

Sustainability Management

Summer Semester 2025

This course introduces you to the fundamentals of corporate sustainability management, with a special focus on integrating sustainability into business practices. It offers both theoretical foundations and practical approaches, preparing you to critically assess, develop, and implement sustainability strategies in corporate settings. Through lectures, interactive exercises, and real-world case studies, we will explore the evolving role of businesses in addressing global sustainability challenges. By the end of the semester, you will have acquired essential knowledge of the principles of sustainability management and will be equipped to tackle various sustainability-related challenges from a managerial perspective.

Course Outline

Chapter 1: What Is Corporate Sustainability and Why Does It Matter?

This chapter lays the foundation for understanding why corporate sustainability has become an essential component of contemporary business. We will explore the key drivers behind its growing importance—such as environmental degradation, digitalization, and globalization—and examine the motivations that encourage companies to pursue sustainable transformation.

Chapter 2: Approaches to Sustainability

In this chapter, we discuss several approaches and frameworks used to define sustainability. We elaborate the differences and similarities between frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Planetary Boundaries, and Doughnut Economics in order to understand the relationship between corporate action and system changes. Additionally, we will examine sustainability from different

perspectives, e.g. by discussing ethical implications of sustainability or strategic opportunities for corporate actors.

Chapter 3: Corporate Sustainability Concepts

From theory to practice: In this chapter, we will delve into different concepts for implementing corporate sustainability. First, we will explore how to identify and manage relevant stakeholders—both internal (e.g., employees) and external (e.g., investors, NGOs). Second, we will examine how sustainability can be transformed into a competitive advantage. Using strategic management tools such as PESTEL and Porter's Five Forces, you will learn how to critically analyze the value of sustainability at both the industry and company level.

Chapter 4: Corporate Sustainability Actors

Who drives sustainable change within and beyond organizations? In this chapter, we will explore the key actors shaping corporate sustainability, including different types of firms (e.g., MNCs, SMEs, hybrid organizations), internal agents like sustainability professionals and corporate boards, and external stakeholders such as investors and NGOs. We will assess their roles, responsibilities, and potential to drive sustainable transformation in organizational and market contexts.

Chapter 5: Corporate Sustainability Processes

The final part of the course focuses on the operational dimensions of sustainability management. We will examine how innovation, strategic alliances, and resource reconfiguration contribute to sustainability goals. Topics include sustainability-oriented mergers and acquisitions (M&A), the implementation of circular economy principles, and the challenges of reconciling business growth with sustainable development.

Course Prerequisites and Grading

- Attendance is not mandatory. However, both the lecture and the practical sessions include a variety of interactive formats designed to help you consolidate the theoretical knowledge gained throughout the course. For this reason, we strongly encourage you to attend and actively participate in all sessions.
- According to the applicable examination regulations, your final grade will be determined by your grade in the final exam.

Organizational Remarks

- The course consists of a lecture (Tuesdays, 10.15 AM– 11.45 AM) and a practical session (Tuesdays, 12.15 PM – 1.45 PM).
- We use ILIAS as our major communication channel. Lecture slides and materials will be uploaded after the sessions.
- We strive to make our sessions as interactive as possible. For the practical sessions, please bring an electronic device that allows you to read articles, prepare short presentations, and take notes.
- Assignment submissions will also be organized via ILIAS. Please follow the submission guidelines discussed in the kick-off session.
- Make sure to check your mails. In case of any short-notice changes, we'll inform you via mail.

Important Dates

Lecture	Practical Session	Date
Kick-Off & Introduction to Sustainability Management	<i>No Practical Session</i>	22.04.2025
Assignment 1 (Online): The Trade-Off Game <i>No Lecture</i>	Foundations of Managerial Thinking	29.04.2025
Chapter 1	Foundations of Managerial Thinking	06.05.2025
Chapter 2	Chapter 1	13.05.2025
Chapter 2	Chapter 2	20.05.2025
Chapter 3	Chapter 2 & 3	27.05.2025
Online Assignment 2 (Online):	<i>No Lecture and Practical Session</i>	03.06.2025
Chapter 3	Chapter 3	10.06.2025
Chapter 3	Chapter 3	17.06.2025
Chapter 4	Chapter 3	24.06.2025
Chapter 4	Chapter 4	01.07.2025
Chapter 5	Assignment 3 (In-Class): Interactive Guest Lecture Carbon Accounting Final date tbd	08.07.2025
Chapter 5	Chapter 5	15.07.2025
Recap & Q&A		22.07.2025