

# Sustainability, Climate Change and Democracy.

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## 1. Presentation

This study guide will allow easy development and understanding of the subject throughout the 20 weeks of its duration (4 weeks of asynchronous self-study development and 16 weeks of synchronous and guided development in Buenos Aires, Argentina).

It is necessary to follow it with the [Course Description](#) file to get a global perception. In this study guide, students will find the course structure, due dates, corresponding assignments, contact with professors or the KulturStudier team in case of academic doubts, a bibliography of the topic, and different complementary links to web pages.

The readings below were selected to awaken each of your interest in topics such as sustainability, climate change, and democracy. This will, in turn, allow you to analyze how the concepts have different relevance and approaches in different latitudes.

By clicking on the blue titles, students can access the mentioned files easily.

## 2. Course content

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

It consists of lectures, seminars, workshops, a discussion event in the form of a Model Convention of the Parties of the Escazú Agreement (COP-Escazú), and fact-checking activities on how the media promotes fake news concerning climate change and sustainability.

**The course is divided into two sections:**

## Self-study section (4 weeks)

Prior to the trip and during four weeks, students must train and learn about the fundamental topics that will be covered during the course development in Argentina. This section will be asynchronous and self-taught. Participating students must write an essay on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) based on the recommended readings in the course bibliography. This essay is mandatory and individual and must be approved. It can be written in Spanish or English.

It is vital that students comply with the time allotted in the calendar to avoid delays and reading overload and that they become familiar with the syllabus before their trip to Argentina.

If students have any questions, please contact their academic coordinator at [sustainabilitycourse@minu.org](mailto:sustainabilitycourse@minu.org).

The bibliography can be found by clicking on the blue Mandatory [Bibliography heading](#) or the KulturStudier website. If you consider it necessary to print the course bibliography, we advise you to do it directly in Buenos Aires, as it is more affordable.

### **Guidelines for the Essay:**

- Individual Elaboration.
- The essay should have an initial page where students will write their first and last name and the title they assigned to their essay.
- 1500 words minimum, in 3 or 4 pages (not counting the initial page).
- Font: Times New Roman, font size: 12 pts, 1.5 line spacing, and 3 cm. margins throughout the document.
- The essay must be submitted by e-mail, and the file must have the following name: student's last name + ODS essay. For example, Messi, ODSessay.
- The essay should be sent to the academic coordinator's e-mail: [sustainabilitycourse@minu.org](mailto:sustainabilitycourse@minu.org). It can be written in Spanish or English, according to the student's preferences.

### **Assignment**

Students will have the possibility to choose one among the following options to develop:

### **Option 1:**

*Students will develop an essay on the Sustainable Development Goals in which they will have the freedom to choose 3 of the 17 goals, which must be related to each other and be linked to the influence of misinformation as an impediment to the development of these goals, as well as, to democratic development.*

### **Option 2:**

*Students will elaborate an essay on the Sustainable Development Goals. They will be free to choose 3 of the 17 goals and relate them to the current situation in Argentina and Latin America regarding sustainable development and the environment. They will also have to analyze how misinformation affects the region's climate change issue.*

The conclusions reached in the essay will give students the necessary knowledge and basis to face the classes in Argentina in a better way. It is recommended to avoid plagiarism and the use of artificial intelligence; that is to say, the essay must be self-elaborated.

### [Bibliography](#)

Woodbridge M. (2016) **“From MDGs to SDGs: What are the Sustainable Development Goals?”** Bonn, Germany. ICLEI, Local Governments for Sustainability. Pp.1-4

United Nations (2015) **“Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”**. Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform. New York: United Nations. Pp. 1-40

United Nations (2016) **“From the MDG’s to Sustainable Development for all”** United Nations Development Program Platform. New York: United Nations. Pp 63-73

United Nations (2023) **“The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023”**. Sustainable Development Goals Platform. New York: United Nations.

Stephan Lewandowsky (2021) **“Climate Change Disinformation and How to Combat It”**. The Annual Review of Public Health Platform.

J. Hardoy y G. Pandiella (2009) **“Urban poverty and vulnerability to climate change in Latin America”**. International Institute for Environment and Development.

## Guided section in Argentina (16 weeks)

It will be synchronous and take place in Buenos Aires, Argentina, at the Universidad Nacional de San Martín facilities. This section includes:

- 13 classes of 2 hours duration.
- 1 Seminar on academic writing, with a duration of 2 hours.
- 2 Environmental Roundtable Discussion of 2 hours each, with Leaders of Environmental NGOs and Institutions.
- 2 workshops of 2 hours of preparation for the Model of the Conference of the Parties of the Escazú Agreement (COP-Escazú).
- Participation in the COP-Ezcacú Model (2 days, 4 hours each).
- 2 Fact-checking activities of 2 hours each.
- Excursion of four hours to a sustainable environment near Buenos Aires.
- Delivery of a final essay on the content of the course.

To pass the course, students must submit an essay prior to their trip to Buenos Aires, Argentina, attend at least 75% of the classes, seminars, and activities, and submit a final essay. There will also be qualified participation in the classes and the Fact-checking activities.

### **Contents distributed by class**

#### ***First part of the course:***

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

Class 2: *Strong institutions, citizen participation and democracy as a path to sustainability (SDG 16) - 2nd part.*

Class 3: *Sustainable Development Goals in Latin America and Argentina: Which SDGs are not reaching the established goals?*

Class 4: *Environmental policies in Argentina: the current situation of lithium, water reserves, deforestation and wetlands.*

Class 5: *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.*

Class 6: *Exploitation of Natural Resources in Latin America: socio-environmental conflicts and challenges with local communities.*

Class 7: *Exploitation of natural resources in Argentina: socio-environmental conflicts and challenges with local communities. Cases of the NOA and Patagonia.*

Class 8: *International Cooperation in Climate and Environmental Matters.*

**Second part of the course:**

Class 9: *Global population growth, and its impact on agricultural economies and sustainable urban planning.*

Class 10: *Carbon footprint and the Latin America situation: Climate change, mitigation and adaptation.*

Class 11: *The situation of developed and developing countries in regard to climate change: green political polarization.*

Class 12: *Mass media and the public agenda. How does the proliferation of disinformation and fake news influence the SDGs?*

Class 13: *Argentina's progress in environmental issues and steps towards a sustainable future: socio-environmental challenges.*

Students will have the opportunity to dive into the cultures, history, and policies of the country, having the possibility to understand the economic, social, and environmental complex of Argentina and Latin America.

## Excursion

This will be a four-hour guided tour of a sustainable environment near Buenos Aires. Its purpose will be for students to get to know each other and discover a different environment, the area's development, the inhabitants' relationship with the ecosystem, and the importance of wetlands. This trip will have a theoretical and practical approach.

## Environmental Roundtable Discussion

Environmental Roundtable Discussions will be with leaders from local NGOs and/or International Organizations. The content will be defined according to the participating institutions. Some of them could be:

- Asociación Sustentar
- Ecohouse.
- Fundación Ambiente y Recursos Naturales.
- Fundación Biosfera.
- Fundación Vida Silvestre
- Jóvenes por el Clima.
- United Nations Development Program.
- Sustentabilidad sin fronteras

## Fact-Checking Activities

Through fact-checking activities, students will seek to reflect on the spread of fake news related to climate change, sustainability, and other environmental issues. In addition, tools will be provided to combat misinformation generated around environmental issues.

The activity, divided into two workshops, will focus on the complexities of digital content and how it spreads quickly in social networks and mass media. It will also rethink the role of youth in the digital environment, both as consumers and as producers and reproducers of information.

- The topics to be discussed will be:
  - Information bubbles.
  - Polarization, hate speeches, and cognitive biases.
  - Cognitive dissonances.

- Checking news.
- Tools against disinformation.

## Simulation Model

What are they? They are a non-formal educational proposal that promises a safe space where a series of academic and theoretical contents are configured, as well as a social experience and an articulation of roles.

In the Model of the Conference of the Parties of the Escazú Agreement (COP-Escazú), students will carry out a simulation of the system of international relations within the scope of the United Nations with its structure, protocol, and accurate functioning. Each participant will have to "put themselves in the shoes" of a representative of the various countries that comprise the organisation and represent their culture and thoughts. The main objective of a Simulation Model is that each participant achieves from the development of the event - in addition to previous training - critical knowledge of international reality, diversity of ideas and cultures, tolerance development through negotiation practices to reach consensuses, and learning skills such as public speaking, reflective analysis, and decision making.

### Development of the Model

Previous training: Participants will have two training sessions, two hours each, dictated by the team of the MiNU Association. During these sessions, the rules to be followed during the model will be taught, as well as the different instances of the model, its development, and the particular topic to be discussed.

During two days of four hours each, participants will gather at the Universidad Nacional de San Martín facilities, where the simulation will take place.

**Theme of the Model:** *SDG 12, Responsible production and consumption.*

## Final Essay

This final essay will reflect on what students have learned during the course. They will be able to raise the problems they have observed regarding sustainable development, climate change, and sustainability in Argentina. Additionally, Students will be able to propose solutions according to the country's history, culture, economy, and society.

### **Guidelines for the Essay:**

- Individual Elaboration.
- The essay should have an initial page where students will write their first and last names and the title they assigned to their essay.
- 7 or 10 pages (not counting the initial page).
- Font: Times New Roman, font size: 12 pts, 1.5 line spacing, and 3 cm margins throughout the document.
- The essay must be submitted by e-mail and the file must have the following name: Student's last name + Final essay. Example: Messi, FINALessay.
- The essay should be sent to the academic coordinator's e-mail: sustainabilitycourse@minu.org. It can be written in Spanish or English.