

Sustainable Development, Business and Policy

Lecturers

Estelle CANTILLON (Coordinator) and Bruno VAN POTTELSBERGHE

Course mnemonic

GEST-S2002

ECTS credits

5 credits

Language(s) of instruction

English

Course period

Second term

Campus

Solbosch

Course content

GESTS2002 “Sustainable Development, Business and Policy” provides an introduction to sustainable development starting from the state of the planet and the interactions between the planet and human societies, to the scientific and historical underpinnings of sustainable development and its implications for business and policy. Emphasis is placed on the central role of governance and organisations in the slowing or facilitation of action and innovation. The course is divided into three parts:

- 1 Lectures provides an introduction to the key concepts and references on the subject and shows how policy and managerial thinking about sustainable development co-evolved with our scientific understanding of the interaction between Earth System and human society. Climate change and its solutions and circular economy are two focal points of the lectures.
- 2 Guest speakers complements lectures and shed light on current managerial practices and associated challenges
- 3 Group projects provide an opportunity for students to critically examine the contribution of specific policies, technologies or products to the energy transition or a more circular economy.

This course contributes to the Energy, Circular Economy, Human Development and Socially Sustainable Organisations pedagogical pathways of the Sustainable Development initiative that seek to provide an integrated training in sustainability.

Objectives (and/or specific learning outcomes)

Sustainable development issues are typically complex and multifaceted, and so are their solutions. At the same time, sustainability has become such a buzzword that firms and politicians are tempted to leverage it for marketing purposes,

rather than to describe solutions that genuinely contribute to more sustainable operations and practices. Critical thinking is therefore paramount. Upon completion of the course, you should be able to:

- › Describe the intellectual and scientific underpinnings of sustainable development and corporate social responsibility;
- › Contextualize a sustainable development issue, and describe the stakeholders and the relevant links between this issue and other social, economic and environmental dimensions;
- › Analyze a mechanism of governance and assess its impact on stakeholders' incentives;
- › Draw on relevant scientific and grey literature sources to critically assess a proposed solution (policy, strategy, product, ...) from a sustainable development perspective.

Teaching method and learning activities

The course combines standard lectures, pre-class readings and assignments, in-class interactive activities, guest speakers and a group project.

Contribution to the teaching profile

This course contributes, entirely (or partially), to the development of the following learning outcomes of the bachelor degrees in Business engineering:

- › LO 1.1 Apply fundamental concepts, tools and models (in economics and management) to formulate a well-defined problem and propose a multidisciplinary solution.
- › LO 1.2 Understand the scientific and technological principles (and their impact on managerial analysis).
- › LO 1.3 Integrate sustainable development in analyses
 - › Specifically, this course contributes to this objective by introducing students to (1) the scientific foundations of sustainable development, (2) systems thinking (concept and tools, application to analyses in class and in the group project), (3) the analysis of governance mechanisms and triggers for change and providing them with a first experience of group projects where they will be asked to integrate different perspectives and apply systems thinking to a specific sustainability-related problem.
- › The course is part of the Sustainable Development initiative and provides an introduction to some of the issues that are developed in more depth in courses from the Energy, Circular Economy, Socially Sustainable Organisations and Human Development pathways of the BA Ingénieur de Gestion.
- › LO 2.1 Adopt a scientific approach to data collection, research and analysis and communicate results with clear, structured and sophisticated arguments.
- › LO 2.2 Display critical thinking, logical and abstract reasoning and develop an independent approach to learning.
- › LO 4.1 Work and communicate effectively as part of a team (in an international and multicultural environment).

- LO 4.2 Recognize ethical dilemmas (and contribute to solving them).

References, bibliography and recommended reading

The course relies on a set of readings (reader available at the PUB) and other pedagogical material available to registered students on the uv.

Course notes

Université virtuelle and Syllabus

Other information

Place(s) of teaching

Solbosch

Contact(s)

Estelle Cantillon (Estelle.Cantillon@ulb.be) and Bruno van Pottelsberghe (bruno.vanpottelsberghe@ulb.be)

Evaluation method(s)

Oral examination, Oral presentation, Group work and Personal work

Evaluation method(s) (additional information)

The final grade is based on pre-class assignments and participation, a written group project and, performance on an oral exam.

Determination of the mark (including the weighting of partial marks)

The final grade is based on participation to pre-class assignments, a written group project and performance on an oral exam. The final grade is made of the pre-class assignments and participation (15%), the group project (40%) and the oral exam (45%).

Students failing in the first session (June), get a second chance to pass the course in August by taking a somewhat longer oral exam that will count for 80% of the final grade. The remaining 20% will come from their grades on their pre-class assignments and in-class participation (10%) and their group project (10%).

Main language(s) of evaluation

English

Programmes

Programmes proposing this course at the Solvay Brussels School of Economics and Management

BA-ECON | Bachelor in Economics : General | option Anglais/unit 2 and BA-INGE | Bachelor in Business engineering | option Français/unit 2 and option Anglais/unit 2