

Program 2024

“Sustainability, Climate Change, and Democracy”

[Study Abroad Program – UNSAM]

Workload: 64 hours

Course Description

Sustainability encompasses the capacity to fulfill current needs while safeguarding the potential of forthcoming generations to ensure their own requirements. It is about finding a balance between human needs, environmental care, and economic viability. Sustainability crosses every instance of our lives and it is us, through citizen participation and the good exercise of democracy, who can pave the way for its correct development.

Every year, sustainability becomes increasingly pertinent in our lives, driven not only by heightened awareness of global environmental challenges but also by the very real threat of climate change

Students will try to understand the importance of applying and evolving sustainable development goals in our lives, as well as the essentiality for the development of Latin America and Argentina. They will take a look at environmental policies and challenges faced by local communities in the face of the continuous natural resource exploitation, as well as the importance of local and international organizations that support, defend, and contribute to such development. Also the role of fake news in the face of climate change and the SDGs, how developed and developing countries position themselves in the face of climate change, boundaries faced by urban planning and agricultural economies, carbon footprint, and glimpses of a sustainable future in the region. Participants will study specific cases of massive environmental exploitation occurring in the north and south of Argentina.

Goals

The course aims to provide students with a broader understanding of the current situation of climate change, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and how these issues are addressed by international organizations, local NGOs, and the media. In addition, the course provides an immersion into a sustainable environment.

Bibliography

The bibliography will be available on a Google Drive, and on the Kulturstudier website.

Course contents

the course focuses on the following topics

- Sustainability in Latin America and Argentina
- Democracy, public policies, the importance of institutions, and citizen participation in sustainability.
- Sustainable development goals and their implementation in Argentina and Latin America.
- Exploitation of natural resources in Argentina.
- Climate change: its mitigation and how we adapt to it.
- The role of developed and developing countries on the road to sustainability.

Academic Calendar

Students will find below the content and distribution of classes week by week during their stay in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

- The class load per week will be 4 hours, except on week 11, which will be 8 hours.

Week 1

Academic Writing Seminar

Introductory class on course content

Weekend 1

Three-day, two-night excursion to a sustainable environment close to Buenos Aires

Week 2

Class 1: *Strong institutions, citizen participation and democracy as a path to sustainability (SDG 16).*

- Michael Peters (2019) **“Can democracy solve the sustainability crisis? Green politics, grassroots participation and the failure of the sustainability paradigm”**. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*,
- Astrid Nilsson, others (2021) **“Citizen participation for sustainable cities”**. Stockholm Environment Institute
- Better policies for better lives (2016) **“Innovative Citizen Participation and New Democratic Institutions”**. OECD, Better policies for better lives platform.
- Lisa-Maria Glass, Jens Newig (2019) **“Governance for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals: How important are participation, policy coherence, reflexivity, adaptation and democratic institutions?”**. *Earth System Governance*.

Week 3

Preparation workshop for COP simulation model

Class 2: *Sustainable Development Goals in Latin America and Argentina: Which are the SDGs that are not reaching the established goals?*

- United Nations (2018) **“The 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals: An opportunity for Latin America and the Caribbean”** SDG platform.
- Students will have the freedom to research the SDGs that interest them most and bring their contribution to the class.

Week 4

Preparation workshop for COP simulation model

Class 3: *Environmental policies in Argentina: the current situation of lithium, water reserves, deforestation and wetlands.*

- OECD Studies on Water (2019) “**Water Governance in Argentina**” Rastreator: <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/a76fd8a3-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/a76fd8a3-en>
- Fred Pearce (2022) “**Why the Rush to Mine Lithium Could Dry Up the High Andes**” Rastreator: <https://e360.yale.edu/features/lithium-mining-water-andes-argentina>
- Cecilia Fernández Castañón (2022) “**The true cost of Argentina’s Lithium rush**” Rastreator: <https://www.fairplanet.org/story/the-true-cost-of-argentinas-lithium-rush/>
- Virginia Tognola (2020) “**Activists Call for Legislation to Protect Argentina’s Wetlands**” Rastrator: <https://nacla.org/argentina-wetlands-protection>
- Andrea del Rio (2023) “**The Wetlands: the heart of Argentine biodiversity**” Rastrator: <https://buenosairesherald.com/what-to-do-in-argentina/around-argentina/the-wetlands-the-heart-of-argentine-biodiversity>

Week 5

Environmental Seminar

Class 4: *Sustainable development in local communities and the role of Civil Society Organizations: How to move forward in order to face the economic crisis and climate change.*

- Garnett Balmford (2022) “**The vital role of organizations in protecting climate and nature**” Rastrator: <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41562-021-01260-z#citeas>

- George Ingram (2020) **“Civil society: An essential ingredient of development”**
Rastrator:
<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/civil-society-an-essential-ingredient-of-development/>
- Fonseca (2022) **“Sustainability and social transformation: the role of ecovillages in confluence with the pluriverse of community-led alternatives”**
Rastrator: <https://www.nature.com/articles/s44168-022-00022-5#citeas>

Week 6

Environmental Seminar

Class 5: *Exploitation of natural resources in Latin America and Argentina: socio-environmental conflicts and challenges with local communities. Cases of the NOA and Patagonia.*

- Lucas Christel and Daniel Torunczyk **“Sovereignties in Conflict: Socio-environmental Mobilization and the Glaciers Law in Argentina”**
Centrum voor Studie en Documentatie van Latijns Amerika.
- McNeish, John Andrew. (2018). **“Resource Extraction and Conflict in Latin America”**. Colombia Internacional.
- Mariana Walter, Lucrecia Wagner (2021) **“Mining struggles in Argentina. The keys of a successful story of mobilization”** The Extractive Industries and Society.
- Juan José Relmucao (2021) **“Lithium Mining in Argentina Threatens Local Communities”** Rastrator:
<https://nacla.org/lithium-mining-argentina-threatens-local-communities>
- Natalie Alcoba (2022) **“A race for lithium is sparking fears of water shortages in northern Argentina”** Rastrator:
<https://www.climatechangenews.com/2022/01/07/race-lithium-sparking-fears-water-shortages-northern-argentina/>

Week 7

Reading week

Week 8

Fact checking activity

Class 6: *Mass media and the public agenda. How does the proliferation of disinformation and fake news influence the SDGs?*

- Stephan Lewandowsky (2021) “**Climate Change Disinformation and How to Combat It**”. *The Annual Review of Public Health Platform*.
- Yariv Tsfati (2020) “**Causes and consequences of mainstream media dissemination off fake news: literature review and synthesis**” *Annals of the International Communication Association*.

Week 9

Fact-checking activity

Class 7: *The situation of developed and developing countries in regard to climate change and the current state of international cooperation: green political polarization.*

- Elizabeth Cousens, Ilona Szabó de Carvalho (2020) “**Why we need international cooperation now more than ever**” Rastrator:
<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/09/global-cooperation-international-united-nations-covid-19-climate-change/>
- Pedro Mariani (2021) “**Climate Change and International Cooperation**” Rastrator:
<https://www.sir.advancedleadership.harvard.edu/articles/climate-change-and-international-cooperation>
- Amar Bhattacharya, Homi Kharas, and John W. McArthur (2023) “**Developing countries are key to climate action**” Rastrator:

<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/developing-countries-are-key-to-climate-action/>

- Sedona Chinn, P. Sol Hart, and Stuart Soroka (2020) **“Politicization and Polarization in Climate Change News Content, 1985-2017”** SAGE Publications.

Week 10

Class 8: *Global population growth, its impact on agricultural economies and sustainable urban planning.*

- Zhenhua Zhang, Mingcheng Zhao, Yunpeng Zhang, Yanchao Feng (2023) **“How does urbanization affect public health? New evidence from 175 countries worldwide”** *Frontiers in Public Health*.
- Richa Mahtta, others (2022) **“Urban land expansion: the role of population and economic growth for 300+ cities”** *npj Urban Sustainability*.
- Department of Economic and Social Affairs Population Division **“Global Population Growth and Sustainable Development”** United Nations Platform.

Week 11

Simulation model of the Conference of the Parties.

Week 12

Class 9: *Carbon footprint and the Latin America situation: Climate change, mitigation and adaptation.*

- United Nations Development Programme. (2022) **“Guidance for Implementing National Voluntary Carbon Footprint Programs in Latin America”**. UNDP, New York.
- UN Environment Programme (2020) **“Zero Carbon: The opportunity, cost and benefits of the coupled decarbonization of the power and transport sectors in Latin America and the Caribbean”**. UN Environment Programme, Office for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Week 13

Class 10: *Argentina's progress in environmental issues and steps towards a sustainable future: socio-environmental challenges.*

- The World Bank Group (2022) **“Country Climate and Development Report: Argentina”** World Bank Publications.
- The World Bank Group (2016) **“Argentina: Country Environmental Analysis”** World Bank Publications.

Week 14

Delivery of guidelines for the final essay on the course content.

Week 15

Consultations and Follow-up of the final essay.

Week 16

Delivery of grades and feedback.

Evaluation and grading

A) Evaluation criteria and approval requirements:

- Class participation (20%)

Over the course of the course, student participation is extremely important, getting involved during class, bringing new ideas, and bringing topics for discussion to the class will be necessary.

- Fact-checking deliveries (one per activity) (20%)

During the fact-checking activities, students will have to put into practice their skills as fact-checkers through the analysis of fake news and news that seek to misinform. The trainers will provide them with the tools to develop the activity and deliver the analysis at the end of the activity.

- Participation in the COP Simulation Model (30%)

One day during week number 11, students will participate in a simulation model of the parties' conference. This section is developed in the Study Guide.

- Final essay on course learning (30%)

At the end of the course, students must submit an essay on the knowledge acquired during the course, which must be reflective and must propose alternatives and solutions.

B) Class attendance:

A 75% class attendance will be required and the student who does not comply with this percentage will automatically receive an F. 0.5 points will be deducted each time the student incurs in an unexcused absence or does not hand in the work requested by the teacher in due time and form.

Absence from exams: make-up exams are a privilege only granted to those who give a week's notice of their absence with a justified cause.

Participation: Participation is an extremely important element in the learning experience. For this reason, cell phones must be turned off during class. They may only be turned on for exceptional reasons and with the teacher's permission. Those who do not comply with this rule will have their grade reduced.

C) Grades

Percent Description

10 (A) Excellent	100-95
9 (A-) Very Good	94-89
8 (B) Good	88-83
7 (B-) Above average	82-77
6 (C) Average	76-71
5 (C) Below average	70-65
4 (D) Passing	64-60
F Failed	59-0
W Disqualified	With Academic Advisor approval
I Incomplete	Only with advisor approval

Plagiarism: An important objective of the course is for students to learn how to write essays. Students are then expected to write their own papers. Plagiarism not only undermines the learning process but is also a breach of university policy and intellectual honesty. The sources and bibliography should always be citations when writing essays. Plagiarism will automatically receive an F. If you are in doubt as to what constitutes plagiarism you should consult your instructor.

A paper that is written with the help of artificial intelligence will not be considered your own original work and will not be evaluated. The academic staff might check if papers have been written using AI with detection tools such as GPTZero, or similar.