

## Introduction to Humanities and Social Science Perspective on Sustainability

### Educational subject description sheet

#### Basic information

<p><b>Field of study</b> Joint Bachelor in Sustainability</p> <p><b>Speciality</b> -</p> <p><b>Organizational unit</b> Faculty of Law and Administration</p> <p><b>Study level</b> first cycle (joint degree programme)</p> <p><b>Study form</b> full-time degree programme</p> <p><b>Education profile</b> General academic</p> <p><b>Mandatory</b> obligatory</p>		<p><b>Education cycle</b> 2025/26</p> <p><b>Subject code</b> UJ.WPAJBSS.820.16352.25</p> <p><b>Lecture languages</b> english</p> <p><b>Subject related to scientific research</b> Yes</p> <p><b>Disciplines</b> Sociology of science, Learning about the culture and religion</p> <p><b>ISCED classification</b> 0288 Interdisciplinary programmes involving broad field 02</p> <p><b>USOS code</b></p>	
<b>Subject coordinator</b>	Piotr Szwedo		
<b>Lecturer</b>	Piotr Szwedo		
<b>Period</b> Semester 2	<b>Examination</b> graded credit	<b>Number of ECTS points</b> 4.0	<b>Activities and hours</b> Lecture with elements of a discussion class: 32

## Goals

C1	This course is designed to introduce students to the interdisciplinary field of sustainability studies from the perspectives of the humanities and social sciences. Guided by the question of how societies take responsibility for sustainability, students will explore the conceptual and historical foundations of sustainability, examine relevant theoretical perspectives and concepts, and analyze empirical evidence from different societal and cultural contexts. The course will highlight the role of social scientists and humanities scholars and the methods they use in analyzing and addressing sustainability issues. In so doing, it will encourage students to think critically about and constructively engage with (un)sustainable transformation pathways and societal responses to sustainability challenges, such as climate, biodiversity, energy, food, and mobility.
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## Subject's learning outcomes

Code	Outcomes in terms of	Effects	Examination methods
<b>Knowledge - Student knows and understands:</b>			
W1	the key conceptual and historical foundations of sustainability.	JBS_K1_W01, JBS_K1_W02	credit with grade, project, essay
W2	the foundations and implications of various theoretical perspectives and empirical evidence related to sustainability problems and solutions.	JBS_K1_W04, JBS_K1_W06	credit with grade, project, essay
<b>Skills - Student can:</b>			
U1	explore sustainability issues from the perspectives of social sciences and humanities.	JBS_K1_U02	credit with grade, project, essay
U2	critically evaluate sustainability research from the social sciences and humanities.	JBS_K1_U01	credit with grade, project, essay
<b>Social competences - Student is ready for:</b>			
K1	to engage in informed academic and societal discussions on sustainability topics.	JBS_K1_K02, JBS_K1_K03	credit with grade, project, essay
K2	to collaborate effectively in group work addressing specific questions on sustainability.	JBS_K1_K02, JBS_K1_K04	credit with grade, project, essay

## Calculation of ECTS points

Activity form	Activity hours*
Lecture with elements of a discussion class	32
preparation for classes	20
preparation of a multimedia presentation	15
essay preparation	40
<b>Student workload</b>	<b>Hours</b> 107
	<b>ECTS</b> 4.0

\* 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"> <li>• Overview of course objectives and structure</li> <li>• Introduction to the sociology of sustainability: key concepts and scope</li> <li>• Clarification of organizational matters and course expectations</li> <li>• Discussion on the importance of interdisciplinary approaches</li> <li>• Initial student engagement activity: Sustainability World Café</li> </ul>	W1, W2, U1, U2, K1, K2
2.	<p>Historical and Conceptual Foundations of Sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historical development of sustainability concepts</li> <li>• Key milestones in sustainability discourse</li> <li>• Influences of early environmental and social movements</li> <li>• Introduction to the UN 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)</li> <li>• Moral dimensions of sustainability</li> </ul>	W1, W2, U1, U2, K1, K2
3.	<p>Humanities Perspectives on Sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ethical and philosophical foundations of sustainability</li> <li>• Concepts from environmental ethics and eco-philosophy</li> <li>• Cultural and historical perspectives on human-environment interactions</li> <li>• Critical engagement with sustainability as an idea</li> <li>• Case studies on ethical dilemmas and conflicts in sustainability</li> </ul>	W1, W2, U1, U2, K1, K2
4.	<p>Social Science Perspectives on Sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social science foundations: structure and agency, levels of analysis</li> <li>• Economic, sociological and political explanations of unsustainability</li> <li>• Theories of societal transformations, conflicts, and crises</li> <li>• Empirical examples illustrating social science perspectives</li> <li>• Class debate on the strengths and weaknesses of different theories</li> </ul>	W1, W2, U1, U2, K1, K2

No.	Course content	Subject's learning outcomes
5.	<p>Cultural Dimensions of Sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role of culture in shaping sustainability practices, including indigenous knowledge and traditional ecological practices.</li> <li>• Comparative analysis of cultural approaches to sustainability, examining differences and similarities across global cultures.</li> <li>• Impact of (post-)colonialism on current sustainability challenges and environmental justice.</li> <li>• Exploration of how identity (race, gender, ethnicity) influences environmental interactions and sustainability efforts.</li> <li>• Case studies and examples of cultural sustainability initiatives, with student presentations and discussions on their implications for global sustainability.</li> </ul>	W1, W2, U1, U2, K1, K2
6.	<p>Understanding Unsustainable Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis of unsustainable development paths</li> <li>• Role of economic systems, industrialization, and neoliberalization</li> <li>• Impacts on climate, biodiversity, energy, and food systems</li> <li>• Case studies from different cultural contexts</li> <li>• Interactive activity: mapping unsustainable practices</li> </ul>	W1, W2, U1, U2, K1, K2
7.	<p>Societal Transformations for Sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Theories and models of societal transformation</li> <li>• Role of technology, digitalization, and innovation in sustainability transitions</li> <li>• Case studies on transformative changes in mobility, food, and energy systems</li> <li>• Discussion on the role of crises in driving transformation</li> <li>• Group exercise: envisioning a sustainable future society</li> </ul>	W1, W2, U1, U2, K1, K2
8.	<p>Societal Responses to Sustainability Challenges I</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government policies, international agreements, and governance contexts</li> <li>• Role of public sector and policy-making in sustainability</li> <li>• Transformations of governance and democracy</li> <li>• Case studies on governmental responses in climate, biodiversity, and mobility</li> <li>• Group project: designing a policy framework for sustainability</li> </ul>	W1, W2, U1, U2, K1, K2

No.	Course content	Subject's learning outcomes
9.	Societal Responses to Sustainability Challenges II <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community-based and grassroots sustainability initiatives</li> <li>• Role of civil society, NGOs, and social movements in promoting sustainability</li> <li>• Corporate social responsibility and sustainable business practices</li> <li>• Counter-globalization movements and local sustainability efforts</li> <li>• Case studies on societal responses across different actor types</li> </ul>	W1, W2, U1, U2, K1, K2
10.	Communication and Advocacy for Sustainability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategies for effective communication on sustainability issues</li> <li>• Role of media and public discourse in shaping sustainability agendas</li> <li>• Techniques for advocacy and public engagement</li> <li>• Case studies on successful sustainability campaigns in various fields</li> <li>• Workshop: developing a sustainability communication plan</li> </ul>	W1, W2, U1, U2, K1, K2
11.	Current Issues and Debates in Sustainability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examination of contemporary sustainability issues</li> <li>• Critical analysis of debates on climate change, biodiversity loss, and energy transitions</li> <li>• Discussion on the SDGs and their implementation</li> <li>• Case studies on societal conflicts and crises related to sustainability</li> <li>• Student-led discussions on future directions for sustainability</li> </ul>	W1, W2, U1, U2, K1, K2
12.	Course Summary and Reflections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recap of key concepts and perspectives covered in the course</li> <li>• Student presentations on sustainability projects</li> <li>• Reflection on personal learning and future applications</li> <li>• Discussion on the role of social sciences and humanities in sustainability research</li> <li>• Final group activity: collaborative creation of a sustainability manifesto</li> </ul>	W1, W2, U1, U2, K1, K2

### **Course advanced**

**Teaching methods :**

text analysis, brainstorming, conversation lecture, discussion

Activities	Examination methods	Credit conditions
Lecture with elements of a discussion class	credit with grade, project, essay	Portfolio (graded), including the following elements: • Short input (group presentation) (30% of grade) • Individual and group exercises (20% of grade) • Essay exploring a sustainability topic from social sciences and humanities perspectives (40% of grade). • Participation and contribution to discussions (10% of the final grade).

## Entry requirements

None

## Literature

### Obligatory

1. Dryzek, J. S. (2013). *The Politics of the Earth: Environmental Discourses* (3rd ed.). Oxford University Press.
2. Redclift, M., & Woodgate, G. (Eds.). (2010). *The International Handbook of Environmental Sociology* (2nd ed.). Edward Elgar Publishing.
3. Keller, D. R. (Ed.). (2010). *Environmental Ethics: The Big Questions*. Wiley-Blackwell.
4. Conca, K., & Dabelko, G. D. (Eds.). (2015). *Green Planet Blues: Critical Perspectives on Global Environmental Politics* (5th ed.). Westview Press.
5. Gabrielson, T., Hall, C., Meyer, J. M., & Schlosberg, D. (Eds.). (2016). *The Oxford Handbook of Environmental Political Theory*. Oxford University Press.
6. Linnér, B.-O., & Wibeck, V. (2019). *Sustainability Transformations: Agents and Drivers across Societies*. Cambridge University Press.
7. Meadowcroft, J., Banister, D., Holden, E., Langhelle, O., Linnerud, K., & Gilpin, G. (Hrsg.). (2019). *What Next for Sustainable Development?: Our Common Future at Thirty*. Edward Elgar Publishing.

## Effects

Code	Content
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_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).