



## GRADUATE SCHOOL

### **GM0212 Strategic Environmental Assessment - Integrating Environment in Strategic Planning and Decision-making, 7.5 credits**

Strategic Environmental Assessment - Integrating Environment in Strategic Planning and Decision-making, 7,5 högskolepoäng

*Second Cycle*

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#### **Confirmation**

This course syllabus was confirmed by School of Business, Economics and Law on 2010-10-07 and was last revised on 2018-05-28 by Graduate School to be valid from 2018-09-03, autumn semester of 2018.

*Field of education:* Social Sciences 100%

*Department:* Graduate School

#### **Position in the educational system**

The course Strategic Environmental Assessment - Integrating Environment in Strategic Planning and Decision Making is a course within the Master of Science programmes at the Graduate School, School of Business, Economics and Law, University of Gothenburg.

#### *Main field of studies*

Environmental Management and Economics

#### *Specialization*

A1N, Second cycle, has only first-cycle course/s as entry requirements

#### **Entry requirements**

To be eligible for the course Strategic Environmental Assessment– Integrating Environment in Strategic Planning and Decision-making, the participant must fulfil the entrance qualifications for one of the Master of Science programmes at the Graduate School.

#### **Learning outcomes**

After completion of this course, the student shall be able to:

1. describe and analyze strategic environmental issues pertaining to policies, and investment plans and programs.
2. understand decision making processes linked with political, legal, economic, corporate and ecological systems.
3. explain i) why environmental considerations have not been appropriately integrated in strategic planning, decision-making and implementation, and ii) procedural, process and institutional factors that may affect the outcome (attaining environmental objectives) of a strategic action.
4. apply strategic environmental assessment approaches in different contexts and at different levels of decision making.
5. present working material, findings and conclusions orally and in written texts.

The course is sustainability-focused, which means that at least one of the learning outcomes clearly shows that the course content meets at least one of the University of Gothenburg's confirmed sustainability criteria. The content also constitutes the course's main focus.

### **Course content**

Large companies and governments increasingly face environmental and climate challenges in their planning, investments, decision-making and operations. They imply risks to investments and implementation of policies, plans and programs. Companies and governments also face goal conflicts and trade-offs between ensuring environmental sustainability objectives and other objectives such as increasing production, expanding markets, boosting economic growth or increasing employment.

Strategic environmental assessment (SEA) constitutes a formalized approach to address environmental challenges, and reconcile goal conflicts/trade-offs. It is a practical tool as well as a legal procedure which businesses and government agencies increasingly need to follow in their planning and operations in developed and developing countries. The aim of the course is to present and discuss key concepts of SEA, and promote an understanding of environmental integration in strategic planning and decision making across key actors.

The course is concerned with the general issue of integrating environmental sustainability considerations in strategic planning and decision-making, including Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), with a particular focus on the role of institutions, and the role of norms, values and behavior for attaining sustainable development.

Concepts from decision- and policy-making theories are introduced to explain the general setting for decision-making of strategic actions. This includes analyzing decision-making in policies, and investment plans and programs. The course teaches skills that are useful and required for professional use. It investigates the role of institutions, and political-economy factors for large companies' and government agencies' planning, decision-making and effective environmental management. Further, it explores a wide range of examples from Sweden, EU, OECD and developing countries. The students explore why environmental considerations are often poorly integrated in strategic planning and policymaking, and learn how SEA approaches can be adapted and designed to different contexts. The course also deals with legal aspects and frameworks of different countries applying SEA.

### **Form of teaching**

Form of teaching include: lectures, group discussions, literature seminars, group work, student presentations.

*Language of instruction:* English

### **Assessment**

The course comprises a series of lectures and literature seminars. In order to facilitate reading and good understanding of literature seminars and participatory discussions will be held during the course.

Literature seminars: Literature seminars will be held at two occasions and are compulsory. As preparation for the seminars the students are required to read scientific articles, reports or other texts that are recommended and/or assigned. The students will write short texts based on a set of questions. The texts are handed in to the responsible lecturers and serve as a basis for the student's preparation and participation in the literature seminar discussions. The written text and the participation in the literature seminar are formally examined.

Examination: The examination is based on each student's individual performance in the various tasks and assignments included in the course. The individual assessment is decisive for the assessment, examination and grading of each student.

The examination is based on the outcomes of the literature seminars (including two brief reports and group discussions) and a written exam. The exam is done in the form of a written home assignment and examined on an individual basis. The learning outcomes are assessed based on the student's performance on the literature seminars (including the oral presentations and written texts/reports) and the written exam.

If a student, who has failed the same examined component twice, wishes to change examiner before the next examination, a written application shall be sent to the department responsible for the course and shall be granted unless there are special reasons to the contrary (Chapter 6, Section 22 of Higher Education Ordinance).

In cases where a course has been discontinued or has undergone major changes, the student shall normally be guaranteed at least three examination occasions (including the ordinary examination) during a period of at least one year from the last time the course was given.

The number of examinations is limited to five.

### **Grades**

The grading scale comprises: Pass with Distinction (VG), Pass (G) and Fail (U). Students are awarded points based on their performance in the literature seminars (including the oral presentations and reports) and the written exam. Acquiring Pass on the course requires at least 50% of the total amount of the points assigned in the course; Pass with Distinction requires at least 75% of the total points. Fail is given for students acquiring less than 50% of the total amount of the points of the course.

### **Course evaluation**

The course will be evaluated upon completion. The results of and possible changes to the course will be shared with students who participated in the evaluation and students who are starting the course.