Course syllabus IMEN02

Föreställningar om hållbarhet
Conceptualisations of Sustainability

IMEN02, 5 credits, A (Second Cycle)

Valid for: 2018-2019 XAMIS
Decided by: PLED W
Date of Decision: 2018-03-22

General Information

Main field: Environmental Management and Policy. Depth of study relative to the degree requirements: Second cycle, has only first-cycle course/s as entry requirements.
Compulsory for: XA_EMP1
Language of instruction: The course will be given in English

Aim

It is widely recognized that sustainability-related challenges are systemic in their nature. Effective interventions towards a sustainable society require therefore the need to take a system-oriented perspective into account. Most analytical and operational concepts that are currently being widely considered as relevant templates for, or roadmaps towards sustainable development, are based on systems and/or life cycle logics. The aim of this course is to introduce the students to key sustainability concepts with a particular focus on fundamental principles and concepts that embody system- and life cycle-oriented ways of thinking. In addition to an introduction on these key concepts, and their terminology and logics, it is the aim of the course to develop students’ capability to critically reflect upon their applicability and contribution. Furthermore, the course aims to enable students to critically discuss the issues of justice, influence and equitability in relation to sustainable development.

Learning outcomes

Knowledge and understanding
For a passing grade the student must

• demonstrate an ability to describe and apply the logic and principles of systems thinking in the context of environmental challenges and sustainable development;
• demonstrate an ability to describe, discuss, contrast and understand controversies related to key ideals/concepts of relevance in the public discourse on sustainable development, including definitions and interpretations of sustainable development, the Sustainable Development Goals, the Natural Step’s four sustainability principles, life cycle thinking, as well as circular economy concepts;
• be able to discuss and explain causes of the issue of justice, influence and equitability in relation to sustainable development, and the potential trade-offs that such solutions may entail (e.g. distributional and inter-generational aspects);
• be able to describe and contrast definitions of desired/sustainable behaviour on an individual, organizational, local, regional and global level; and
• be able to recognise and illustrate a life-cycle perspective on production and consumption systems.

Competences and skills
For a passing grade the student must

• demonstrate an ability to plan and execute course assignments within given time limits, using relevant
methods for completing the assignment;
• demonstrate an ability to work effectively in a group with members of diverse disciplinary and national background;
• demonstrate an ability to communicate the value of sustainability and how this relates to justice to the general public; and
• be able to develop and present multimedia content via web-based communication tools.

Judgement and approach
For a passing grade the student must
• demonstrate a capability to reflect on how their own ways of thinking are based on certain values, which are affected by, and impact upon, others and the world around them.

Contents
The course consists of three modules.
• Systems module: The module is intended to provide a basis in systems thinking. Key ideas and concepts introduced include: definitions and interpretations of sustainable development, key historical moments and milestones in the environmental and sustainable development movement, the sustainable development goals, the natural step's four sustainability principles, life cycle thinking, circular economy concepts.

• Life-cycle module: In this module, students explore a distinct production and consumption value chain in order to gain a life-cycle perspective on a specific product or service. The exercise includes study visits to organizations/firms that operate within this value chain. The exercise involves the identification of intervention points, as well as reflection about the challenges to trigger change in value chains.

• Communication module: In this module, students are required to describe, explain and critique concepts related to a sustainability topic to a layperson audience. The means of communication is a web-based multimedia presentation.

Examination details
Grading scale: TH - (U,3,4,5) - (Fail, Three, Four, Five)
Assessment: Attendance during field visits and seminars is mandatory. 40% of the final grade is based on the two course assignments, and 60% on the exam.

The examiner, in consultation with Disability Support Services, may deviate from the regular form of examination in order to provide a permanently disabled student with a form of examination equivalent to that of a student without a disability.

Admission
Admission requirements:
• Students should have been admitted to the MSc Programme in Environmental Management and Policy
The number of participants is limited to: No
The course overlaps following course/s: IMEN09

Reading list
• According to a literature list that will be available at the latest eight weeks before start of the course on the course web page.

Contact and other information
Course coordinator: Lars Strupeit, lars.strupeit@iiiee.lu.se
Course coordinator: Bernadette Kiss, bernadette.kiss@iiiee.lu.se
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Course homepage: http://www.iiiee.lu.se/education/emp/curriculum