Course title: Circular Economy
Language of instruction: English
Professor: Lela Mélon
Professor’s contact and office hours: upon agreement
Course contact hours: 45
Recommended credit: 6 ECTS credits
Course prerequisites: There are no specific prerequisites for this course, just a genuine interest in sustainability and being briefly familiarized with the UN Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.
Language requirements: Recommended level in the European Framework B2 (or equivalent: Cambridge Certificate if the teaching language is English, DELE or 3 semesters in the case of Spanish)

Course focus and approach: this is a course that focuses on regenerative approach to the environmental sustainability in the framework of circular economy and circular practices in diverse social settings, framing the notions of sustainable consumption and production.

Course description: The course is devoted to delivering the knowledge on the pertinent issues of sustainable development through the prism of the use of circular economy principles. Understanding the concept of a circular economy demands the understanding as to how a circular economy deviates from the current linear system, being able to analyze and develop complex circular systems using a systems-thinking approach, assessing the use of Life Cycle Assessment and Agent Based Modelling. The course also teaches how to formulate improvements for a transition towards a circular design and the students learn how to use and apply complexity aspects and agent-based modelling. The concept of circular economy will be applied through policy considerations, legal aspects, economic and practical implications.

Learning objectives: At the end of the course, the students will be able to understand in great detail, the concept of sustainable circular economy, its broader implications and legal and policy requirements for enacting changes to the existing linear practices for achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Course workload: The course will develop along a full term, with twenty-one (21) two-hour sessions. Each of them will consist of a lecture by the professor, a discussion about the required readings, and in some cases additional activities addressed to specific issues of the course. Depending on the nature of such activities, active participation of students will be required. Readings for each session are compulsory as a basis for discussion, without exception. A close approximation to the Problem Based Learning method.

Teaching methodology: focus of the class will be on thorough understanding of the theoretical concepts as applied in practice through problem-based learning.
**Assessment criteria:**
Apart from lectures, course activities will imply course and reading assignments, as well as active participation by students. The evaluation of the course will combine continuous assessment and a final examination, according to the following criteria:

Midterm: 40%
Course assignments: 20%
Final exam: 40%

It is possible to obtain additional 10% from outstanding active in-class participation.

**Retaking conditions:**
For students failing the course after the final examination, it will be possible to retake the exam while grades for course assignments and class participation are maintained.

**BaPIS absence policy**
Attending class is mandatory and will be monitored daily by professors. Missing classes will impact on the student’s final grade as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Absences</th>
<th>Penalization</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to two (2) absences</td>
<td>No penalization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three (3) absences</td>
<td>1 point subtracted from final grade (on a 10-point scale)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Four (4) absences</td>
<td>2 points subtracted from final grade (on a 10-point scale)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five (5) absences or more</td>
<td>The student receives an INCOMPLETE (“NO PRESENTADO”) for the course</td>
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The BaPIS attendance policy does not distinguish between justified or unjustified absences. The student is deemed responsible to manage his/her absences.

Only absences for medical reasons will be considered justified absences. The student is deemed responsible to provide the necessary documentation. Other emergency situations will be analyzed on a case by case basis by the Academic Director of the BaPIS.

The Instructor, the Academic Director and the Study Abroad Office should be informed by email without any delay.

**Classroom norms:**
- No food or drink is permitted in class.
- Students will have a ten-minute break after one one-hour session.
- Active class participation is mandatory.
Weekly schedule

SESSIONS 1-4: The pitfalls of linear economy and the traditional business models
- The course description
- Syllabus, assessment and readings
- Introduction to the course requirements and methods of assessment
- Exploring the depth and the meaning of the term “linear economy,” its origins and its adaptations through time
- Understanding the distinction between sustainability and regenerative practices
- Shareholder primacy and short-termism of financial markets and the need for adaptation to circular principles.

Reading and class discussion: suggested readings, the important summaries will be provided by the professor a week before each class.
4. The Principles of International Law Related to Sustainable Development (the text will be provided to the students)

SESSIONS 4-7: Defining and correctly positioning the notion of circular economy
- Studying the need for the implementation of circular economy principles
- Defining circular economy and identifying the pitfalls of its application in a ‘business-as-usual’ scenario
- Embedding the emerging concepts under the umbrella framework of sustainability.
- Discussing instances where circular economy is not sustainable.

Reading and class discussion: suggested readings, the important summaries will be provided by the professor a week before each class.


SESSIONS 8 and 9: Financing Circular Economy
- The role of finance in business and (sustainable) innovation
- The definition of sustainable finance
- Relevant developments in the EU regarding sustainable finance
- Recognising the importance of adaptation of financial systems to the characteristics of circular economy
- Analysing the current pitfalls, suggesting contractual remedies to adapt the old traditional linear system of financing to the new demands of circular economy.

Reading and class discussion: suggested readings, the important summaries will be provided by the professor a week before each class.


SESSION 10: Midterm (group project presentation)

SESSIONS 11-13: Life Cycle Assessment Method
- Defining Life Cycle Assessment Method
- Understanding LCA synonyms, goals and purpose
- Discussing LCA goals and scope, inventory, impact assessment and interpretation.
- On the LCA uses and data analysis.
- Presenting variants to the LCA (cradle-to-grave, cradle-to-gate, etc.)
- Life cycle energy analysis and critiques.

Reading and class discussion: suggested readings, the important summaries will be provided by the professor a week before each class


SESSIONS 14 and 15: EU Legislation on Circular Economy
- The analysis of Final Circular Economy Package issued by the EU in 2019, also from a policy coherence perspective.
- Studying the boundaries and pitfalls of the Circular Economy Action Plan.
- Analyzing adjacent EU policy and legal frameworks.

Reading and class discussion: suggested readings, the important summaries will be provided by the professor a week before each class.

SESSION 16: International organisations on Circular Economy
- NGOs as accelerating factors for a mass deployment of circular economy.
- Ellen MacArthur foundation.
- European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform.
- The materials issued by NGOs.

Reading and class discussion: suggested readings, the important summaries will be provided by the professor a week before each class.

SESSION 17-19: Future prospects
- Studying the concepts presented in the previous sessions in the light of possible future developments.
- Application of the existing rules to the current business reality and vice versa: which market realities would need further legislative intervention?
- Practical discussions, case law analysis and analysis of proposals of the EU Commission and the EU Parliament on the matter.

Reading and class discussion: TBA following the newest developments
SESSIONS 20 and 21: Recap and exam preparation

Last revision: April 2021.

Required readings:

Recommended bibliography: