CIEE Global Institute - Buenos Aires

Course name: Green Business and Policies in the Global Context
Course number: ENVI 3102 BAAR
Programs offering course: Buenos Aires Open Campus
Open Campus track: Sustainability and Environmental Sciences
Language of instruction: English
U.S. semester credits: 3
Contact hours: 45
Term: Fall 2018

Course Description

The seminar seeks to engage students about the most recent international debates surrounding the complex relationship between unprecedented levels of global growth in production and consumption, and the imperative of environmental protection. In this direction, a wide array of theoretical notions for the understanding of this complex interplay (such as sustainable development, green economy, green growth, sustainable degrowth), emerging from international organizations, academia and the corporate sector will be introduced and discussed along the different sessions. Additionally, the opportunities and shortcomings of different technologically innovative strategies promoted by governments and private stakeholders in the search of achieving economic development while reducing environmental risks will be presented and assessed. Finally, guest speakers will contribute to the discussion by sharing the outcomes of specific implemented measures associated with sustainable production and consumption, payments for ecosystem services, and energy efficiency among others policies.

Learning Objectives

By completing this course, students will be able to:

- Deeply understand major theories, debates, concepts, and facts drawn from an interdisciplinary perspective, including international relations, international law, environmental studies, international political economy, developmental studies, as they relate to green businesses.
- Analyze the complexity of interests at stake in the relationship between sustainable natural resource managements and business opportunities and practices framed in the national/regional settings and their interconnections with intricate global trends
- Deeply understand the role that different actors present in Latin American play in global discussions around business and the environment
- Think critically about broader global dynamics when investigating and comparing multiple perspectives (local, national, regional and global) on the interplay between business and the environment.

Course Prerequisites
Methods of Instruction

The teaching dynamic for the course will combine the structure of lecture and seminar modalities, meaning that each of the sessions will start with an ice-breaking exercise with essential questions posed about main arguments of the readings provided (which will allow the instructor to evaluate the overall level of understanding of the texts at discussion), followed by a presentation of the subject by the instructor that will help set the basis for opening up the discussion during the last 30 minutes of the session. This method will allow students to better follow the in-depth presentations by the instructor and other special keynote guest, enabling them to adequately understand and later on use the different theoretical and conceptual provided tools.

A Discussion Forum will also be held where students will have to represent the position of an organizations regarding the central subjects discussed in class, the proposals for climate change mitigation and adaptations by different relevant stakeholders involved in climate change governance and negotiations. This method will enable students gain a better understanding of the role that different actors present in Latin American play in global discussions around business and the environment. Additionally, special guest speakers associated with the governmental/intergovernmental, corporate actor, and/or civil society sectors will be invited to share local and regional empirically based experiences that will serve the purpose of illustrating with examples the ideas discussed at a theoretical level. This method will allow students to recognize the complexity of interests at stake in the relationship between sustainable natural resource managements and business opportunities and practices framed in the national/regional settings and their interconnections with intricate global trends. The final teaching goal of the course is to enable students to critically think, synthesize and integrate the contents gained during the different sessions into a business project of closure.

Assessment and Final Grade

1. Participation 20%
2. Presentation 15%
3. Discussion Forums (2) 15%
4. Midterm Exam 25%
5. Final project 25%
TOTAL: 100%

Course Requirements

Presentation
Students will be required to deliver a presentation during the course. These presentations should be about 10-15 minutes and it should show a good understanding
of a selected topic and the ability to put it in perspective. The topic should be presented in a concise yet comprehensive manner.

**Midterm Exam**
Students will undertake a written exam that assesses both the level of comprehension of the readings and the understanding of the issues at discussion along the first half of the semester. The exam will consist of three proposed exam instructions from which students choose two and elaborate their answers based on both the readings discussed and the contents provided in class.

**Discussion Forums**
The Discussion Forums consist of two role-play exercises in which students, divided into smaller groups, will have to represent the positions and interests of different organizations in a multi-stakeholder negotiation (involving corporate, NGO, media and governmental actors) around a pertinent sensitive subject (i.e Climate change governance). Each Discussion Forum is worth 10% of the assessment grade.

**Final Project**
Students will be provided with instructions for the production of a final green business project. This method will enable students to critically think, synthesize and integrate the contents gained during the different sessions. Students are expected to create a business project and show extensive knowledge of the discussed literature to support their arguments and stakeholders positions around their green business proposal.

**Participation**
Participation is valued as meaningful contribution in the digital and tangible classroom, utilizing the resources and materials presented to students as part of the course. Meaningful contribution requires students to be prepared in advance of each class session and to have regular attendance. Students must clearly demonstrate they have engaged with the materials as directed, for example, through classroom discussions, online discussion boards, peer-to-peer feedback (after presentations), interaction with guest speakers, and attentiveness on co-curricular and outside-of-classroom activities. Each session will begin with a ‘breaking ice’ exercise that consists on briefly describing the main ideas and arguments introduced by the authors at discussion for that specific session (listed as mandatory readings for the day). Therefore only students who voluntarily participate along the different session’s opening will have that 10% count as part of their final grade for class participation.

**Attendance Policy**
Regular class attendance is required throughout the program, and all unexcused absences will result in a lower participation grade for any affected CIEE course. Due to the intensive schedules for Open Campus and Short Term programs, unexcused absences that constitute more than 10% of the total course will result in a written warning.
Students who transfer from one CIEE class to another during the add/drop period will not be considered absent from the first session(s) of their new class, provided they were marked present for the first session(s) of their original class. Otherwise, the absence(s) from the original class carry over to the new class and count against the grade in that class.

For CIEE classes, excessively tardy (over 15 minutes late) students must be marked absent. Attendance policies also apply to any required co-curricular class excursion or event, as well as to Internship, Service Learning, or required field placement. Students who miss class for personal travel, including unforeseen delays that arise as a result of personal travel, will be marked as absent and unexcused. No make-up or re-sit opportunity will be provided.

Attendance policies also apply to any required class excursion, with the exception that some class excursions cannot accommodate any tardiness, and students risk being marked as absent if they fail to be present at the appointed time.

Unexcused absences will lead to the following penalties:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Total Course Hours Missed</th>
<th>Equivalent Number of Open Campus Semester classes</th>
<th>Minimum Penalty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to 10%</td>
<td>1 content classes, or up to 2 language classes</td>
<td>Participation graded as per class requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 – 20%</td>
<td>2 content classes, or 3-4 language classes</td>
<td>Participation graded as per class requirements; written warning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 20%</td>
<td>3 content classes, or 5 language classes</td>
<td>Automatic course failure, and possible expulsion</td>
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**Weekly Schedule**

NOTE: this schedule is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor to take advantage of current experiential learning opportunities.

**Week 1** **Orientation Week**

Class 1.1 **Introduction**
A complete introduction to the course’s contents, activities (forum, guest speakers), assessment methods and to the instructors will be made to students during part of the first meeting providing space for questions by students. Additionally, by highlighting the main topics to be discussed on the following weeks, we will provide an overall contextualization of how green business and policies will be approached in this course. In this direction subjects such as environmental governance and rule making, private-public partnerships, international negotiations, North-South cooperation, among others will be tackled.

Class 1:2 Sustainable Development from a Historical Perspective

Students will explore the historical developments and current debates around the concept of sustainable development, including the three pillars of sustainability and international commitments and programs for fostering sustainable development vis-à-vis the progress experienced at the regional/national levels. This session is the first conceptual-historical building block in the path of understanding the need for a more balanced relationship between economic, social and environmental imperatives in 21st century development.

Reading:

Class 1:3 Available Tools for Managing Sustainability

The main instruments and indicators for measuring sustainability will be covered and analyzed. Other tools for the analysis and management of sustainable development will also be covered with the aim of understanding how sustainability can be calculated and benchmarked in relation to a broad array of procedures associated to productive activities.

Reading:

Week 2

Class 2:1 Policy Instruments for a Green Economy

The students will examine the green economy and growth precedents, declarations and policy instruments. The session provides further conceptual tools for understanding and analyzing the interplay between business and the
environment but also analyzes the main policy instruments available (regulations, tax instruments, trading systems, R&D) and their potential for achieving sustainable development.

Reading:

Class 2:2 Alternative Visions and Proposals

The proposals of Buen Vivir, Ubuntu, Sustainable Degrowth and Post-development will be compared and analyzed. The session is oriented at providing insight on the new alternative visions introduced by different groups of ecological thought. A comparison of the main conceptual components of these alternatives versus those of Green Economy and Green Growth, will help strengthening the students’ understanding of the substantial differences between the contributions of these approaches.

Reading:

Class 2:3 Private Environmental Governance

International and domestic nongovernmental organizations have recently been introducing a number of non-state maker-driven governance systems as a way to develop environmentally and socially responsible practices. The goal is to mapping the various approaches emerging from the corporate sector such as corporate social responsibility, voluntary sustainability certification systems/schemes, emissions credits, among others and assess whether they challenge or complement the process of public policy and rulemaking in the environment realm.

Reading:

❖ Presentations due

Week 3
Class 3.1 Civil Society Environmental Governance

The participation of NGOs as a driving force in key collective decisions: the monitoring of the clean-up plan of the Matanza-Riachuelo water basin. The session seeks to analyze the process of civil society’s involvement in a litigation case on the remediation of one of Latin-America’s most polluted water basins in which more than 18 million people live. By looking at the different stages of a collective process involving a judicial decision of Argentina's Supreme Court of Justice, which created a Collegiate Charter (coordinated by National Ombudsman) integrating civil society organizations in the monitoring of the clean-up plan, the session discusses the opportunities and shortcomings of civil society organizations’ participation in environmental governance.

Reading:

Class 3:2 Site Visit: Riachuelo

The goal of the visit is to see and understand some of the environmental restorations measures that have been taken in terms of water, air, soils, biodiversity and living conditions by Matanza Riachuelo Watershed Authority, the agency responsible for implementing the Integral Plan for Environmental Sanitation of the basin.

Reading: TBC

Class 3:3 Midterm Exam

Week 4

Class 4:1 Renewable Energies in Latin America: Biofuels

Biofuels has been presented as an alternative source of energy in a context of climate change, but what are some of the sustainability rules and dilemmas? The session’s goal is to assess the potential and limits that this alternative source of energy poses for South American sustainable development contrasting the sector’s evolution in economic, social and environmental terms.

Reading:
Fulquet, G. & Pelfini A. (2015).“Brazil as a new International cooperation actor in Sub-Saharan Africa: Biofuels at the crossroad between sustainable development and natural resource exploitation”. In Hancock, K. (ed). Special issue on
Class 4:2  Mining in Latin America

What are the main challenges for extractive industries in the Global South. Environmental impacts, social conflicts and the perpetuation of a mere exporter role? Latin America has exploited its minerals since colonization times, and many countries have developed their economic system around this activity. However, the current technical, political and economic conditions have posed a different set of challenges involving high environmental impacts, social conflictive and strong dependence on volatile prices. The module seeks to debate the main challenges that emerge from the current global scenario for extractive industries and national development strategies.

Reading:

❖ Discussion Forum 1 due

Class 4:3  Climate Change Governance

North-South tensions regarding rights and responsibilities before current global environmental problems (Tragedy of the Commons, Shared but differentiated responsibilities) in a context of a changing international order will be put in context. Main existing coalitions in climate negotiations (G77, BASIC, AOSIS) will be analyzed. A debate on the changes and new commitments after the Paris Agreement will be carried out, analyzing actors, interests and overlapping visions around Climate Change. Instructions for the Discussion Forum will be provided in this class.

Reading:
Week 5

Class 5:1 Climate Change Negotiations

Students will represent the positions and interests of different organizations in a multi-stakeholder negotiation (involving corporate, NGO, media and governmental actors) around a pertinent sensitive subject (Climate change governance). This exercise will help students recognize the complexity of interests at stake and the discourses around the environment that different actors and interest groups evoke for achieving their goals and defending their positions in international negotiations.

❖ Discussion Forum 2 due

Class 5:2 Corporate Social Responsibility in Argentina

The goal of the class is to overview some of the sustainable agriculture practices emerging from the corporate sector in Argentina. A guest speaker, responsible for CSR at NIDERA will be in charge of presenting those practices. NIDERA is a large agribusiness form that over the last few years has introduced changes with the goal of improving its agricultural and environmental practices in the production and manufacturing of its products. This session aims to show by example how the corporate sector can take the lead in carrying out innovative programs and policies encouraging a sustainable management of natural resource while also creating economic opportunities.

Reading:

Class 5:3 Site Visit

One of NIDERA’s production plants will be visited. The visit aims to show by example, how the corporate sector can take the lead in carrying out innovative programs and policies encouraging a sustainable management of natural resource while also creating economic opportunities.

Reading: TBC

Week 6
Can payments and compensations for environmental services encourage more sustainable land use and practices? The debate over the valuation of nature will be introduced. By looking at tools like compensation for environmental services the module discusses the different approaches to improve conservation of particular ecosystems and their services. It analyzes both the advantages and disadvantages of these kinds of schemes while bringing into debate different philosophical conceptions of nature and natural resources.

Reading:

Class 6:2 Alternative and Sustainable Energy

The session aims to present innovations from the corporate sector in the provision of alternative sources of energy. A guest speaker from IMPSA will be presenting on such subject. A leading Argentinian firm in the renewable energy sector, IMPSA has specialized over the last decade in the manufacturing of wind power generators supporting the development of wind power plants throughout South America. This session seeks to introduce yet another success example coming from the corporate sector in which an indigenous technological innovation allows for sustainable and low carbon energy solution.

Reading: TBC

Class 6:3 Final projects presentations
Students will present their green business projects to the rest of the class linking it with the literature and contents of the course.

❖ Final project due

Course Materials

Readings


**Online Resources**


[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MybUS3VaMp8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MybUS3VaMp8)