



MSc course: Management of Sustainable Development (P00806)

20 credits, Semester 2

Course Organiser:

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Who should take this course?

- MScT Environmental Sustainability programme students (core course).
- Students from any discipline interested in gaining a broad understanding of approaches to sustainable development. Although there are no pre-requisite courses, students who did not take the *Principles of Environmental Sustainability* course (P00807) will need to do some extra reading to familiarise themselves with the concept of sustainable development (see below).
- This course is particularly suitable for students wishing to work in government, local authorities, environmental consultancy, or environmental NGOs.

Course aims:

This course introduces the diverse range of approaches being used to achieve sustainable development. The approaches considered include international governance, national institutions, economic instruments, environmental regulation, technological innovation, new policy initiatives and grassroots participation. The use of these approaches at different levels of governance in a range of key sectors is considered, mainly on a case study basis. The course encourages a strongly interdisciplinary approach to the understanding of sustainable development and seeks to foster critical thinking and debate.

Programme:

All sessions will be held in the Crew Building Annexe, Room 4, 09:00-13:00 every Thursday (on some Thursdays the class will continue until 15:30 – see programme below). The Crew Building Annexe is a single storey suite of class rooms immediately to the north of the Crew Building. The location of the Crew Building is shown at: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/maps/kings-buildings/crew-building/>

The course is largely delivered by experts in a number of topic areas that pertain to the management and implementation of sustainable developing. Each week, a different topic is presented by an expert in that field, and a diverse range is covered across the course. There are key themes which cut across all the topics, including:

- The inter-relation between economic, social and environmental decision-making – how these are balanced, where priorities should and do lie, and whether outcomes which address all three are ever possible.
- Scale: from international agreements, national and local governments, to producers, consumers, households and individuals – where does (and should) the impetus for change come from? Where is it directed? Are upstream or downstream interventions more effective? We think about the broad context in which sustainable development decisions are made (tackling global issues at a global level) to individual behaviours, lifestyles, and consumption patterns.

- Power and control over decision-making – from the power of particular actors, the role of business, to affected communities, taking account of different versions of environmental policies and policy making (and the effect of changes to them).
- Knowledge and information – we look at the role of science in policy making, political machinations behind policy decisions, the construction and use of models, the role of experts, and trust in information sources and providers. We also consider how knowledge and information effect behaviour, and the values that people bring to bear on their decisions.

The course varies slightly from year to year, based on the availability of outside speaker and experts. Below is a list of topics covered in 2008/9, and is likely to form the basis for the programme in 2009/10. Full details will be confirmed nearer the time.

Topic
UK policy context: market incentives and support for renewable energy
Assessment of the prospects for renewable energy technologies; the proposed new deployment of nuclear energy
Making transport more sustainable. Case study: high speed rail as an alternative to air travel
The potential for greenhouse gas emission reductions through the decentralization of energy generation
The Kyoto Protocol and the UK climate change programme; equity considerations in climate change policy; introduction to emissions trading
The benefits and risks of genetic modification of crops.
Personal carbon allowances and carbon taxation
Can ecotourism provide sustainable livelihoods and protect biodiversity?
Current trends in corporate social responsibility
Sustainable waste management. Case study: UK organic waste
International environmental agreements: managing the global commons
Sustainable development and rural communities
Climate change issues, solutions, and culture change

Assessments (dates are for the 2008/9 class, and will be different for subsequent years)

The course is assessed entirely by coursework (100%). No examination will be held:

- First assignment: 2,500-word essay, chosen from three topics, due by 12 noon on Thursday 19th February 2009 (50% of course mark)
- Second assignment: 2,500-word essay, chosen from three topics, due by 12 noon on Thursday 26th March 2009 (50% of course mark)

Further details of the coursework assignments are available in the *Management of Sustainable Development* folder of the WebCT online learning environment, accessible through the MyEd portal. WebCT will be used for electronic submission of essays.

Recommended reading:

There is no textbook that covers the whole course. A detailed reading list will therefore be provided each week.

For students who did not take last semester's *Principles of Environmental Sustainability* course, the following readings are suggested:

- Beder, S. (2006). *Environmental Principles and Policies. An Interdisciplinary Introduction*. Earthscan, London. ISBN: 1844074048. (Chapters 1 to 6).
- WCED (1987). *Our Common Future*. World Commission on Environment and Development. Oxford University Press, Oxford. ISBN: 019282080X. (Chapter 2).