



GRADUATE SCHOOL

GM1215 Strategic Sustainability Assessment - Integrating Environment and Economics in Strategic Decision-making, 7.5 credits

Strategisk hållbarhetsbedömning - Integrering av miljö och ekonomi i strategiskt beslutsfattande, 7,5 högskolepoäng

Second Cycle

Confirmation

This course syllabus was confirmed by Graduate School on 2020-04-01 to be valid from 2020-08-31, autumn semester of 2020.

Field of education: Social Sciences 100%

Department: Graduate School

Position in the educational system

The course Strategic Sustainability Assessment - Integrating Environment and Economics in Strategic 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 Sustainability Assessment - Integrating Environment and Economics in Strategic Decision-making, the participant must fulfil the entrance qualifications for one of the Master of Science programmes at the Graduate School.

Learning outcomes

On successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. describe and analyze strategic sustainability issues pertaining to policies, and investment plans and programmes
2. describe decision making processes linked with political, legal, economic, corporate and ecological systems
3. explain i) why sustainability 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 sustainability objectives) of a strategic action
4. apply strategic sustainability 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.

There are several formalized approaches to address sustainability challenges, and reconcile goal conflicts/trade-offs. They are practical tools as well as a legal procedure, which businesses and government agencies increasingly need to follow and use in their planning and operations in developed and developing countries. The aim of the course is to present and discuss key sustainability assessment approaches, and promote an understanding of environmental, social and economic integration in strategic planning and decision making across key actors.

The course is concerned with the general issue of integrating environmental and economic 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 sustainability approaches can be adapted and designed to different contexts. The course also deals with legal aspects and frameworks of different countries applying sustainability assessments.

Form of teaching

Lectures, group discussions, literature seminars, group work, student presentations.

Language of instruction: English

Assessment

Learning outcome 1-5 will be assessed through individual written home exam.

Learning outcome 1-5 will be assessed through literature seminars.

Learning outcome 1-5 will be assessed through formulation and submission of reports

Participation in literature seminars is compulsory. Absence from compulsory elements of the course can be replaced with alternative assignments.

If a student, who has failed the same examined element on two occasions, wishes to change examiner before the next examination session, such a request is to be submitted to the department in writing and granted unless there are special reasons to the contrary (Chapter 6, Section 22 of Higher Education Ordinance).

In the event that a course has ceased or undergone major changes, students are to be guaranteed at least three examination sessions (including the ordinary examination session) over a period of at least one year, though at most two years after the course has ceased/been changed.

The number of examinations is limited to five.

Grades

The grading scale comprises: Excellent (A), Very good (B), Good (C), Satisfactory (D), Sufficient (E) and Fail (F).

Pass is required on all examination forms. The grade (A-E) corresponds to the total score a student obtains on the individual written exam (60 % of final grade), literature seminars and reports (40 % of final grade). To receive a pass grade (A-E) $\geq 50\%$ points is required. The scale is tied to fixed score intervals:

A: 85%-100%

B: 75%-84%

C: 68%-74%

D: 60%-67%

E: 50%-59%

F: $<50\%$

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.