

Program 2024

“Sustainability, Climate Change, and Democracy”

Workload: 64 hours

Course Description

Sustainability encompasses the capacity to fulfill current needs while safeguarding the potential of forthcoming generations to ensure their own requirements. It is about finding a balance between human needs, environmental care, and economic viability. Sustainability crosses every instance of our lives and it is us, through citizen participation and the good exercise of democracy, who can pave the way for its correct development.

Every year, sustainability becomes increasingly pertinent in our lives, driven not only by heightened awareness of global environmental challenges but also by the very real threat of climate change

Students will try to understand the importance of applying and evolving sustainable development goals in our lives, as well as the essentiality for the development of Latin America and Argentina. They will take a look at environmental policies and challenges faced by local communities in the face of the continuous natural resource exploitation, as well as the importance of local and international organizations that support, defend, and contribute to such development. Also the role of fake news in the face of climate change and the SDGs, how developed and developing countries position themselves in the face of climate change, boundaries faced by urban planning and agricultural economies, carbon footprint, and glimpses of a sustainable future in the region. Participants will study specific cases of massive environmental exploitation occurring in the north and south of Argentina.

Goals

The course aims to provide students with a broader understanding of the current situation of climate change, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and how these issues are addressed by international organizations, local NGOs, and the media. In addition, the course provides an immersion into a sustainable environment.

Bibliography

The bibliography will be available on a Google Drive, and on the Kulturstudier website.

Course contents

The course focuses on the following topics:

- Sustainability in Latin America and Argentina
- Democracy, public policies, the importance of institutions, and citizen participation in sustainability.
- Sustainable development goals and their implementation in Argentina and Latin America.
- Exploitation of natural resources in Argentina.
- Climate change: its mitigation and how we adapt to it.
- The role of developed and developing countries on the road to sustainability.

Academic Calendar

Below, students will find the content and distribution of classes week by week during their stay in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

- The class load per week will be 4 hours, except for the 1st week, which will be 2 hours, the 9th week, which will be 6 hours, and the 10th week, which will be 8 hours.

1st Week

Introductory class on course content and study program.

2nd Week

Class 1: *Strong institutions, citizen participation and democracy as a path to sustainability (SDG 16) - 1st part.*

- Michael Peters (2019) **“Can democracy solve the sustainability crisis? Green politics, grassroots participation and the failure of the sustainability paradigm”**. Educational Philosophy and Theory,
- Astrid Nilsson, others (2021) **“Citizen participation for sustainable cities”**. Stockholm Environment Institute
- Better policies for better lives (2016) **“Innovative Citizen Participation and New Democratic Institutions”**. OECD, Better policies for better lives platform.
- Lisa-Maria Glass, Jens Newig (2019) **“Governance for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals: How important are participation, policy coherence, reflexivity, adaptation and democratic institutions?”**. Earth System Governance.

3rd Week

Class 2: *Sustainable Development Goals in Latin America and Argentina: Which SDGs are not reaching the established goals?*

- United Nations (2018) **“The 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals: An opportunity for Latin America and the Caribbean”** SDG platform.
- Students will have the freedom to research the SDGs that interest them most and bring their contribution to the class.

Preparation workshop for COP-Escazú simulation model - 1st part

4th Week

Class 3: *Environmental policies in Argentina: the current situation of lithium, water reserves, deforestation and wetlands.*

- OECD Studies on Water (2019) “**Water Governance in Argentina**” Rastreator: <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/a76fd8a3-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/a76fd8a3-en>
- Fred Pearce (2022) “**Why the Rush to Mine Lithium Could Dry Up the High Andes**” Rastreator: <https://e360.yale.edu/features/lithium-mining-water-andes-argentina>
- Cecilia Fernández Castañón (2022) “**The true cost of Argentina’s Lithium rush**” Rastreator: <https://www.fairplanet.org/story/the-true-cost-of-argentinas-lithium-rush/>
- Virginia Tognola (2020) “**Activists Call for Legislation to Protect Argentina’s Wetlands**” Rastrator: <https://nacla.org/argentina-wetlands-protection>
- Andrea del Rio (2023) “**The Wetlands: the heart of Argentine biodiversity**” Rastrator: <https://buenosairesherald.com/what-to-do-in-argentina/around-argentina/the-wetlands-the-heart-of-argentine-biodiversity>

Academic Writing Seminar

5th Week

Class 4: *Sustainable development in local communities and the role of Civil Society Organizations: How to move forward in order to face the economic crisis and climate change.*

- Garnett Balmford (2022) “**The vital role of organizations in protecting climate and nature**”
- George Ingram (2020) “**Civil society: An essential ingredient of development**” Rastrator: <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/civil-society-an-essential-ingredient-of-development/>
- Fonseca (2022) “**Sustainability and social transformation: the role of ecovillages in confluence with the pluriverse of community-led alternatives**”

Environmental Roundtable Discussion

6th Week

Class 5: Exploitation of Natural Resources in Latin America: socio-environmental conflicts and challenges with local communities.

- McNeish, John Andrew. (2018). **“Resource Extraction and Conflict in Latin America”**. Colombia Internacional.
- Svampa, Maristella. (2019). **“Neo-extractivism in Latin America: Socio-environmental Conflicts, the Territorial Turn and New Political Narratives”**. Cambridge Elements.

Class 6: Exploitation of natural resources in Argentina: socio-environmental conflicts and challenges with local communities. Cases of the NOA and Patagonia.

- Lucas Christel and Daniel Torunczyk (2017) **“Sovereignties in Conflict: Socio-environmental Mobilization and the Glaciers Law in Argentina”** Centrum voor Studie en Documentatie van Latijns Amerika.
- Ana Mariel Weinstock (2016) **“A Decade of Social and Environmental Mobilization Against Mega-Mining in Chubut, Argentinian Patagonia”**. Palgrave Studies in Green Criminology
- Mariana Walter, Lucrecia Wagner (2021) **“Mining struggles in Argentina. The keys of a successful story of mobilisation”**. The Extractive Industries and Society.
- Pia Marchegiani, Elisa Morgera and Louisa Parks (2019) **“Indigenous peoples’ rights to natural resources in Argentina: the challenges of impact assessment, consent and fair and equitable benefit-sharing in cases of lithium mining”**. The International Journal of Human Rights.

7th Week

Class 7: International Cooperation in Climate and Environmental Matters.

- Patt, A., L. Rajamani, P. Bhandari, A. Ivanova Boncheva, A. Caparrós, K. Djemouai, I. Kubota, J. Peel, A.P. Sari, D.F. Sprinz, J. Wettestad (2022) **“International Cooperation. Climate change 2022: Mitigation of Climate Change. Contribution of Working Group III to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change”**. IPCC.
- Wiliam Nordhaus (2020) **“The Climate Club: How to Fix a Failing Global Effort”**. Foreign Affairs.

Preparation workshop for COP-Escazú simulation model - 2nd part

8th Week

Reading Week

Reading Week

9th Week

Class 8: *Global population growth, and its impact on agricultural economies and sustainable urban planning.*

- Zhenhua Zhang, Mingcheng Zhao, Yunpeng Zhang, Yanchao Feng (2023) **“How does urbanization affect public health? New evidence from 175 countries worldwide”** *Frontiers in Public Health*.
- Richa Mahtta, others (2022) **“Urban land expansion: the role of population and economic growth for 300+ cities”** *npj Urban Sustainability*.
- Department of Economic and Social Affairs Population Division **“Global Population Growth and Sustainable Development”** *United Nations Platform*.

Simulation model of the Conference of the Parties.

10th Week

Field trip: Guided tour of the Costanera Sur Ecological Reserve

Simulation model of the Conference of the Parties.

11th Week

Class 9: *Carbon footprint and the Latin America situation: Climate change, mitigation and adaptation.*

- United Nations Development Programme. (2022) **“Guidance for Implementing National Voluntary Carbon Footprint Programs in Latin America”**. UNDP, New York.
- **UN Environment Programme (2020) “Zero Carbon: The opportunity, cost and benefits of the coupled decarbonization of the power and transport sectors in Latin America and the Caribbean”**. UN Environment Programme, Office for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Class 10: *Argentina's progress in environmental issues and steps towards a sustainable future: socio-environmental challenges.*

- The World Bank Group (2022) **“Country Climate and Development Report: Argentina”** World Bank Publications.
- The World Bank Group (2016) **“Argentina: Country Environmental Analysis”** World Bank Publications.

12th Week

Class 11: *Mass media and the public agenda. How does the proliferation of disinformation and fake news influence the SDGs?*

- Stephan Lewandowsky (2021) **“Climate Change Disinformation and How to Combat It”**. The Annual Review of Public Health Platform.
- Yariv Tsfati (2020) **“Causes and consequences of mainstream media dissemination off fake news: literature review and synthesis”** Annals of the International Communication Association.

Fact-checking activity

13th Week

Class 12: *The situation of developed and developing countries in regard to climate change: green political polarization.*

- Amar Bhattacharya, Homi Kharas, and John W. McArthur (2023) “**Keys to Climate Action: How Developing Countries Could Drive Global Success and Local Prosperity**”. The Brookings Institution.
- Sedona Chinn, P. Sol Hart, and Stuart Soroka (2020) “**Politicization and Polarization in Climate Change News Content, 1985-2017**” SAGE Publications.

Fact-checking activity

14th Week

Environmental Roundtable Discussion

Consultations and follow-up of the final essay.

15th Week

Submission of final essay. (ONLINE)

16th Week

Delivery of grades and feedback.

Evaluation and grading

A) Evaluation criteria and approval requirements:

- Class participation (20%)

Student participation is extremely important throughout the course. Getting involved during class, bringing new ideas, and bringing topics for discussion will be necessary.

- Fact-checking deliveries (one per activity) (20%)

During the fact-checking activities, students will have to put into practice their skills as fact-checkers through the analysis of fake news and news that seek to misinform. The trainers will provide them with the tools to develop the activity and deliver the analysis at the end of the activity.

- Participation in the COP-Escazú Simulation Model (30%)

The students will participate in a simulation model of the Conference of the Parties to the Escazú Agreement, where they will research the topics addressed, prepare their speeches, debate, and negotiate to represent various countries of Latin America that are part of the Agreement.

- Final essay on course learning (30%)

At the end of the course, students must submit an essay on the knowledge acquired during the course, which must be reflective and must propose alternatives and solutions.

B) Class attendance:

A 75% class attendance will be required and the student who does not comply with this percentage will automatically receive an F. 0.5 points will be deducted each time the student incurs in an unexcused absence or does not hand in the work requested by the teacher in due time and form.

Absence from exams: make-up exams are a privilege only granted to those who give a week's notice of their absence with a justified cause.

Participation: Participation is an extremely important element in the learning experience. For this reason, cell phones must be turned off during class. They may only be turned on for exceptional reasons and with the teacher's permission. Those who do not comply with this rule will have their grade reduced.

C) Grades

Percent Description

10 (A) Excellent	100-95
9 (A-) Very Good	94-89
8 (B) Good	88-83
7 (B-) Above average	82-77
6 (C) Average	76-71
5 (C) Below average	70-65
4 (D) Passing	64-60
F Failed	59-0
W Disqualified	With Academic Advisor approval
I Incomplete	Only with advisor approval

Plagiarism: A critical objective of the course is for students to learn how to write essays. Students are then expected to write their papers. Plagiarism undermines the learning process and is a breach of university policy and intellectual honesty. When writing essays, the sources and bibliography should always be cited. Plagiarism will automatically receive an F. If you doubt what constitutes plagiarism, you should consult your instructor.

A paper written with the help of artificial intelligence will not be considered your original work and will not be evaluated.