Education for Sustainable Development: From Global Agendas to Local Actions

United Nations University
Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability (UNU-IAS)
Autumn 2023

Location: 6F Lecture Room, United Nations University, Tokyo

Time: Wednesday 9:30 – 11:10 (4 October 2023 till 17 January 2024)
Half day sessions 9:30 – 13:00 (15 November, 6 December, and 10 January)

Lecturer: Shengru Li (li@unu.edu)
Office hours: by appointment

Course Description

This 2-credit course offers a comprehensive exploration of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), focusing on its role in addressing global challenges and fostering sustainable societal change. The course delves into the fundamental principles of ESD, its importance in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and its potential to inspire lifelong learning. Through a combination of engaging lectures, interactive activities, field visits, and thought-provoking documentaries, students will critically analyse innovative teaching methodologies, stakeholder engagement strategies, and community-driven development approaches within the realm of ESD. Students will study the relationship between global agendas and local actions in ESD and explore the sustainability issues in local communities. The course will then introduce innovative ESD programs and policies, learning environments, teachers, youth, and community involvement through case studies.

Students will work in groups to develop analysis presentations for sustainability education practises in Europe and challenges faced by youth in China. The guiding questions to develop your presentation will be shared during the course. By the end of the course, students will have a thorough understanding of the importance of ESD in achieving the 17 SDGs by 2030 and will have the skills to analyse and address local sustainability issues through education.

Course Objectives and Learning Goals

1. Understand the role of education for sustainable development (ESD) in achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs) from an inclusive and lifelong learning perspective.
2. Learn about the theories and practices of rural development and poverty reduction, with a focus

on participatory approaches and the role of community involvement.
3. Examine the societal, economic, and environmental contexts underpinning the educational practices and outcomes depicted in the documentaries.

Requirements and Grading Policy

Assessment and group work structures:
- Attendance and class participation (20%)
- Paper assignment (20%, individual work by 29 Nov 2023)
    o A short paper on a global or local sustainability issue of your interest, potential benefits and challenges in addressing the issues with ESD, and potential learners and rationales (max 1,500 words)
- Group presentation #1 on documentary analysis "Education for Sustainable Future – Inspiring Practices from Europe" (30%, group presentation on 13 Dec)
    o Random groups will be formed to identify good practices of addressing environmental issues and sustainable environmental development by educational institutions in various national contexts in Europe.
- Group presentation #2 on documentary analysis "China's Slacker Youths: Why They Went From 'Lying Flat' To 'Let It Rot'" (30%, group presentation on 17 Jan)
    o Random groups will be formed to analyse the reasons behind the phenomenon of "Tang Ping" or lying flat in China, investigate how education is playing a role in shaping this phenomenon, and examine how education may be able to address the challenge.

Assessment Criteria:
1. Understanding and application of ESD concepts and principles
   Evaluate the student's ability to understand and apply the concepts and principles of ESD, as covered in the course material and lectures.
2. Analysis and reflection
   Evaluate the student's ability to critically analyse and reflect on the documentary presented in the course, and to relate them to the ESD concepts and development theories discussed.
3. Group work and presentation
   Evaluate the student's ability to work effectively in a group and to present their group's analysis and reflection on the documentary and educational intervention proposal.

Grading scale:

United Nations University Grades			
Grade Meanings	Letter Grade	Numerical Scale of Marks (For reference)	Grade Point Average (For reference)
Excellent	A	90-100%	4
		80%-89%	3
Good	B	70-79%	2
Adequate	C	60-69%	1
Inadequate	D	0-59%	0

General Criteria: Each written assignment should be in MS format and single-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font. All written assignments must have a title, a proper introduction and conclusion section and all material that is used to support the student's argument must be clearly cited. For the in-text citations and the bibliography, we suggest that students use APA style citations. A reference or bibliography page should come after the end of each written assignment. Reference programs such as Endnote, Citavi, RefWorks or Mendeley are very useful for collecting, organising and formatting citations and students are strongly encouraged to make use of these. Assignments should be carefully edited for grammar and spelling before submission – British English will be used for spelling rules in this course.

Course Outline

No.	Description	Date	Assignment	Instructor
1	*Introduction* • Global challenges: How much do we know? • Learning goals • Overview of assignments	4 Oct		Li
2	*Lecture:* • Introduction to ESD: Why education? • SDG4: Education 2030 Agenda • ESD and lifelong learning	11 Oct		Li
3	*Lecture:* • Introduction to ESD: Trends, main issues and remaining challenges • ESD 2030 Roadmap: Five priority areas	18 Oct		Li
4	*Lecture:* • Innovative pedagogies for sustainable teaching	25 Oct		Sawaros (guest lecturer)
5	*Lecture:* • Stakeholder analysis on fast fashion	8 Nov		Sawaros (guest lecturer)
6, 7	*Field visit:* • School or institution promoting initiatives on education for sustainable development in or around Tokyo	15 Nov (half day)		Li
8	*Lecture:* • ESD: Global agenda to local actions • Cases: Innovative ESD programmes (policies, learning environment, teachers, youth, and community involvement) • What are main sustainability issues in your local community?	22 Nov		Li

9	*Lecture:* • Case study: Sustainable use of ICT to develop teacher training materials in schools in Mongolia"	29 Nov	Due date for the short paper	Oyun Tsogtsaikhan (guest lecturer)
10, 11	*Lecture and Documentary:* • Putting the first last – outsider dilemma • Putting the last first – community-driven development approaches • Documentary: "Education for Sustainable Future – Inspiring Practices from Europe" • Group work for presentation development	6 Dec (half day)		Li
12	*Student Presentation*	13 Dec	Group presentation #1	Li
13, 14	*Lecture and Documentary:* • Beyond formulaic approaches for local community involvement • Documentary: "China's Slacker Youths: Why They Went From 'Lying Flat' To 'Let It Rot'" • Group work for presentation development	10 Jan (half day)		Li
15	*Student Presentation*	17 Jan	Group presentation #2	Li

Course Readings by Lecture

Session 2

UNESCO. (2016). [Unpacking Sustainable Development Goal 4 Education 2030.](#) UNESCO.

Session 3

Wiek, A., Withycombe, L., & Redman, C. L. (2011). [Key competencies in sustainability: a reference framework for academic program development.](#) Sustainability Science, 6(2), 203-218.

Session 8

Alsop, S., Dippo, D., & Zandvliet, D. B. (2007). Teacher education as or for social and ecological transformation: Place-based reflections on local and global participatory methods and collaborative practices. Journal of Education for Teaching, 33(2), 207-223.

Jacob Institute. (2019). Respecting our Relations: Dori Tunstall on Decolonizing Design. [https://jacobsdesigncal.medium.com/respecting-our-relations-dori-tunstall-on-decolonizing- design-d894df4c2ed2](https://jacobsdesigncal.medium.com/respecting-our-relations-dori-tunstall-on-decolonizing-design-d894df4c2ed2)

UNESCO. (2014). [UNESCO roadmap for implementing the global action programme on education for sustainable development.](#)

UNU-IAS. (2021). [Tackling Climate Action at the Local Level: Education for Sustainable Development Projects](#) from the Global RCE Network.

Session 10, 11

Chambers, R., "[Rural poverty unperceived](#)," in Rural Development: Putting the Last First. Pearson, 1983, ch. 1, pp. 1-27.

Chambers, R., "[Whose Knowledge?](#)" in Rural Development: Putting the Last First, Pearson, 1983, ch.4, pp.75-102.

Session 13, 14

Hailey, J., ["Beyond the Formulaic: Process and Practice in South Asian NGOs" in Participation: the new tyranny?,](#) Cooke, B., and Kothari, U. eds, Zed Books, London, 2001, pp. 89-101.

Important Information

Class Conduct & Etiquette

Students are expected to arrive on time and not to engage in disruptive behaviours during

class, e.g., private conversations, using cell phones and other electronic devices, and reading newspapers. Cell phones should be switched off and stored in a bag. We wish to create an atmosphere of open and tolerant discussion in the classroom and request students recognise every individual's right to have an opinion. The lecturer and other students should be treated with dignity and respect, particularly in discussions on contentious political issues where diverse opinions are likely to arise. However, we also recognise tolerance limits, and the lecturer reserves the right to request disciplinary action against any student who violates this policy or repeatedly shows disruptive behaviours in class.

Academic Misconduct

If evidence of academic misconduct on tasks and final test should be found, the student may receive a failing grade for the entire course and will be reported to the appropriate authorities for disciplinary action.

Computer Use in Class

The use of computers (including tablets) in the classroom is restricted to taking notes, reading the course material, or searching for course-related information on the internet. Any disruption of the class by cell phones, instant messaging programs, or other communication devices will not be tolerated. The lecturer reserves the right to revoke this permission if a student is found using a computer for any non-course-related activities.

Plagiarism & Academic Misconduct

Please be aware that the consequences of plagiarism are severe, and students found guilty of academic misconduct will be punished in accordance with UNU's academic honesty policies. The lecturer reserves the right to run all assignments through anti-plagiarism software provided by the UNU. If evidence of academic misconduct on the assigned presentations, the mid-term exam or the final essay should be found, the assignment will receive a failing grade. In case of repeated violations of academic conduct, the student may receive a failing grade for the entire course and will be reported to the appropriate authorities for disciplinary action.