

# 21E10000, How to change the world: Innovating toward sustainability, 6 ETCS

Instructors' contact information	Course information
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## 1. OVERVIEW

In the course “How to change the world: Innovating toward sustainability”, we work with global environmental and social sustainability problems and their potential solutions. The course aims at **exploring alternative paths for creative and innovative responses to sustainability challenges**. Global sustainability challenges are taken as starting points for innovating new forms of individual action, economic activity, business models, and organizational forms. The course addresses sustainability innovation from the following main perspectives: **sustainable business models and sustainability innovations, inclusive business in low-income markets, various forms of entrepreneurship for sustainability ventures, intrapreneurship for sustainability context of large organizations, and change advocacy and leadership**. We employ a variety of interactive working methods, which encourage students to **explore** and **reflect** upon their own thinking patterns and develop new ideas in a collaborative manner.

## 2. PREREQUISITES

This course is part of the advanced studies (master level). At least one previous course on sustainability topic is a requirement for admission.

## 3. LEARNING OUTCOMES

Through lectures, exercises, a team project and practitioner talks, the students gain understanding of **wicked societal problems related to sustainability**: what they are, how they can be approached, how they are connected to each other and why it is important to tackle them. More importantly, the students explore **alternative paths for creative and innovative responses** to sustainability challenges. We both provide the students with information of the **known approaches to sustainability innovation and entrepreneurship** as well as **encourage their personal reflection in finding their own approaches and roles as change makers**. The students gain an understanding of how these vast challenges can be approached with **realistic and plausible actions** and what kind of different strategies can be identified. The students also try out these approaches in their course project as they collaboratively set up a social or sustainability enterprise and aim to develop an innovative response to a clearly focused sustainability issue.

## 4. ASYNCHRONOUS SUPPORT VIDEOS

Some sessions have **asynchronous lecture videos to support learning**. They are available through MyCourses under “Sessions and materials”. Any required videos will be specifically noted in the schedule below in section 7.

## 5. ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

- Interactive lectures: 25%
- Team project: 40%
- Input in Reading Corner discussion: 15%
- Learning diary: 20%

## 6. ASSIGNMENTS

### **Course project: Designing a business model for a social or sustainability enterprise**

Student teams of three or four members design a business model for a social or sustainability enterprise that aims to address one wicked sustainability problem. One enterprise cannot solve a wicked problem in full, but it can address a relevant part of the problem in a selected geographic setting. The business model designed by the student teams should be simultaneously realistic yet ambitious. The core of this task is the business model of the enterprise. The teams can use the Osterwalder Business Model Canvas as a basis for designing the business model of their enterprise.

The steps of the task are:

- Selecting a slice of the wicked sustainability problem assigned for the team
- What will be the sustainability contribution of our enterprise? Which problem will it solve?
- Selecting the geographic context: where will our enterprise operate?
- Drafting the business model using a selected version of Sustainable Business Model Canvas
- Analysing the challenges and pitfalls of the enterprise and its business model
- What can be done to remove challenges and pitfalls?
- Screening sustainability impacts of the business model with the help of a selected screening instrument (options provided in MyCourses)
- Can Aalto students set up this enterprise or participate in setting it up?

The assignment will be graded based on:

- (1) the relevance and credibility of the business model as well as the sustainability problem it sets to solve
- (2) how well the team collected and utilized relevant background information and specified the issue being addressed
- (3) how ambitious and creative yet feasible the proposed business model is.

## Reading corner

The reading corner is a way to discuss the literature on the course, and share ideas and questions collaboratively. The reading corner is a required meeting for the course (see schedule below) and affects the course grade. It is also a great way to meet and have reflective discussions with other students related to course topics. The student chooses a book to read and present from six book options. Students who have read the same book present its central arguments and learnings to the other participants of the reading session. Student groups are free to organize the presentation style and format themselves (usually PowerPoint presentations are discouraged and verbal communication with, for example, backup material is encouraged). Two or three books are discussed during each session. Students are welcome to attend more than one session.

The reading corner **grading** is based on the quality and quantity of the student's contribution to the reading corner discussion. **Quality** refers to issues such as (1) the depth of insights, (2) going beyond citing the book to reflecting from one's own perspective, (3) making links to comments of other students, and (4) carrying the discussion further by asking questions from the group. Participants can ask or answer questions, share their own learnings and observations from the book, and connect to something they know or see in society. So merely "making several comments" does not yield maximum points.

## Book options for the reading corners

The student selects a book from the list below **by March 9, 2023** in MyCourses.

1. Mazzucato, M. (2018) *The value of everything: Making and taking in the global world*. Allen Lane.
2. Wilkinson, R. Pickett, K. (2009) *The spirit level: Why equality is better for everyone*. ISBN: 978-014103236-8.

3. Grant, A. (2016) *Originals: How non-conformists move the world*. New York: Penguin Books.
4. Bregman, R. (2020) *Humankind: A hopeful history*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
5. Frey, B. (2018) *Economics of Happiness*. Springer. AND Layard, P. R. G. (2005 or 2011) *Happiness: Lessons from a new science*. ISBN978-0-241-95279-5
6. Jackson, T. (2009) *Prosperity without growth: Economics for a finite planet*. ISBN: 978-1-84407-8943

### **Discussion forum online**

During the course, we will have an option to have an online discussion forum in MyCourses, where you will have the chance to reflect on the content of the lectures as well as on the other course assignments. While online discussion participation is **not compulsory**, the forum is intended as an additional platform for sharing your views if desired.

### **Writing a learning diary on happiness or sustainability deeds**

Option #1 of the learning diary will give you a chance to explore one of the biggest questions of life: “What makes me happy?” Human well-being, happiness and their constituents are one of the underlying themes of the course. We will explore these topics – and their sustainable foundations – from different angles, one of which is a diary in which we would like you reflect on a daily basis what makes you happy. So, every day write down what has made you happy on that particular day, and reflect upon what this tells you about the basis and pursuit of happiness. We urge you to **do this every day and as immediately as possible** when you experience the moment you wish to record. This will help you in reflecting upon those moments and your experience in a genuine manner.

Option #2 of the learning diary encourages you to do one sustainability deed a day. The idea here is to change one small thing in a day, however small it is. You do not need to choose a new issue for each day (although you can opt for that also), but you are free to explore as many topics and deeds as you desire during the time period. You can also concentrate on one single thing or issue, if you wish. The concrete deed can be e.g. opting for a more sustainable option in your consumption, promoting a positive venture, convincing someone to

make a sustainable choice in their life, refraining from buying or doing an environmentally harmful act, engaging in a socially sustainable act, picking up a piece of trash, and so on. With this exercise, we challenge you to explore how it feels to make changes in your own daily routine. What is necessary to make the change happen and what is needed to make it stick? This exercise helps explore the influence of and learnings from small deeds.

We will discuss the learning diaries during the course in order to share our insights and reflections. We explore each option independently as well as their interconnections. This may create learning lessons that surprise us all.

The learning diary should be completed **by April 17, 2023**. It needs to be submitted in edited and understandable format. The length is five pages max. (11pt Arial, line spacing 1, standard margins, A4 size). The learning diary represents 20% of the course grade, but it is most valuable as a learning tool. Be creative!

## 7. COURSE SCHEDULE

#	Session	Date	Theme	Session pre-assignments	More information
1	Introduction & Crowdsourcing wicked sustainability problems	TUE 28.2 13.15-16	An introduction to the course Team work that lays the ground for team projects		Introduction of the course project.
2	Human wellbeing & ecological carrying capacity	THU 2.3 13.15-16	The big picture of the human wellbeing & environmental sustainability challenges, and the relations between them	Articles 1&2 from the list below	Introduction of the diary & the book alternatives
3	Business model innovation for sustainability	TUE 7.3 13.15-16	Business model concept, business models for sustainability, examples of ecologically	Article 3 from the list below (focus on the value mapping tool)	Case iPhone: Identification of unsustainability points

			sustainable business models		
4	Innovating inclusive & frugal business for poverty alleviation	THU 9.3 13.15-16	Innovating for poverty alleviation & wellbeing, inclusive business models and how to create them		Introduction of next sessions' case exercise
	Clinic sessions	Weeks 11 & 12			Tentatively March 15 & 21 online
5	Creating change through entrepreneurship & Fairphone case	TUE 14.3 13.15-16	Creating change with the help of new organizations: Social and sustainability entrepreneurship.	Articles 4 (Mair et al.) & 5 (Akemu et al.) from the list below  Cases: Fairphone	Fairphone case discussion
6	Creating change through intrapreneurship	THU 16.3 13.15-16	Creating change within large organizations – tactics for intrapreneurship	Read Article 6 (Halme et al.) from the list below	Role play – this exercise bridges creating change topics & the systems session
7	Being a change maker	TUE 21.3 13.15-16	Guest speakers & panel: Sustainability entrepreneurs		Mari Granström, Origin by Ocean Tiina Saukko, Infine Antti Virolainen, Sharetribe
8	Co-creating change in complex global systems	THU 23.3 13.15-16	Navigating complex global systems and creating acceptance for novel ideas in dominant systems.	Watch (1) documentary <i>Freightened: The True Cost of Shipping</i> & (2) video lecture of systems	<i>Freightened</i> system exercise  Partnerships, cocreation &

				(Miller). In MyCourses “Sessions and materials”.	collective sensemaking
				Read articles 7 & 8	
9	Reading corner	TUE 28.3 13-17		Select from book list	Teachers with guest faculty
10	Reading corner	THU 30.3 13-17		Select from book list	Teachers with guest faculty
11	Change makers proudly present	TUE 4.4 13.15-16	Teams present sustainability business models		
12	Change makers proudly present	THU 13.4 13.15-16	Teams present sustainability business models		

## 8. READINGS

In addition to the book list for the reading corner, additional articles will assigned for some lectures. These readings are listed below and announced on the course website.

1. Ripple et al., 2017. World Scientists’ Warning to Humanity: A Second Notice. *BioScience*, 67(12), 1026–1028.
2. Hickel, J. et al. (2022) Degrowth can work — here’s how science can help. *Nature*, 612: 400-403.
3. Bocken et al. 2013. A value mapping tool for sustainable business modelling. *Corporate Governance*, 13(5), 482-497.
4. Halme, M., Lindeman, S. and Linna, P. 2012. Innovation for Inclusive Business: Intrapreneurial Bricolage in Multinational Corporations. *Journal of Management Studies*, June, 743-784.
5. Akemu, O., Whiteman, G and Kennedy, S. 2016. Social Enterprise Emergence from Social Movement Activism: The Fairphone Case. *Journal of Management Studies*, 53(5), 846-877.
6. Mair, J., Battilana, J., & Cardenas, J. 2012. Organizing for Society: A Typology of Social Entrepreneurial Models. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 111(3).
7. Meadows, D. Leverage points: Places to Intervene in a System. Available at <http://donellameadows.org/archives/leverage-points-places-to-intervene-in-a-system/>



8. Monat, J. P. & Gannon, T. F. (2015). What is Systems Thinking? A Review of Selected Literature Plus Recommendations. *American Journal of Systems Science*, 4(1), 11-26.

## 9. COURSE WORKLOAD

Classroom hours	28h
Participating in team project	90h
Preparation of and participation in the reading corner	17h
Preparation of the learning diary on happiness or sustainability deeds	25h
<b>Total</b>	<b>160h (6 cr)</b>

## 10. ETHICAL RULES

Aalto University Code of Academic Integrity and Handling Thereof:  
<https://www.aalto.fi/en/applications-instructions-and-guidelines/aalto-university-code-of-academic-integrity-and-handling-violations-thereof>

## 11. OTHER ISSUES

- Registration to course is through Sisu. Registration closes one week before the start of the course.
- **If you have registered to the course, but cannot make it, please inform the teachers before the beginning of the course so that we can accept students from the waiting list.**
- Course policies

We expect the students to be present during class sessions as active discussion between participants is an important part of the course. In principle, we allow for two absences from the sessions and should they occur, we ask you to notify us with an email. We strongly encourage students to be present during the first lecture.