Syllabus

Humanity's Greatest Challenges

SDG 13 – Climate Action

Presentation video:

Information about the course

→ Elective course
→ First semester of the academic year 2026/27
→ From September 9th to October 22nd
→ Online classes on Wednesday and Thursday from 17h30 to 18h45
→ 3 ECTS
→ Taught by five different teachers (from different Schools)
→ In English

Contents

Week 1– September 9th and 10th
Topic: Background: What are the SDGs and why SDG 13?
Professor: Filipa Pires de Almeida, Católica Lisbon School of Business & Economics

- → Historical Perspective: Sustainable Development and the SDG Agenda
- → The Importance of the SDGs as a Universal Common Language of Prosperity
- → The 2030 Agenda: SDG by SDG
- → The systemic approach to the SDGs: multilevel, multisectoral, interdisciplinary
- → SDG 13: why it matters and its significance
- → The role of organizations and individuals in the SDGs

Week 2 – September 16th and 17th

Topic: Ecotheological Perspectives on the Climate Crisis and Integral Sustainability

Professor: Maria Isabel Pereira Varanda, School of Theology

- → The climate crisis as a relational crisis: ruptures between humans, nature, and the wider community of life
- → Theology of creation and ecological responsibility: foundations for a renewed ethical engagement
- → Integral ecology: beyond environmentalism towards a holistic understanding of interconnected systems
- → The Anthropocene: drama and hope for creation in a time of planetary transformation
- → Risk, science, and emerging ecotheological paradigms in the face of climate uncertainty
- → Peace as integral ecology: links between ecological justice, social harmony, and global stability
- → Ecological conversion and climate action: pathways of personal, communal, and institutional transformation

Week 3 – September 23rd and 24th

Topic: Science and Technology: Science and Its Implications

Professor: Marta Vasconcelos, School of Biotechnology, Porto

- → Earth's climate: key data and patterns
- → The main causes of climate change
- → How can science and technology help mitigate climate change

→ Case study 1. Agriculture
→ Case study 2. Food
→ Case study 3: The role of citizen science and living labs to co-construct solutions

Week 4 – September 30th and October 1st

Topic: Law: Climate Change Law

Professor: Maria Ermida

→ Law and the climate crisis
→ The Paris Agreement and the European Climate Law
→ Framework Climate Law (Portugal): subjects, objectives, and instruments
→ Sustainable business management as a legal requirement (ESG)
→ Specific cases of climate litigation

Week 5 – October 7th and 8th

Topic: Management: Management that creates and extracts value

Professor: Paulo Ribeiro, School of Management, Viseu

→ Organizations. First, second, and third sectors.
→ External environments and internal macrostructure.
→ Legitimacy of organizations, relevant dimensions.
→ Creation and extraction of value, narratives.
→ Efficiency and effectiveness in sustainable management.

Week 6 – October 21st and 22nd

Topic: Final Assessment

Professor: All faculty members

→ Oral portfolio review: October 21
→ Exam: October 22

Objectives

→ Understand the importance of the SDGs as a universal and strategic framework for the future of humanity
→ Understand the challenge posed by SDG 13 through a multisectoral lens: the public sector, the private sector, and civil society
→ Inspire action
→ Understand humanity's place in Earth's processes, taking into account interaction with other biological and geological agents, as well as the ethical distinction (of responsibility) regarding these agents
→ Understand the facts, history, and climate projections from a multidisciplinary perspective
→ Internalize the urgency and other critical aspects of the climate challenge
→ Understand the role of science, its limits, and what lies beyond it
→ Understand the specific role of law in combating the global climate crisis. Be familiar with relevant sources of law at the international, European, and national levels, as well as the actors, objectives, and instruments of climate action. Be familiar with specific cases of climate-related litigation.
→ Improve understanding of the impact of organizational activities on the planet's environmental sustainability. Understand the need to shift the paradigm of economic merit.

Methodology

→ Interactive lectures with student participation
→ Group and individual research work
→ Participation of external guests - inspiration
→ Video watching
→ Case discussions

Grading

The individual assessment will have three distinct components:

- **Group work (30%):** The main objective of the group project is to develop students' ability to propose concrete and well-founded solutions to challenges associated with SDG 13 – Climate Action. Working in teams of four to five members, students must select a relevant topic directly linked to a specific target of SDG 13, identifying a concrete problem related to that target.

Based on the content explored throughout the course unit, each group must propose public or private policy solutions that contribute to achieving the selected target,

demonstrating critical thinking, innovative spirit, and an awareness of the feasibility of their proposals. The goal is for each group to present a concrete solution to an identified problem.

The written report (portfolio) must be submitted by October 12th at 11:59 PM (Lisbon time) via the Moodle platform.

All groups are required to attend at least one mandatory mentoring session with a faculty member from the course unit to receive guidance on defining their topic, approach, and project structure.

The project will be assessed as follows:

- 70% of the final grade will be based on an oral evaluation taking place in the first class of the final week (October 21st), during which groups will respond to questions posed by the faculty.
- 30% of the final grade will be based on the submitted written report.

All faculty members will participate in the evaluation of the projects. The group's mentor will assign 40% of the oral evaluation grade, and the remaining 60% will be equally distributed among the other faculty members.

There will also be peer evaluation conducted in two rounds: at the end of the third week and after the final submission. In each round, students will distribute 100 points among their group members, evaluating individual contributions. This peer assessment may adjust the final individual grade by up to 3 points (positive or negative).

At the end of the course unit, the two best projects from each class will be invited to participate in a final intercampus session scheduled for the end of June. From these, two groups will be selected to present their proposals to a company or governmental entity and may also be invited to participate in a visit to the European Parliament in Brussels (to be confirmed).

2. **Individual response to quizzes during class (20%):** At the end of the second class of the week, quizzes will be given on the subject taught. Answering these quizzes accounts for 20% of the final assessment. Failure to attend class will result in a score of zero on the quiz. The quiz can only be answered during the respective class.

3. **Individual Exam (50%):** Students must complete a Final Exam (in person at their respective campus or online/with special support if abroad), equivalent to 50% of the final assessment. This Exam

contains five questions and will be conducted with the possibility of consulting a double-sided A4 sheet with notes.

Passing the Course Unit requires a minimum score of 8 (out of 20) in all assessment components and a final average not lower than 10. Approval in the course units is granted with a minimum final grade of 10.

If the student does not achieve a passing grade in the Course Unit but has attended at least 80% of the classes and participated in the group work, a Resit Exam will be available three weeks after the regular exam period. This exam will consist of five questions (one per topic). Students are allowed to consult one A4 sheet (front and back) with notes during the exam. This exam can be used either to pass the course or to improve the student's final grade. In this case, continuous assessment is always taken into account, and the student will keep the higher of the two grades.

Academic Integrity

The expected academic conduct of students aligns with the University's values of integrity and ethics, which should be clear throughout the course. Students are expected to behave in a manner that shows respect for their peers and professors, integrity in the development of their work, and honesty in their execution.

Plagiarism is the improper use by any individual of work, intellectual property, etc., produced by someone else, claiming it as their own (https://www.b-on.pt/boas-praticas/plagio/). Plagiarism can be direct, involving an unmentioned citation or part of a work, or accidental, being a compilation of several authors not properly cited.

Non-compliance with the course rules regarding intellectual honesty and plagiarism will result in failure of the course.

Bibliografia

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