



1. General Information

Course Subject	ECON
Course Number	3232
Course Title	Economics of Sustainability
Academic Years	2024-2025
Grading Method	Letter

2. Instructors

Professor HE, Guojun
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Subclasses: 2A

4. Course Description

Course Description	This course is about the economics of sustainability with an emphasis on policies that seek to address environmental pollution and sustainability issues. We will connect microeconomic theories with real world policy applications. The course begins with an overview of microeconomic theories that are particularly relevant to sustainability policies; then it moves on to the key topics in sustainability economics and policies. Particular issues include market failure, externality, common goods and public goods, valuation of non-market goods, environmental regulations, pollution, biodiversity, and economics of climate change. The objective of this course is to develop an understanding of sustainability issues from an economist's point of view.
Free Elective	Yes

5. Course Objectives

1. To provide students with important facts about environmental problems in our society and discuss their economic importance
2. To provide in-depth understanding of the key economic models in environmental economics
3. To develop essential analytical skills to analyze various environmental policies
4. To foster critical thinking of the students in assessing public policies
5. To broaden perspectives of ethics and social responsibility

6. Faculty Learning Goals

- Goal 1: Acquisition and internalization of knowledge of the programme discipline
- Goal 2: Application and integration of knowledge
- Goal 3: Inculcating professionalism

6. Faculty Learning Goals
Goal 4: Developing global outlook
Goal 5: Mastering communication skills
Goal 6: Cultivating leadership

7. Course Learning Outcomes						
Course Teaching and Learning Activities	Aligned Faculty Learning Goals					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
CLO1. Understand basic economics models to analyze environmental problems	✓					
CLO2. Being able to apply different non-market valuation methods to value environmental goods and conduct benefit-cost analysis	✓	✓	✓			
CLO3. Being able to compare different social policies and analyze their welfare implications	✓	✓	✓	✓		
CLO4. Demonstrate effective written and verbal communication and teamwork skill through presentations and reports					✓	✓

8. Course Teaching and Learning Activities		
Course Teaching and Learning Activities #	Expected Study Hours	Study Load (% of study)
T&L1. Interactive Lectures with Discussions and Debates	36	27.3
T&L2. Group Projects (Presentations + Reports)	30	22.7
T&L3. Assignments	30	22.7
T&L4. Self-Study (Readings)	36	27.3
	Total: 132	Total: 100

9. Assessment Methods			
Assessment Methods	Description	Weight %	Aligned Course Learning Outcomes
A1. Assignments	Four assignments in total	20%	1,2,3,4
A2. Group Presentation + Report		30%	1,2,3,4
A3. Participation		10%	1,2,3,4
A4. Final Exam		40%	1,2,3,4

Assessment Rubrics	
A1. Assignments	
A+,A,A-	Respond to all or almost all of the questions clearly and accurately. All or almost all of the responses are well organized, clear, fluent, and with appropriate elaboration.

Assessment Rubrics	
B+,B,B-	Respond to most of the questions clearly and accurately. Most of the responses are well organized, clear, fluent, and with appropriate elaboration.
C+,C,C-	Respond to some of the questions clearly and accurately. Some of the responses are well organized, clear, fluent, and with appropriate elaboration.
D+,D	Respond to few of the questions clearly and accurately. Few of the responses are well organized, clear, fluent, and with appropriate elaboration.
F	Respond to very few of the questions clearly and accurately. Very few of the responses are well organized, clear, fluent, and with appropriate elaboration.
A2. Group Presentation + Report	
A+,A,A-	Strong evidence of superb ability in a clear identification of the problem, a clear logical analysis, a clear and logical policy recommendation, as well as a clear delivery.
B+,B,B-	Strong evidence of ability in a clear identification of the problem, a clear logical analysis, a clear logical policy recommendation, as well as a clear delivery.
C+,C,C-	Evidence of adequate ability in a clear identification of the problem, a clear logical analysis, a clear logical policy recommendation, as well as a clear delivery.
D+,D	Evidence of basic ability in a clear identification of the problem, a clear logical analysis, a clear logical policy recommendation, as well as a clear delivery.
F	Little or no evidence of basic ability in a clear identification of the problem, a clear logical analysis, a clear logical policy recommendation, as well as a clear delivery.
A3. Participation	
A+,A,A-	Attend almost all lectures (> 85%) and participate in the exercises and discussions therein.
B+,B,B-	Attend most lectures (> 70%) and participate in the exercises and discussions therein.
C+,C,C-	Attend more than half of all lectures (> 55%) and participate in the exercises and discussions therein.
D+,D	Attend slightly less than half of all lectures and participate in the exercises and discussions therein.
F	Attend much less than half of all lectures and participate in the exercises and discussions therein.
A4. Final Exam	
A+,A,A-	Respond to all or almost all of the questions clearly and accurately. All or almost all of the responses are well organized, clear, fluent, and with appropriate elaboration.
B+,B,B-	Respond to most of the questions clearly and accurately. Most of the responses are well organized, clear, fluent, and with appropriate elaboration.
C+,C,C-	Respond to some of the questions clearly and accurately. Some of the responses are well organized, clear, fluent, and with appropriate elaboration.
D+,D	Respond to few of the questions clearly and accurately. Few of the responses are well organized, clear, fluent, and with appropriate elaboration.
F	Respond to very few of the questions clearly and accurately. Very few of the responses are well organized, clear, fluent, and with appropriate elaboration.

10. Course Grade Descriptors

A+,A,A-	Demonstrate superb ability to comprehend the course materials and achieve all the intended learning outcomes of the course, as evidenced by an exceptionally thorough understanding of the concepts and reasoning presented in this course and being able to apply it creatively to the analysis and interpretation of observed economic phenomenon.
B+,B,B-	Demonstrate strong ability to comprehend the course materials and achieve the majority of the intended learning outcomes of the course, as evidenced by a good understanding of the concepts and reasoning presented in this course and being able to apply it well to the analysis and interpretation of observed economic phenomenon.
C+,C,C-	Demonstrate fair levels of understanding of the course materials, as evidenced by a roughly accurate understanding of the concepts and reasoning presented in this course and being able to apply it most of the time to the analysis and interpretation of observed economic phenomenon.
D+,D	Demonstrate some evidence of basic familiarity with the course materials, as evidenced by a somewhat accurate understanding of the concepts and reasoning presented in this course and being able to apply it only some of the time to the analysis and interpretation of observed economic phenomenon.
F	Demonstrate a poor grasp of the course materials, as evidenced by a largely inaccurate understanding of the concepts and reasoning presented in this course and being unable to apply it to the analysis and interpretation of observed economic phenomenon.

11. Course Content and Tentative Teaching Schedule

Topic/ Session	Content
1	Economics and Environmental Economics
2	Comparative Statics and Welfare Analysis
3	Externality and Coase Theorem
4	Valuing the Environment
5	Benefit-Cost Analysis
6	Production, Costs, and Pollution
7	The Economics of Environmental Regulations
8	Market Power, Externality, and Second Best
9	Asymmetric Information and Policy Design
10	The Economics of Biodiversity
11	ESG Basics and Citizen Engagement
12	The Economics of Climate Change
13	Presentation and Final Review

12. Required/Recommended Readings & Online Materials

Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “The Economics of the Environment”, by Peter Beck and Gloria Helmand, Prentice Hall; 1 edition, 2010.• “Environmental & Natural Resource Economics” by Tom Tietenberg and Lynne Lewis, Pearson Press.• Reading materials provided by the instructor
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13. Means / Processes for Student feedback on Course

	Conducting mid-term survey in addition to SETL around the end of the semester
✓	Online response via Moodle site
✓	Others
	Regular discussion with students on their needs and their learning progress

14. Course Policy

• Class Conduct

Students are required to attend all classes on time. If you miss a class, it is entirely your responsibility for what you have missed. In case you have to leave the class early, please inform the instructor beforehand and leave quietly. No use of mobile phone or chatting is allowed when the class is in session. Remember to turn off or mute the phone before each session. The instructor has the discretion to give penalty in case of class misconduct. Respect your instructors and your fellow students and be considerate to others.

• Plagiarism and Misconduct

No plagiarism will be tolerated. The University Regulations on academic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. Please check the University Statement on plagiarism on the web: <http://www.hku.hk/plagiarism/>.

Academic dishonesty is behavior in which a deliberately fraudulent misrepresentation is employed in an attempt to gain undeserved intellectual credit, either for oneself or for another. It includes, but is not necessarily limited to, the following types of cases:

o Plagiarism - The representation of someone else's ideas as if they are one's own. Where the arguments, data, designs, etc., of someone else are being used in a paper, report, oral presentation, or similar academic project, this fact must be made explicitly clear by citing the appropriate references. The references must fully indicate the extent to which any parts of the project are not one's own work. Paraphrasing of someone else's ideas is still using someone else's ideas, and must be acknowledged.

o The representation of work as solely one's own when in fact it is the result of a joint effort.

Where a candidate for a degree or other award uses the work of another person or persons without due acknowledgment:

o The relevant Board of Examiners may impose a penalty in relation to the seriousness of the offence;

o The relevant Board of Examiners may report the candidate to the Senate, where there is prima facie evidence of an intention to deceive and where sanctions beyond those in (1) might be invoked.

15. Additional Course Information

- Announcement, assignments, and lecture slides will be posted on the course website. Hard copy of lecture notes will not be provided. Students are expected to log into and check the system regularly for any updated information and announcements, and to download the teaching and learning materials for the study. Students are also required to read extra reading materials that are posted on the course website.
- Penalty for late submission of assignments and group project: any late submission of homework assignments, or the group project will be subject to a 50% penalty deduction of the respective total marks per calendar day after [11:59 pm] of the due date, unless prior written permission is obtained from the Instructor under special circumstances, e.g. medical leave.
- E-mail should be reserved for questions related to scheduling, appointments or administrative issues. The instructor will not answer questions about class materials by e-mail; please come to office hours or schedule an appointment if you have any questions related to course material.
- Special examinations are not granted to students taking up summer internships. Please avoid starting your internships before the end of the examination period.