners have decided to unite their forces to offer a 3-year programme simultaneously and in close collaboration on their campuses and provide participating students with the opportunity to work in international teams at Bachelor level.

The programme grants successful students a European certification, in addition to the national and school degree they complete.

Course 1: Sustainability and Business

The course is dedicated to imparting knowledge on relevant sustainability challenges applied to business. It enables a basic understanding of business unsustainability, supported by discussion of pertinent SDGs of the business context, critical sectors, and the application of advanced sustainability-related practices such as the circular economy and regenerative practices. In addition to the course content, concepts will be introduced through problem-based learning and analyzed through the prism of political considerations, legal aspects, and economic and practical implications.

Objectives

Knowledge

- Understand the stakes and implications for companies in achieving the 17 general objectives of sustainable development.
- Understand the impact of instruments on companies (Green Deal, Strategie Fit for 55)
- Know the obligations of companies and sectors
- Be familiar with the concept of the circular economy

Know-how

- Implement a strategy to change corporate behavior
- Make effective decisions
- Lead and manage a circular economy action plan
- Identify the pitfalls, challenges, and opportunities of the European carbon market
- Know how to create a circular business solution

Soft skills

- Adopt a benevolent attitude
- Adopt a posture of cohesion and mutual support
- Adopt a posture of autonomy and openness (ways of acquiring knowledge, culture...)

Program details

Module 1: General strategy - SDGs and sustainable business (3h)

- SDGs, disclosure reporting, and accounting certifications (in English)
- SDGs and human resources development
- SDGs, greenwashing, and marketing communications
- SDGs as a systemic strategy tool

Module 2: Sectors with the greatest impact - Sustainability hot spots (9h)

2.1 The impact of instruments on companies:

- Climate legislation
- plan for the circular economy
- The Sustainable Development Due Diligence Directive
- Sustainability Reporting Directive
- Sustainable product strategy
- Strategy for sustainable and circular textiles
- EU plastics strategy
- European carbon market
- Energy efficiency as a general objective (ReNew strategy)
- Textile industry
- IT sector and e-waste
- Food
- Automotive industry

2.2 The Climate Act and the Circular Economy Action Plan:

- Describe the company's impact on climate change and broader sustainability challenges that require implementing circular business practices.
- Present the aims and objectives of EU instruments to achieve sustainable business behavior that meets EU climate targets.
- Define the most essential aspects of the relevant instruments influencing corporate behavior.

2.3 The Sustainable Product Strategy and the Sustainable and Circular Textiles Strategy:

- Presenting the instruments from two angles: the supply side and the demand side
- An organic, holistic approach to corporate behavior change is fundamental
- A debate on programmed obsolescence and the attempt to eradicate it through EU instruments

2.4: The European plastics strategy (from food to packaging)

- Presenting the "plastics challenge" in global terms and its multidimensional nature

- The general implications of the instrument for business
- Discuss the instrument's impact on the various production stages in the company context.

2.5: The European carbon market

- Background to the creation and raison d'être of the European carbon market
- Historical development of the European carbon market
- Pitfalls, challenges and opportunities in the current state of knowledge

2.6: Summary of the most important concepts

Module 3: The circular economy (9h)

3.1: Introduction to the circular economy concept

- Understanding the context: international dimension and cultural context of change.
- Different circular economy models: critical principles of the circular economy.
- The circular economy in everyday life: where and how is it implemented?
- The circular approach in practice: a variety of company cases and critical assessment.

3.2: Understanding the circular economy in the context of the EU framework.

- The European Green Deal and the circular economy action plan.
- A brief overview of relevant documents
- Institutional framework and critical stakeholders
- Green recovery or greenwashing

3.3: Systems approach - moving from a linear to a circular mindset

An interactive workshop to encourage a systems approach, critical and circular thinking:

- Understanding circular thinking through the systems approach
- Stakeholder mapping: methods of engagement and identifying synergies.
- Introducing the circular triangle: key drivers of systemic circular change.
- Implementation of circular principles at different levels and in various contexts.

3.4: Circular business models

- Introduction and assessment of circular business models, circular strategies, and value systems.
- Business canvas for circular business models.
- Practical exercises: creating your own circular business solution.
- International competitiveness vs. international collaboration: marketing concepts for a more resilient and inclusive economy and society.

3.5: Circular economy and network governance

Key skills for successful systemic circular transformation:

- Introduction to network governance and its role in the circular transformation process.
- New professions for new challenges: transition brokers at the heart of change.
- Playing roles: orchestrating different stakeholders with different interests.
- Circular economy clusters and circular ecosystems: a variety of opportunities for collaboration and engagement.

3.6: The circular enterprise challenge

To conclude the module, a business challenge will be presented during the first lecture and must be completed by the end of the course. This challenge will focus on a particular business case that must be solved using the knowledge, resources, and approaches taught.

Prerequisites

The general prerequisites are a good knowledge of business management and how a company operates. There are no specific prerequisites for this course, just a genuine interest in sustainability and a brief familiarity with the sustainable development goals of the UN's Agenda 2030.

Language requirement

English B2

Technical, pedagogical, and supervisory arrangements

Distance learning

The course will take place over a full term, with twelve (12) one-and-a-half-hour sessions. Each session will consist of a presentation by the teacher, a discussion of the required readings, and, in some cases, additional activities addressing specific questions in the course. Active student participation will be required depending on the nature of these activities. The readings for each session are compulsory as a basis for discussion, without exception. An approach close to the problem-based learning method.

Professors

Luciana Oranges Cezarino (Ca'Foscari University), Prof. Dr. Lela Mélon (ESCI-UPF), Ladeja Godina Kosir (Circular Change)

Assessment

Assessment of knowledge or training results: continuous during the module and at the end of each training session.

In addition to lectures, course activities will involve coursework, reading assignments, and active student participation. Assessment of the course will combine continuous assessment and a final exam, according to the following criteria:

Part I exam: 20
 Examination of Part II: 40
 Part III examination: 40%.

An additional 10% may be awarded for exceptional active participation in class.

Retake conditions

For students who fail the course after the final exam, it will be possible to retake the exam while retaining grades for homework and course participation.



Summer School 1: Circular Economy

The Ecotopia Circular Economy summer school aims to present an alternative approach to building a prosperous and sustainable economy via the circular or regenerative approach. The summer school program integrates the practical and theoretical knowledge imparted during the ECOTOPIA modules. The program offers a pragmatic approach and an overview of the implementation of solutions in the field of the circular economy. Students work around case studies, conduct study visits, and contribute to participatory workshops.

Objectives

Knowledge

- Understand the challenges of today's circular economy
- Be familiar with systems thinking to approach circularity
- Understand the challenges of the circular economy as a whole.

Know-how

- Search for solutions
- Know how to work in a team
- Be able to assess one's own knowledge and experience critically
- Know how to implement a feedback system

Soft skills

- Adopt a cooperative attitude
- Adopt an intercultural posture

Program details

Day 1

What is the circular economy today?

Day 2

Participatory workshop (learning by doing)

Day 3

Virtual tour of Aquafil's facilities

Day 4

Study visit to KNOF's circular laboratory in Krsko

Day 5: Case studies

Presentation of case studies

Prerequisites

Language requirement

English B2

Technical, pedagogical, and supervisory arrangements

In-person format - 5 days

Individual distance interview

20 minutes per student

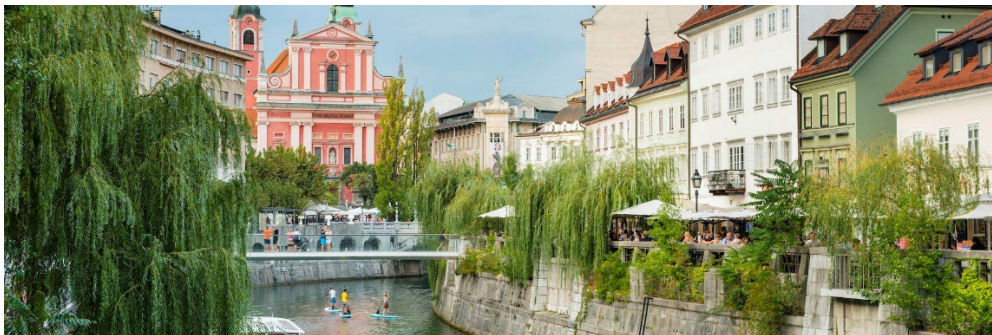
Professors

Maja ZALAZNK, Ladeja GODINA KOSIR, Marco A. SEGOVIA BIFARINI, Charlotte SIMUNEK

Assessment criteria

Relevance of case study descriptions

Ability to link theoretical and practical knowledge



Course 2: Sustainability and Europe

The course imparts knowledge on relevant sustainability challenges applied in Europe. It will examine the role of EU institutions in understanding the impact of migration, economic and agricultural policies in promoting sustainable development. The course will address the part of international trade and EU governance in its history and future.

Concepts will be introduced through problem-based learning and a reflective approach.

Objectives

Knowledge

- Understand the challenges of EU institutional responses
- Understand the impact of the circular economy on the labor market (Green Deal, Strategie Fit for 55)
- Knowledge of agricultural policies
- Knowledge of European governance issues

Know-how

- Promote sustainable development
- Make effective decisions
- Conduct and manage an action plan for the circular economy
- Identify the pitfalls, challenges, and opportunities of the European market in an international trade context

Soft skills

- Be autonomous and open-minded
- Adopt an agile and creative posture

Program details

Module 1: The EU at a crossroads: Institutional responses (3h)

Current challenges facing the EU - international context (macro-economic approach)

The role of EU institutions in promoting sustainable development, the SDGs, and EU priorities

Module 2: On the road to sustainable development: shaping EU economic policies (3h)

Transition to the circular economy: The impact on the labor market

Green Deal and Fit for 55: The EU's green transition plan, sustainable development in business

Module 3: The sustainable development perspective of the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (3h)

Agriculture and sustainable development: greening or greenwashing?

EU Common Agricultural Policy reforms on sustainable development: from increasing productivity to promoting a resilient agricultural sector

Module 4: Restoring the EU's competitiveness: the importance of international trade and its sustainability (3h)

The effects of trade on EU growth

Sustainable development in EU trade agreements

Module 5: Economics and governance of sustainable development (3h)

Reconsidering EU governance: old and new approaches

Economic governance indicators as promoters of sustainable development

Module 6: Recapitulation of the main concepts covered (3h)

The EU - history and future

Prerequisites

The general prerequisites are a good knowledge of business management and company operations. There are no specific prerequisites for this course, just a genuine interest in sustainability and a brief familiarity with the sustainable development goals of the UN Agenda 2030.

Language requirement

English B2

Technical, pedagogical, and supervisory arrangements

Distance learning

The course will take place over a full term, with twelve (12) one-and-a-half-hour sessions.

Each session will consist of a presentation by the teacher, a discussion of the required readings, and, in some cases, additional activities addressing specific questions in the course. Active student participation will be required depending on the nature of these activities. The readings for each session are compulsory as a basis for discussion, without exception. An approach close to the problem-based learning method.

Professors

Ioana ANDREICA, Liviu DECEANU, Leonard HORVATH

Assessment of knowledge and training results

Continuous throughout the module and at the end of each training session.

Assessment criteria:

In addition to lectures, course activities will involve coursework, reading assignments, and active student participation. Assessment of the course will combine continuous assessment and a final exam, according to the following criteria:

Part I exam: 20

Examination of Part II: 40

Part III examination: 40%.

An additional 10% may be awarded for exceptional active participation in class.

Retake conditions

For students who fail the course after the final exam, it will be possible to retake the exam while retaining grades for homework and course participation.



Project Y2: Exploring a specific local sustainability landscape

The aim of this project is to provide a space for intercultural teamwork, appropriation of the content of courses 1 and 2, an opportunity for field work, data collection, research and analysis as well as concrete proposals for a more sustainable future.

It will thus be an inherently collaborative modality of Ecotopia, bringing together the student team, the contributors and the resources mobilized, as well as stakeholders in the chosen field of study, in a logic of research and participative observation (method of investigation, design of proposals, continuous evaluation, sharing of results from the different phases of the project). In this sense, it will also be a means of acculturating students to intercultural and research dynamics.

This activity enables students to engage in research and teamwork while learning about the various players in the sustainability field and their impact on important issues. It also encourages critical thinking and analysis, as students need to consider the strengths and challenges of different actors and how they might work together to address sustainability issues. It allows students to see what the concepts of courses 1 and 2 become once implemented.

Objectives

Knowledge

- Mastery of the academic contents in courses 1 and 2 and the Summer School (regulations, policies, practices...)

Know-how

- Demonstration of the methods in courses 1 and 2 and the Summer School (circular economy, sustainable practices...)

- Use of research methods (data collection, field study, survey, analysis, synthesis and presentation)

Project management (time management, distribution of work, documentation of processes...)

Soft skills

- Intercultural communication
- Openness to learning
- Ability to question ready-made judgements and established rules, to be critical and constructive
- Assertiveness and cooperation balance

Project sequence

Step 1

Form small teams at the beginning of semester 3.

Step 2

Each team must identify a specific theme and question they would like to work on as a team. They then need to identify stakeholders in the local context of their exchange year and players in sustainable development, such as government agencies, non-profit organizations, companies, or individual activists. Some teams can compare two different locations too.

November 2023: Team interview

Presentation of the theme, approach, identified stakeholders.

- Immediate feedback from the faculty and evaluation.

Step 3

Each team must research its stakeholders, including their mission, objectives, and key sustainability initiatives. Teams should also look at the actors' impact on sustainability efforts and any challenges or controversies they have faced. With the research conducted by individual students, the team must define an approach which will be the backbone of their poster.

April 2024: Team interview

Presentation and defense of the poster.

- Evaluation of the poster and supporting research file.

Step 4

As a final project, each team will present the result of their research as a background and a plan for action to a jury of stakeholders.

May 2024: Team interview by a jury

- Evaluation of the plan of action.

Assessment

Criteria

Listed in the Objectives section.

Grading scale

Interview 1: 10%

Research, poster and presentation: 50%

Plan for action and presentation to the jury: 40%

Technical, pedagogical and supervisory arrangements

Training format

Face-to-face during the Summer School, then distance learning and on-site team collaboration

Professors

Charlotte Simunek, Malini Sumputh

Prerequisites

The adequate realization of the team project relies heavily on a good mastery of the skills developed in courses 1 and 2, as well as the Summer School 1.

Language requirement

English B2



Course 3: Sustainable cities

The course is devoted to imparting knowledge on the concept of the sustainable city, which seeks to take account of social, economic and environmental issues in its planning and operation. The aim of the course is to analyze the indicators that accompany the preservation of resources, landscapes and the population's living environment. The course will address the role of local authorities in a global network for sustainable development. Concepts will be introduced through problem-based learning and a reflective and comparative approach to 3 metropolises (African, Asian and European).

Objectives

Knowledge

- Understand the challenges of resource preservation
- Understand the impact of regional planning
- Understand the impact of local authorities in a global network.

Know-how

- Analyze indicators of a "sustainable city"
- Support the preservation of resources
- Conduct and manage an action plan for the development of a sustainable city
- Identify the intercultural challenges and opportunities of a local context within an international network.

Soft skills

- Adopt a posture of autonomy and openness
- Adopt an agile and creative posture

Program details under development

Module 1

Geographical location, infrastructures and territorial approach and their impact on sustainable development: example of an African metropolis

Module 2

The historical challenge and its impact on the preservation of cultural, economic and social heritage: the example of a European metropolis

Module 3

Geopolitical issues, the complexity of belief systems and reference values, and their impact on strategic zones and areas of influence: the example of an Asian metropolis.

Prerequisites

The general prerequisites are a good knowledge of business management and how a company operates. There are no specific prerequisites for this course, just a genuine interest in sustainability and a brief familiarity with the sustainable development goals of the UN Agenda 2030.

Language requirement

English B2

Technical, pedagogical and supervisory arrangements

Distance learning

The course takes place over a full term, with twelve (12) one-and-a-half-hour sessions. Each session will consist of a presentation by the professor, a discussion of the compulsory readings, and, in some cases, additional activities addressing specific questions in the course. Depending on the nature of these activities. The readings for each session are compulsory as a basis for discussion, without exception. An approach close to the problem-based learning method.

Professors

Valentina FAVA & team

Assessment of knowledge and training results

Continuous throughout the module, and at the end of each training session.

Assessment criteria

In addition to lectures, course activities involve coursework, reading assignments, and active student participation. Assessment of the course will combine continuous assessment and a final exam, according to the following criteria:

Part I exam: 20

Examination of Part II: 40

Part III examination: 40%.

An additional 10% may be awarded for exceptional active participation in class.

Retake conditions

For students who fail the course after the final exam, it will be possible to retake the exam while retaining grades for homework and course participation.



SUMMER SCHOOL 2: Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Africa

The "Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Africa" summer school consists of thematic modules spread over three weeks, and is designed for undergraduates interested in African cultures and business perspectives.

The main objective of this immersive program is to give participants essential skills to understand the main challenges and specificities of doing business in/with Africa

Objectives

Knowledge

- Know the challenges and specificities of doing business in/with Africa
- Understanding the diversity of commercial and entrepreneurial practices
- Learn about the characteristics of Arab-Muslim culture
- Understand the technological challenges of data and AI in Africa

Know-how

- Creating team cohesion
- Communicating in an intercultural context
- Discuss the key elements of world politics and power distribution between nations.
- Identify economic challenges to understand Africa's business climate

Soft skills

- Adopting a cooperative posture
- Adopting an intercultural posture

Program details

The thematic modules taught during this Summer School are as follows:

- African Geopolitics
- Artificial Intelligence
- Doing Business in Africa
- Entrepreneurship and Start-ups in Africa
- Introduction to Arab-Muslim Culture and Society
- Moroccan Arabic Course (optional)

Students will meet and interact with local experts and professionals who will help them understand the diversity of African business and entrepreneurial practices. They will also visit local businesses and associations.

Prerequisites

Language requirement

English B2

Technical, pedagogical, and supervisory arrangements

Face-to-face: 90 hours

Duration

15 days (1st-19th July 2024)

Professors

Yousra ABOURABI, Assia BENABDELKADER, Youssef BOUYAKHF, Hafsa EL BEKRI, Oumel Ghit GUELZIM, Soulimane LAHRECH, Abdelkarim RADDADI

Assessment criteria

The relevance of case study descriptions

The ability to link theoretical and practical knowledge



Skills portfolio

The portfolio is only a tool. It is not the portfolio that is assessed, but rather the development of the skills that the student demonstrates in their portfolio. Only the competency is assessed through the portfolio, and nothing else (no form or spelling criteria).

The portfolio, which brings together different resources, enables teachers who don't have the opportunity to see the student in action on a regular basis to discuss the quality of his or her actions, learning and adaptation, to assess their skills.

This document focuses on learning. It is a record of a sample of evidence selected by the students to give an account of their learning. It is the student's own production, enabling "self-judgment" on the development of their skill(s). It shows the student's actions, learning and reflections.

Objectives

Knowledge

- Understanding the value of describing, analysing and making explicit one's experiences
- Knowing the different forms of experience (formal, informal, non-formal)

Know-how

- Knowing how to trace and prove one's experiences
- Telling one's own story
- Identifying transversal and transferable skills
- Taking a critical view of one's knowledge and experience
- Implementing a feedback system

Soft skills

- Adopting a cooperative attitude
- Adopting an attitude of cohesion and mutual aid
- Adopting a non-judgmental approach
- Adopting an attitude of respect and confidentiality

Program details

Step 1: Discovery workshop: Summer School in Ljubljana

Introduction to the Portfolio and workshop to identify the values and skills targeted by the Ecotopia Certification.

Step 2: Preparation of the life story phase and interview: November 2023

Collection of a first set of proof of skills development in sustainability and international cooperation. Interview and guidance for the next phase.

Step 3: Personal collection of proof of skill development: December 2023-June 2025

Regular contacts with professors and feedback.

Prerequisites:

Sensitivity to the life story approach

Language requirement

English B2

Technical, pedagogical and supervisory arrangements

Duration: July 2023 to July 2025 (2 years)

Distance learning format

Individual work and distance interviews.

Professors

Charlotte SIMUNEK, Malini SUMPETH

Evaluation criteria

Relevance of the description of significant experiences in relation to knowledge, know-how and soft skills.

Deliverable

A personal portfolio of skills following the template provided, and including annexes supporting the content of the portfolio. Variations on the format can be discussed on a case-to-case basis.