
Economics for Sustainable Development

Professor: Joan Ribas Tur

Office hours: By appointment

Course Type: Compulsory

Credits: 3 ECTS

Term: First

Course Description

Economics for Sustainable Development is a first-term course in the MSc in Sustainability Management, at the UPF Barcelona School of Management. It is a core, compulsory course that focuses on gaining understanding of the economic approach to sustainability and sustainable development. Particular attention is devoted to the economics of the environment and the design and implementation of environmental policy, in particular taxes and markets for permits.

Objectives (resultados de aprendizaje) and competences

At the end of the course, students should:

- Know the relationship between economic growth, human development and sustainability.
- Know different sustainability definitions and criteria.
- Gain deep understanding of the economic approach to the environment: externalities, public goods and common resources.
- Learn the main economic instruments of environmental policy to limit pollution. Design and implementation of taxes and market for permits.
- Learn the main economic concepts and techniques applied to the management of natural resources.
- Gain insight into the international aspects of environmental issues and policy.

A list of topics include:

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Week 1: Introduction. The economics of sustainability. Micro vs Macro issues. Local vs Global problems.

Week2: Economic Growth, Human Development and Sustainability. Issues and measurement. (I)

Week 3: Economic Growth, Human Development and Sustainability. Issues and measurement. (II)

Week 4: The economic approach to the environment: Externalities, public goods, and common resources.

Week 5: Environmental policy. Pollution Control. Command and control. Taxes. Markets for permits. Other instruments. (I)

Week 6: Environmental policy. Pollution Control. Command and control. Taxes. Markets for permits. Other instruments. (II)

Week 7: Natural Resource Management. Energy, water and other resources.

Week 8: The macroeconomics of international environmental problems.

Methodology

The course comprises eight 3-hour sessions, which combine theory lecturing with general debates and applied discussions on cases and exercises. The students will also engage in presentations of reports, cases, or project assignments. Activities will require both individual and group work.

The course also involves a substantial amount of autonomous work outside the classroom, combining readings that will help you to gain a deeper understanding of the material covered in the class.

Evaluation criteria

Three elements concur in the final mark:

- **Final exam (50%).** The final exam is used to assess the individual level of knowledge and understanding of each student. It will include questions covering topics from all the classes. This item counts for 50% of the final mark. To pass the exam the minimum grade is 5.
- **Group work and homework presentation (30%).** Students will apply their knowledge to different situations during the development of the homework and the group work exercise. They are expected to use the topics they learned to use during the classes.

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- **Class attendance and active participation (20%).** Attendance in every session is expected and recorded using an attendance sheet. It is your responsibility to comply with this measure. Class attendance is compulsory and will be considered in your final grades; punctuality is a must. Note that unexcused absences reduce your score on the "attendance and participation" element of your final grade. Two or more unexcused absences will result in an automatic score of zero and, in all likelihood, a fail mark for the course as a whole.

Attended all the sessions + actively and consistently participated in the class discussions during the entire course period	20
Attended all the sessions + actively and consistently participated in most of the class discussions	15-19
No more than one unexpected absence + often participated in the class discussions	10-14
No more than one unexpected absence + participated in some class discussions	5-10
No more than one unexpected absence + limited or no participation in class discussions	1-5
Otherwise	0

Other evaluation criteria to take into consideration:

- **Retake**

Students who fail the course during the regular evaluation will be allowed ONE re-take of the examination/evaluation. Students that pass any Retake exam should get a 5 by default as a final grade for the course. If the course is again failed after the retake, students will have to register again for the course the following year.

- **No-show**

In case of a justified no-show to an exam, the student must inform the corresponding faculty member and the director(s) of the program so that they study the possibility of rescheduling the exam (one possibility being during the "Retake" period). In the meantime, the student will get an "incomplete", which will be replaced by the actual grade after the final exam is taken. The "incomplete" will not be reflected on the student's Academic Transcript.

- **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is to use another's work and present it as one's own without acknowledging the sources in the correct way. All essays, reports, or projects handed in by a student must be original work completed by the student. By enrolling at any UPF BSM Master of Science and signing the "Honor Code," students acknowledge that they understand the schools' policy on plagiarism and certify that all course assignments will be their own work, except where indicated by correct referencing. Failing to do so may result in an automatic expulsion from the program.

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Bio of Professor

Joan Ribas Tur is professor of economics and academic coordinator at ESCI-UPF since 2009. At ESCI-UPF he teaches Microeconomics, Economics and Globalization and is the academic director of the Final Degree Project of the Degree in International Business and Marketing. He has previously been a professor at the Universitat Pompeu Fabra, the Universitat Abat Oliba-CEU and the Universitat de Girona.

Joan is a graduate in Economic and Business Sciences from the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Master of Science and PhD in Economics from Universitat Pompeu Fabra, where he graduated with a dissertation on economic growth and pollution.

Joan is a member of the research group RISE (Research in International Studies and Economics) and a collaborator of the UNESCO Chair in Life Cycle and Climate Change. He is editor of the economy blog 5centims.cat and a regular contributor to the media.

Reading Materials/ Bibliography/Resources

No textbook is required for this course. All the required materials will be provided. Any readings, notes, handouts, datasets, or additional course material will be available through the course website. Although there is no core textbook for the course, an overview of most topics can be found in the reading list below.

Atkinson G., Dietz S. and Neumayer E. (2014), *Handbook of Sustainable Development*. Edward Elgar. Second Edition.

Dasgupta, Partha (2021), *The Economics of Biodiversity: The Dasgupta Review* (London: HM Treasury).

Nordhaus, William D. (2021), *The Spirit of Green. The economics of Collisions and Contagions in a Crowded World*. Princeton University Press.

Sachs, Jeffrey D. (2015), *The Age of Sustainable Development*. Columbia University Press.

Skene, Keith and Alan Murray (2015), *Sustainable Economics. Context, Challenges and Opportunities for the 21st-Century Practitioner*. Greenleaf Publishing.

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Tietenberg, Tom and Lynne Lewis (2012), *Environmental and Natural Resource Economics*, 9th Edition. Pearson.

United Nations Development Program (2020), *Human Development Report 2020. The Next Frontier: Human Development and the Anthropocene*.