



**EC/PO 235 IN SEARCH OF SUSTAINABILITY: ENERGY, THE ENVIRONMENT, AND SOCIETY IN CENTRAL EUROPE**  
IES Abroad Vienna

**DESCRIPTION:**

This course is centered on the concept of sustainability and its various shared implications. Initially, students will be made familiar with the history and the present uses of this concept. In addition the concept of Central Europe, an introduction to the Political System of the European Union and its strategies and policies in the field of sustainability will be provided. Bearing in mind the sustainability perspective, energy, environmental and societal issues and policies in five selected central European countries will be worked on in detail during the term. Due to shared borders, common EU membership and close historical bonds, Austria, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Slovenia will be examined. Specifically, an introduction to the regional political and economic systems will be given and selected case studies in the energy and environmental fields will be discussed. Equally, the structure of the course aims at putting the different case studies into a comparative perspective. A one-day course-related trip to the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros Waterworks (on the border between Austria, Slovakia, and Hungary) and Bratislava will be organized as part of the course.

**CREDITS:** 3 credits

**LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION:** English

**PREREQUISITES:** None

**ADDITIONAL COST:** Field trip costs, if any, beyond IES Abroad subsidy (Bus journey), TBA.

**METHOD OF PRESENTATION:**

A combination of methods will be applied, including

- Lectures
- Class discussions of the required readings
- Student presentations of selected case studies
- Course-related excursion
- The method of presentation is furthermore based on a team-teaching approach with input from a political systems-based (Pfefferle) and an energy and environmental policy-oriented perspective (Schmidt).

**REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:**

- Oral presentation of a country case study – 25%
- Individually written final research paper on the country case study - 25%
- Course participation - 10%
- Midterm Test - 25%
- Final Exam - 25%

**Oral Presentation of Country Case Study**

Will be given during sessions 7 and 9 and will be partly based on students' own research.

**Final Research Paper**

Topics and research questions should be proposed to the instructors by the 6th session

## Course participation grading rubric

<b>A</b>	<b>Excellent participation</b> The student's contributions reflect an active reading of the assigned bibliography. Skillfully synthesizes the main ideas of the readings and raises questions about the applications and implications of the material. Demonstrates, through questions and comments, that he or she has been capable of relating the main ideas in the readings to the other information discussed in the course, and with his or her own life experience. The student makes informed judgments about the readings and other ideas discussed in class, providing evidence and reasons. He/she respectfully states his/her reactions about other classmates' opinions, and is capable of contributing to the inquiry spiral with other questions. The student gets fully involved in the completion of the class activities.
<b>B</b>	<b>Very good participation</b> The student's contributions show that the assigned materials are usually read. Most of the time the main ideas are identified, even though sometimes it seems that applications and implications of the information read were not properly reflected upon. The student is able to construct over others' contributions, but sometimes seems to interrupt the shared construction to go over tangents. He/she is respectful of others' ideas. Regularly involved in the activities but occasionally loses concentration or energy.
<b>C</b>	<b>Regular participation</b> The participant evidences a regular reading of the bibliography, but in a superficial way. He/she tries to construct over others' ideas, but commonly provides comments that indicate lack of preparation about the material. Frequently, contributions are shallow or unarticulated with the discussion in hand.
<b>F</b>	<b>Insufficient participation</b> Consistently, the participant reads in a shallow way or does not read at all. Does not participate in an informed way, and shows lack of interest in constructing over others' ideas.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of the course students will be able to:

- Understand the political and economic systems of the five selected central European countries
- Gain a detailed and thorough knowledge of this region and its issues in the field of energy and environment
- Get expertise on the concept of sustainability and its various implications
- Be able to assess course related policies from a comparative perspective
- Be able to work out extended case studies on complex topics
  - Form their own opinion on such cases

## ATTENDANCE POLICY:

IES Abroad Vienna requires attendance at all class sessions, including field study excursions, internship meetings, scheduled rehearsals, and exams. Attendance will be taken for every class. If a student misses more than two classes without an excuse, the final grade will be reduced by one-third of a letter grade (for example, A- to B+) for every additional unexcused absence.

### Excused Absences are permitted only when:

- 1) a student is ill (health issues),
- 2) when class is held on a recognized religious holiday traditionally observed by the particular student, or
- 3) in the case of a grave incident affecting family members;
- 4) Exceptions may be made for conflicting academic commitments, but only in writing and only well in advance of missed class time.

Please refer to IES Vienna Attendance Policy for details on how to get your absences excused.

#### CONTENT:

Session	Content	Reading
Session 1: Introduction to course, structure, requirements and topic	Defining Central Europe. Introductory remarks on the concept of Central Europe and issues of environmental security and civil society in Central Europe.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Petritsch, p. 131-140</li> <li>• Àgh, p. 1-10</li> <li>• Kobtzeff, p.113-141</li> </ul>
Session 2: Defining Sustainability I	This session is designed to make students familiar with the concept of sustainability and its various implications. Starting with the UN-definition: “sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Brundtland Commission), other meanings and concepts of sustainability will be discussed in class.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carson, p. 23-30</li> <li>• World Commission on Environment and Development, Arts 1-28 and Arts 60-64</li> <li>• Blewitt, p. 1-26</li> </ul>
Session 3: Defining Sustainability II	This session is designed to make students familiar with the concept of sustainability and its various implications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kates, p. 8–21</li> <li>• Blewitt, p. 75-97</li> </ul>
Session 4: Introduction to the Political System of the European Union	This session focuses on a brief introduction to the Political System of the European Union. Starting with an historic overview of the project of European integration up to date, the main institutions (European Council, Council of Ministers, European Commission, European Parliament) of the European policy-making process will be introduced.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hix/Hoyland, p. 27-69 and 72-109</li> </ul>
Session 5: The European Union and Sustainability: Strategies and Policies	The European Union’s (renewed) Strategy for Sustainable Development and its Review in 2009 is going to be analyzed and discussed.  Midterm Exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council of the European Union (2006), p. 2-21</li> <li>• European Commission (2009), p. 2-11</li> </ul>
Session 6: Group formation and selection of case studies	The basic principles of EU Environmental and Energy Policy will be examined, with an emphasis on the “new” member states.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carmin et. al, p. 3-26</li> <li>• Pavlinek et.al, p. 237-265</li> <li>• Jefferson, p. 571-582</li> </ul>
Session 7: Case Studies: Environmental	Guest speaker of the Federal Chancellery and Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water	None

Policies in Central European countries	Management (Lebensministerium) talks on “Climate Change and Austria”. In the second part of this lecture students shall present a country case study, based on the country assessments of the report “The European Environment – State and Outlook Report 2010”, as well as on own research. A detailed guideline for the presentation as well as specific literature will be provided.	
Session 8: Course-related excursion to Bratislava and Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros Waterworks	Course-related trip: Bratislava and Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros Waterworks	None
Session 9: Case Studies: Energy Policies in Central European countries	Students shall present a country case study, based on the country assessments of the report “The European Environment – State and Outlook Report 2010”, as well as on own research. A detailed guideline for the presentation as well as specific literature will be provided.	None
Session 10: Summary of the case studies	Discussion of alternative models of sustainability  Final Exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Blewitt, p. 149-172</li> </ul>

#### COURSE-RELATED TRIPS:

- Course-related excursion to Bratislava and Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros Waterworks (exact date TBA)

#### REQUIRED READINGS:

- Àgh, Attila (1998). The Politics of Central Europe. Sage Publications, London.
- Blewitt, John (2008). Understanding Sustainable Development. Earthscan. London.
- Carmin, Joann/VanDeVeer, Stacy D. (2005). Enlarging EU Environments: Central and Eastern Europe from Transition to Accession. In: Carmin, Joann/VanDeVeer, Stacy D. (eds.). EU Enlargement and the Environment: Institutional Change and Environmental Policy in Central and Eastern Europe. VERLAG & ERSCHINUNGSORT FEHLEN. p. 3-26
- Carson, Rachel (2002). The Obligation to Ensure. In: Silent Sprint. Mariner Books, New York, p. 23-30
- Council of the European Union (2006). Renewed EU Sustainable Development Strategy. Available on: <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/06/st10/st10917.en06.pdf> [3]
- European Environment Agency (2010). The European Environment – state and outlook 2010. Available on: <http://www.eea.europa.eu/soer/countries#c11=CommonalityReport> [4] c11=DiversityReport&c11=FlexibilityReport&c12=all&c5=&b\_start=0
- European Commission (2009). Mainstreaming sustainable development into EU policies: 2009 Review of the European Union Strategy for Sustainable Development. Available on: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2009:0400:FIN:en:PDF>
- Federal Chancellery and Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management

(2007). The First National Report on Implementing the EU Strategy for Sustainable Development. Available on: <http://umwelt.lebensministerium.at/filemanager/download/23377/> [6]

- Hix, Simon, Høyland, Bjørn (2011). The Political System of the European Union. 3rd edition. Palgrave Macmillan, ERSCHINUNGSORT FEHLT
- Kates, Robert, Parris, Thomas and Leiserowitz, Anthony (2005). What is Sustainable Development? In: Environment 47(3), p. 8–21
- Kobtzeff, Oleg (2000). Environmental Security and Civil Society. In: Gardner, Hall (ed.). Central and Southeastern Europe in Transition. Perspectives on Success and Failure Since 1989. Praeger, Westport/London, p. 113-149
- Pavlinek, Peter/Pickles, John (2005). Environmental Pasts/Environmental Futures in Post-Socialist Europe. In: Carmin, Joann/VanDeVeer, Stacy D. (eds.). EU Enlargement and the Environment: Institutional Change and Environmental Policy in Central and Eastern Europe. VERLAG & ERSCHINUNGSORT FEHLEN, p. 237-265
- Petritsch, Wolfgang (2008). Culture in Central Europe: Possibilities and Preconditions. In: The Analyst - Central and Eastern European Review English Edition issue: 01 / 2008, pages: 131-140
- World Commission on Environment and Development (1987). Our Common Future, Chapter 2: Towards Sustainable Development. United Nations General Assembly (<http://www.un-documents.net/ocf-02.htm#I>)(Brundtland-Report)

#### RECOMMENDED READINGS:

- Redclift, Michael (2005). "Sustainable Development (1987–2005): An Oxymoron Comes of Age." In: Sustainable Development 13(4), p. 212–227.
- European Commission (2001). European Sustainable Development Strategy 2001. In: [http://ec.europa.eu/sustainable/sds2001/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/sustainable/sds2001/index_en.htm) [8]

#### FURTHER READINGS:

- Blewitt, John (2008). Understanding Sustainable Development. Earthscan. London.
- Eurostat (2009). Sustainable development in the European Union. 2009 monitoring report of the EU sustainable development strategy. In: [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY\\_OFFPUB/KS-78-09-865/EN/KS-78-09-865-EN.PDF](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-78-09-865/EN/KS-78-09-865-EN.PDF) [9]
- Geden, Oliver and Kremer, Martin (2010). The European Union: A Challenged Leader in Ambitious International Climate Policy. In: Dröge, Susanne (ed.). International Climate Policy. Priorities of Key Negotiating Parties. SWS Research Paper. Berlin, March 2010.

#### IMPORTANT WEB RESOURCES:

- European Commission – Environment: [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/index_en.htm) [10]
- European Commission - Sustainable Development: [http://ec.europa.eu/sustainable/welcome/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/sustainable/welcome/index_en.htm) [11]
- European Environment Agency: <http://www.eea.europa.eu/> [12]

#### LINKS:

- [1] <https://www.iesabroad.org/study-abroad/programs/vienna-music>
- [2] <https://www.iesabroad.org/study-abroad/programs/vienna-european-society-culture>
- [3] <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/06/st10/st10917.en06.pdf>
- [4] <http://www.eea.europa.eu/soer/countries#c11=CommonalityReport>
- [5] <http://eur->
- [6] <http://umwelt.lebensministerium.at/filemanager/download/23377/>
- [7] <http://www.un->
- [8] [http://ec.europa.eu/sustainable/sds2001/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/sustainable/sds2001/index_en.htm)
- [9] [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY\\_OFFPUB/KS-78-09-865/EN/KS-78-09-865-EN.PDF](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-78-09-865/EN/KS-78-09-865-EN.PDF)
- [10] [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/index_en.htm)



[11] [http://ec.europa.eu/sustainable/welcome/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/sustainable/welcome/index_en.htm)

[12] <http://www.eea.europa.eu/>