

IP201-30 Sustainability: Frameworks, Challenges and Opportunities

20/21

Department

Liberal Arts

Level

Undergraduate Level 3

Module leader

Tim Burnett

Credit value

30

Module duration

22 weeks

Assessment

60% coursework, 40% exam

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

This module is a core second year module on the BA in Liberal Arts courses. It complements the other core module on Consumption and each explores a major organizing concept of contemporary society from different intellectual perspectives.

[Module web page](#)

Module aims

This module complements its sister Y2 core module in Consumption, with each exploring a major organizing concept of contemporary society from different intellectual perspectives. Where Consumption draws on cultural interventions and sociological and historical theoretical frameworks, Sustainability instead focusses on contemporary ecological, economic, and regulatory challenges and the development of effective evidence-based policy.

The module aims to provide students with in-depth and holistic study of the topical issue of Sustainability using a multi-disciplinary PBL approach. Students examine a number of dimensions of sustainability, viewed from a variety of disciplinary perspectives, and acquire a detailed evidence-based understanding of current controversies, debates and theories.

In addition to an understanding of the factors inherent in a broad definition of sustainability, students will be encouraged to explore feasible policy approaches to address the most pressing issues, and to have an awareness of the barriers to effective policymaking in the sustainability sphere.

The problems explored throughout this module revolve around questions of defining and understanding sustainability, the challenges of measuring and assessing it, opportunities and limitations in individual action, issues in business and globalisation, and the sustainability of population and society.

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

The module's structure is based on 5 problems around the broad issue of Sustainability. These are followed by a study of the current critical and theoretical approaches to addressing the broad issue. Term 1

I. What is, and what isn't sustainability?

- a. Introduction: understanding complexity, systems thinking, and the emergence and development of sustainability thought
- b. The mastery of nature: an embedded ideological bias
- c. Reconstructing the sustainability narrative: separating myth from reality; Sustainability and Sustainable Development

II. How can we measure sustainability?

- a. Sustainability indicators, indices, and other considerations in measurement
- b. Concepts, methodologies, and data tools to assess water use

III. How do we engage individuals and 'the public' in sustainability?

- a. Individual behaviour, sustainable consumption, and the power of behavioural cues
- b. Community action and the power of coordination
- c. Education for sustainability
- d. Social media, engagement, and tools for creating agents of change Group presentations (week 10)

Term 2

IV. The issues of business and globalisation

- a. Corporate social responsibility and the supply chain
- b. Closing loops in production and the circular economy
- c. Globalisation: Challenges and opportunities

V. Dealing with trends in population and living

- a. Population challenges in the 21st century
- b. Rural livelihoods and the sustainability of traditional culture
- c. Urbanisation and the sustainable city

VI. Critical and Theoretical approaches to Sustainability

- d. Ecocriticism and critical approaches to sustainability Group presentations (week 10)

Term 3

I. Revision

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate advanced cognitive skills such as critical analysis, source-text analysis, quantitative and qualitative research methods and communication skills.
- Utilise meta-cognitive skills developed through problem-based learning such as planning how to approach a learning task, identifying the appropriate strategies to solve a problem, monitoring their own comprehension, self-assessing and self-correcting, and becoming aware of their own learning, strengths, and weaknesses.
- Demonstrate both knowledge and understanding of the challenges inherent in conceptualising and defining sustainability in a holistic sense (including contextual, ethical, political), and the skills required to deal with such complexity (such as systems thinking).
- Interpret and critically respond to sustainability-related issues through subject-specific knowledge relating to measures used to assess sustainability (and their limitations), the role of businesses and the relationship between economic growth and sustainability, the debates around population growth, and the tension between urban and rural development.
- Articulate their own individual framework for narrating and explaining sustainability.

Indicative reading list

The module will be taught using 2 textbooks (both available as e-books from the library): Kopnina, H. and Shoreman-Ouimet, E. (eds) (2015). Sustainability : Key Issues. Routledge
Stibbe, A. (ed) (2009). The Handbook of Sustainability Literacy. Green Books

[View reading list on Talis Aspire](#)

Interdisciplinary

This is a core module on the BA in Liberal Arts course which offers students an interdisciplinary learning experience allowing students to achieve breadth and depth of knowledge

Subject specific skills

Demonstrate both knowledge and understanding of the challenges inherent in conceptualising and defining sustainability in a holistic sense (including contextual, ethical, political), and the skills required to deal with such complexity (such as systems thinking)

Transferable skills

Advanced cognitive skills such as critical analysis, source-text analysis, quantitative and qualitative research methods and communication skills

Meta-cognitive skills developed through problem-based learning e.g. planning how to approach a learning task, identifying the appropriate strategies to solve a problem, monitoring own comprehension, self-assessing and self-correcting, and becoming aware of own learning, strengths, and weaknesses

Systems thinking

Study

Study time

Type	Required
Seminars	2 sessions of 2 hours (1%)
Practical classes	20 sessions of 2 hours (13%)
Private study	256 hours (85%)
Total	300 hours

Private study description

Reading, research and preparation for practical classes

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You do not need to pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Assessment group D2

	Weighting	Study time
Essay	20%	
Response paper		
Group Presentation (Term 1 & 2)	15%	
Presentation (Term 1) 7.5%		
Presentation (Term 2) 7.5%		
15-minute group presentations		
Critical response essay	20%	
Portfolio of blog entries	5%	
Online Examination	40%	
Exam - 2 hours		

Weighting

Study time

- Students may use a calculator

Feedback on assessment

Individual, detailed feedback for the response papers will be provided via Tabula. Feedback for the group presentation will be provided verbally, and in writing via Tabula. Feedback on exam papers will be provided individually in the form of written comments published on Tabula. Written feedback on blog posts will be provided weekly.

[Past exam papers for IP201](#)

Availability

Courses

This module is Core for:

- Year 2 of UVCA-LA99 Undergraduate Liberal Arts