



JAGIELLONIAN
UNIVERSITY
IN KRAKÓW

Introduction to Sustainability Ethics

Educational subject description sheet

Basic information

Field of study Joint Bachelor in Sustainability		Education cycle 2025/26	
Speciality Social Sciences & Humanities		Subject code UJ.WPAJBSSSHS.840.16580.25	
Organizational unit Faculty of Law and Administration		Lecture languages english	
Study level first cycle (joint degree programme)		Subject related to scientific research Yes	
Study form full-time degree programme		Disciplines Philosophy, Learning about the culture and religion	
Education profile General academic		ISCED classification 0223 Philosophy and ethics	
Mandatory obligatory		USOS code	
Subject coordinator	Piotr Szwedo		
Lecturer	Michael Coors		
Period Semester 3	Examination graded credit	Number of ECTS points 3.0	
	Activities and hours Discussion class: 28		

Goals

C1	The primary goal of this course is to provide students with a foundational understanding of the ethical principles and theories that underpin sustainability, with a particular emphasis on the concept of responsibility. The course will explore key ethical dilemmas, issues, and applications in the context of sustainability, balancing theoretical exploration with practical reflection. By the end of the course, students will be equipped to critically analyze and engage with ethical questions related to sustainability and take responsibility in their personal and professional lives.
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Subject's learning outcomes

Code	Outcomes in terms of	Effects	Examination methods
Knowledge - Student knows and understands:			
W1	key normative principles underpinning sustainability and their ethical implications.	JBS_K1_W01, JBS_K1_W02, JBS_K1_W06, JBS_K1_W07	credit with grade, essay
W2	the main ethical dilemmas and issues surrounding sustainability concepts, practices, and policies, emphasizing responsible action.	JBS_K1_W03, JBS_K1_W04, JBS_K1_W06, JBS_K1_W07	credit with grade, essay
Skills - Student can:			
U1	apply ethical concepts and theories to analyze sustainability issues (at the level of ideas and concrete practices).	JBS_K1_U02	credit with grade, essay
U2	critically evaluate and discuss current sustainability themes regarding their ethical implications.	JBS_K1_U01	credit with grade, essay
Social competences - Student is ready for:			
K1	to engage in informed and respectful ethical debates related to sustainability, advocating for responsible actions.	JBS_K1_K03, JBS_K1_K04	credit with grade, essay
K2	to advocate for ethical practices in sustainability and take responsibility for these practices in various social and professional contexts.	JBS_K1_K01, JBS_K1_K02	credit with grade, essay

Calculation of ECTS points

Activity form	Activity hours*	
Discussion class	28	
preparation for classes	24	
essay preparation	38	
Student workload	Hours 90	ECTS 3.0

* hour means 45 minutes

Study content

No.	Course content	Subject's learning outcomes
1.	<p>Introduction to the Course</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of course objectives and structure. • Clarification of organizational matters. • Introduction to key concepts in sustainability and ethics, focusing on responsibility. 	W1, W2
2.	<p>Foundations of Ethical Theory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of major ethical theories: consequentialism, deontology, virtue ethics. • Discussion of how these theories emphasize responsibility in sustainability. • Critical analysis of strengths and weaknesses of each theory. 	W1, W2
3.	<p>Concepts of Sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition and normative principles of sustainability. • Historical development of the concept. • Sustainability conceptions from an ethical perspective. 	W1, W2
4.	<p>Environmental Ethics and Responsibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethical perspectives on human-environment interactions. • Deep ecology, biocentrism, ecocentrism, and their implications for responsibility. • Case studies on environmental policy and nature conservation. 	W1, W2, U1, U2, K1
5.	<p>Social Justice, Responsibility, and Sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intersection of social justice and sustainability. • Issues of equity, access, and responsibility in sustainability. • Case studies on environmental racism, global inequality. 	W1, W2, U1, U2, K1
6.	<p>Intergenerational Justice and Responsibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethical considerations of obligations to future generations. • Theories of intergenerational justice and responsible stewardship. • Case studies on climate change, resource depletion. 	W1, W2, U1, U2, K1

No.	Course content	Subject's learning outcomes
7.	Ethical Dilemmas and Responsibility in Sustainability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common ethical dilemmas in sustainability practices. • Balancing economic growth, environmental protection, and responsibility. • Discussion and analysis of real-world scenarios emphasizing responsible decision-making. 	W1, W2, U1, U2, K1
8.	Corporate Responsibility and Sustainability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsibilities of businesses towards sustainability. • Concepts of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and their ethical implications. • Case studies on corporate sustainability practices and responsible business conduct. 	W1, W2, U1, U2, K1, K2
9.	Consumer Responsibility and Sustainability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethical implications of consumer choices. • Potential and limits of sustainable consumption. • Case studies on fair trade, ethical consumerism. 	W1, W2, U1, U2, K1, K2
10.	Government Responsibility and Sustainability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethical considerations and responsibilities in sustainability policy-making. • Principles of good governance and responsible leadership in sustainability. • Analysis of the ethical implications of sustainability governance frameworks. 	W1, W2, U1, U2, K1
11.	Science and Technology Responsibility for Sustainability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethical issues and responsibilities related to technological solutions for sustainability. • Debate on the role of technology in achieving responsible sustainability. • Case studies: renewable energy, geoengineering. 	W1, W2, U1, U2, K1
12.	Cultural Perspectives on Sustainability and Responsibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role of cultural values and beliefs in shaping sustainability ethics. • Comparison of sustainability ethics and responsibility across different cultures. • Case studies: indigenous perspectives, global South. 	W1, W2, U1, U2, K1

No.	Course content	Subject's learning outcomes
13.	Personal and Professional Responsibility for Sustainability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethical responsibilities of individuals in promoting sustainability. • Integration of sustainability ethics and responsibility into professional practices. • Reflection on personal values, actions, and responsible behavior. 	W1, W2, U1, U2, K1, K2
14.	Course Summary, Reflection, and Responsibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recap of key themes and concepts covered in the course. • Reflection on learning outcomes, personal growth, and responsibility. • Discussion on future directions and applications of sustainability ethics, emphasizing responsible action. 	W1, W2, U1, U2, K1, K2

Course advanced

Teaching methods :

lecture with multimedia presentation, discussion, case study

Activities	Examination methods	Credit conditions
Discussion class	credit with grade, essay	Active participation including group presentations and exercises (non-graded); individually written essay (graded)

Entry requirements

None

Literature

Obligatory

1. Gardiner, S. M., & Thompson, A. (Eds.). (2017). The Oxford handbook of environmental ethics. Oxford University Press.
2. Jamieson, D. (2014). Reason in a dark time: Why the struggle against climate change failed—and what it means for our future. Oxford University Press.
3. Norton, B. G. (2005). Sustainability: A philosophy of adaptive ecosystem management. University of Chicago Press.
4. Rolston, H. III. (2020). A new environmental ethics: The next millennium for life on Earth (2nd edition). Routledge.

Effects

Code	Content
JBS_K1_K01	The graduate can encourage sustainability-driven practices in the workplace and appraise sustainability of own values, perceptions, roles, and actions, with a special focus on environmental wellbeing.
JBS_K1_K02	The graduate can demonstrate considerable entrepreneurial initiative, autonomy, and readiness to act in complex and changing environments, especially in the context of supporting, undertaking, and co-organising activities beneficial for a sustainable society.
JBS_K1_K03	The graduate can consider different visions of the future and develop own evidence-based opinions in reference to the balance of values linked to economic development, social welfare, and environmental protection.
JBS_K1_K04	The graduate can critically assess and verbalize own competencies and skills related to different aspects of sustainability as well as their need for development.
JBS_K1_U01	The graduate can critically analyse academic literature, formulate research questions and conduct research under supervision.
JBS_K1_U02	The graduate can present and report knowledge, methodologies, ideas, problems and solutions, clearly and comprehensively, in different forms destined for different audiences – including discussions and debates which require defending a substantiated opinion, as well as conversations in a foreign language at the CEFR B2 level.
JBS_K1_W01	The graduate can describe the concept of sustainability and recognize the differences in relevant definitions, models and approaches.
JBS_K1_W02	The graduate can explain the axiological background of sustainability and summarize key stages of development of the concept.
JBS_K1_W03	The graduate can give examples of sustainability-related dilemmas and hypothesize on the optimal course of action.
JBS_K1_W04	The graduate can identify sustainability-related problems specific to selected cultural, geographical, and political contexts.
JBS_K1_W06	The graduate can describe interconnections between various aspects of sustainability and identify their significance in the context of natural and social sciences, with a special focus on disciplines included in the selected specialisation track (law and politics; chemistry and physics; chemistry and biology; economics and geography; economics, management and engineering; humanities).
JBS_K1_W07	The graduate can apply the theory and methodology of disciplines included in the selected specialisation track to sustainability-related problems, taking into consideration practical limitations such as protection of intellectual property.