

Weekly Syllabus for JA Online Course

“Green entrepreneurship for sustainable development”

Weeks 1-2 Introduction. Definition of Sustainable Development

Video Lecture 1 (<10 minutes): **Introduction to the Course.** Discusses the goals of the online course, the format of the assignments, online discussion sessions, the studying workload and the objectives.

Video Lecture 2 (15-20 minutes): **Definition of Sustainable Development. What is “development”?**

- How do we define development? How do societies develop? How do we measure that? – we start with a brief historic background focusing on several milestones and several trends – agricultural and industrial revolution, population growth, agricultural productivity growth, improvement in health care and education, and lead to a brief mention on development metrics such as GDP and Human Development Index (HDI) . We illustrate global and national (for Norway and Bulgaria) development trends by using visualizations from World Bank Statistics data (noting the WB categorization of development) and Gapminder (<http://www.gapminder.org/>). Finally, we discuss the question “Is development inevitable” and present the parable of the Impossible Hamster (<http://www.impossiblehamster.org/>) and the concept of “degrowth”, and milder concepts of “decoupling” economic development from resource use and pollution emissions.

Video Lecture 3 (15-20 minutes): **Definition of Sustainable Development. What is “sustainable”?**

- How do we define “sustainable” – overview of several concepts, including the IPAT equation (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/IPAT>), the Iroquis “7 generations” concept (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seven_generation_sustainability), and the Planetary Boundaries framework (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Planetary_boundaries). We have to make a distinction that with regard to economic development, what may be “unsustainable” in one region, may be sustainable in another (example with water and forest management in Norway versus Bulgaria, and water footprint statistics for imported goods).

Assignment/Quiz: Using the Gapminder chart creator (<http://www.gapminder.org/world>) to compare several key sustainability related-trends for Bulgaria and Norway (as part of quiz). Quiz questions also include several of the concepts reviewed in the video lectures.

Weeks 3-4 Introduction to Green Business

Video Lecture 1 (10-15 minutes): **Role of business in sustainability**

- A very brief discussion of business perceptions toward sustainability (using up to date analytical reports such as the UN Global Compact Surveys, the Accenture CEO surveys and the 2013 MIT survey report). Several examples (quotes) from famous green visionaries/entrepreneurs to feed into the next week of lectures.

Video Lecture 2 (20-30 minutes): Can Every Business Be Green?

A clear distinction between environmentally conscious business, “green visionaries” and “green entrepreneurs”. A definition of environmental performance and the link to a business strategy. Several examples of revolutionary green businesses from different industries (typically the example should compare a large industry leader to a small start-up company), which may include 3 examples:

- **Primary Energy** – Large producer of wind turbines vs. an algae biodiesel startup;
- **Transport** – Large EV Automakers (Norway has most EVs per person in the world) vs. Start-up cargo bicycle courier;
- **Agriculture** – Large Bio brands versus small producers/horticulture

Video Lecture 3 (<15 minutes): Greenwashing. What Is It and How to Avoid It?

Basic definition of greenwashing – the “Seven Sins of Greenwashing”. How to recognize greenwashed advertising, packaging and product description. How to avoid greenwashing in our own business. Funny example of greenwashed products and brands.

Assignment/Quiz: Focus on lecture material. Maybe 2 extra credit questions – find and describe a green business and a greenwashing advertisement in your area.

Weeks 5-6 Great Ideas for Green Entrepreneurs

Video Lecture 1 (20-25 minutes): The Circular Economy. Presentation of various visions and concepts for future economy and the new roles that various businesses can play. Focus on energy and material flows, product life cycles and various services. Besides the basic Circular Economy concept (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Circular_economy) additional concepts such as Cradle2Cradle design and Blue Economy (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Blue_Economy).

Video Lecture 2 (15-20 minutes): Design with Nature. This lecture is dedicated to business ideas and technologies inspired by nature, mostly in the design field known as biomimicry. In addition to the basic technological examples (termite mounds, wind-generating buildings, innovative materials, etc.) a special focus will be on observing ecosystem services, which may give rise to new business practices or services (e.g. urban beekeeping, urban mining, sharing resources).

Video Lecture 3 (35-40 minutes): Green Business Ideas from Around the World. This lecture will present about 15-20 ideas (mainly sourced from Sustainia 100 2013 report, the Blue Economy and Sustainable Brands publications), arranged geographically (with focus on Europe) and by sector. We can focus on specific sectors, which represent interest for some students or provide additional examples from Bulgaria and Norway. Sectors may include:

Health, Education, IT, Resources, Construction

Assignment/Quiz: Select or create a green business idea. Develop it as the final assignment until the end deadline of the course.

Weeks 7-8 Sustainability is More than Green: Socially Responsible Business.

Video Lecture 1 (10-15 minutes): **From CSR to Corporate Sustainability**, how businesses can help society. An overview of the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) conceptual evolution from causal charity work to businesses fully integrating societal objectives. Various international corporate sustainability initiatives with strong social focus (such as the UN Global Compact and social responsibility labeling systems such as FairTrade) will be reviewed. Particular issues will focus worker rights, livelihoods protection and restoration, cultural aspects and identities.

Video Lecture 2 (20-25 minutes): **How to Engage Stakeholders?** This lecture presents in very basic terms what is a “stakeholder” (such as employees, their families, local community members), how they can be identified and approached, and how a business should work with stakeholders to contribute to local development. Examples of Stakeholder Identification and Stakeholder Engagement focus on some large projects (e.g. ones where a community is resettled such as a dam or mine), as well as services, which are particularly targeted to improving livelihoods in the local communities (e.g. the pioneer micro-credit schemes of Grameen Bank). Several stakeholder engagement standards (e.g. IFC standards) are very briefly introduced and maybe 1-2 relevant examples in Bulgaria.

Video Lecture 3 (15-20 minutes): **The Triple Bottom Line**, how businesses measure their success in the social sphere and how they account for both environmental and social sustainability into their overall performance. This lecture covers the basics of Triple Bottom Line (3BL) philosophy and introduces some standards for 3BL accounting (such as AccountAbility and the GRE reporting) in very basic terms. A short introduction of social investment (mention of various sustainability indexes and funds) will also be made.

Assignment/Quiz: The quiz will target student understanding of the 3BL concept and the social components of sustainability. Students may be asked to review the CSR performance of multi-national companies by checking GRE reports on the Internet.

Weeks 9-10 Social Entrepreneurship on a local scale

Video Lecture 1 (10-15 minutes): **The Need for Social Enterprise**, definition of a social enterprise as a special kind of business, based on the definition by Muhammad Yunus, mentioning the history of the concept, as well as available schemes and initiatives (including Social Venture Capital Funds).

Video Lecture 2 (20-25 minutes): **Starting a Social Business**, here the process whereby a social business is created will be explained, including the identification of community needs, devising a social business strategy and establishing what is the social return on investment (known as SROI) for a new business venture.

Video Lecture 3 (10-15 minutes): **From Social Business to Social Innovation**. This lecture should present interesting and innovative social enterprise projects that qualify for social innovation (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_innovation). Particular ideas from the fields of health care, education, social inclusion and rehabilitation of vulnerable people will be included.

Assignment/Quiz: The quiz will focus on the lecture materials and the various characteristics of social business and social enterprise.

Weeks 11-12 Synthesis – Go do it!

Video Lecture 1 (10-15 minutes): Discussion on how to incorporate all the concepts studied in the course to an actual business idea. General advice on what to strive for and what to avoid in a startup business.

Video Lecture 2 (10-15 minutes): Q&A Session on the Final Assignment. We can collect questions in the forum and give directions or an example.

Video Lecture 3 (10-15 minutes): General Q&A Session. Here we can answer general/curiosity questions about sustainability and green business that we have received from students in the course. It is possible that some questions are addressed to the guest speakers, and record their answers.

Assignment/Quiz: The final assignment in essay form (500 words long) will describe a student idea for a green, socially responsible startup business; will be graded according to written criteria.

NOTE: *This syllabus doesn't contain the guest speakers who will be confirmed upon inception of the course and their names will be announced after April 1, 2014.*