

MGT-203

**Sustainable entrepreneurship**

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Cursus	Sem.	Type
Humanities and Social Sciences	BA4	Obl.

Language of teaching	English
Credits	2
Session	Summer
Semester	Spring
Exam	During the semester
Workload	60h
Weeks	14
<b>Hours</b>	<b>2 weekly</b>
Courses	2 weekly
<b>Number of positions</b>	<b>40</b>

**Remark**

Une seule inscription à un cours SHS+MGT autorisée. En cas d'inscriptions multiples elles seront toutes supprimées sans notification

**Summary**

This class is designed for Bachelor students who want to understand the interrelated economic, social and ecological challenges society is facing, and who want to acquire the knowledge and skills to re-frame problems into opportunities and establish entrepreneurial ventures tackling the problems.

**Content**

This class is designed for Bachelor students who want to understand the interrelated economic, social and ecological challenges society is facing, and who want to acquire the knowledge and skills to re-frame problems into opportunities and establish entrepreneurial ventures tackling the problems.

The course sets out with a systemic overview of the economic, social and ecological challenges we are confronted with in the 21st century. Students will be introduced to the basic ideas and principles of entrepreneurship and learn how re-framing problems into entrepreneurial opportunities is not only a powerful means to tackle problem but also to build viable businesses that create value for the entrepreneur, its stakeholders, society and the planet. The course focuses on the early stages of the entrepreneurial process from recognition of an opportunity to the development of a sound business model. An emphasis is put on harnessing technology for societal change; while topics like different financing options or marketing strategies will be touched upon, this course will not cover them in great detail. Students who are interested in diving deeper into such topics are invited to select the general *Introduction to entrepreneurship* (MGT-201) course in the fall semester which is designed as an extension to this course. Given the systemic nature of many sustainability-related challenges, this course combines insights from various theoretical approaches, coupled with practical techniques and methods for analyzing and evaluating sustainable business opportunities, crafting holistic sustainable business models, and presenting professionally and convincingly to different audiences.

**Keywords**

Sustainability, grand societal challenges, social, environmental, entrepreneurship, new venture creation, business model

**Learning Prerequisites****Required courses**

none

**Recommended courses**

none

### Important concepts to start the course

Sustainable entrepreneurship: The process of identifying and exploiting opportunities to bring into existence innovative products, processes or services that aim at generating gains to individuals, the economy, society, and the planet.

### Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, the student must be able to:

- Discuss the multiple, interrelated challenges our society is facing
- Explain how entrepreneurship can be used to tackle societal challenges
- Analyze entrepreneurial opportunities and their potential to address societal challenges
- Assess / Evaluate different sustainable business strategies
- Develop business models that address societal challenges

### Transversal skills

- Take responsibility for environmental impacts of her/ his actions and decisions.
- Demonstrate the capacity for critical thinking
- Take feedback (critique) and respond in an appropriate manner.
- Make an oral presentation.
- Access and evaluate appropriate sources of information.

### Teaching methods

A Socratic style of teaching will be adopted to stimulate discussions and to appeal to students' critical thinking abilities and problem-solving skills. To steer this active learning experience, the course will combine classical lectures with several interactive teaching methods, including group work, student presentations, individual reflection exercises, case studies, as well as guest speaker experiences. Accordingly, a major focus of the course is students' group work on a business model for a sustainable venture, that means that students are asked to identify social and environmental problems, derive entrepreneurial opportunities to tackle these problems, analyze customer needs, and develop and iteratively adapt a business model. Throughout this process, students apply the theoretical knowledge acquired in the classroom and will be able to experience the early stages of new venture creation first hand.

In line with university regulations, class attendance is not mandatory in general. However, attendance for group formation and presentations is required. As large parts of this course are group-based, steady attendance is also critical for the sake of team spirit and fairness. Please contact the TA (Philipp Schneider, [philipp.schneider@epfl.ch](mailto:philipp.schneider@epfl.ch)) as early as possible if you know that you will not be able to attend class (or need to come/leave later/earlier).

### Expected student activities

We will form student groups who will work during the semester on a business model for a sustainable venture. Throughout the semester, each team will follow a step-by step process to develop a sustainable business model. Overall, we will have three pitching events in which teams get to present their progress (early idea presentations, mid-term presentation, final presentation). Please note that the expected time investment is rather high compared to similar courses; in return, you can expect highly engaged teachers and a hands-on learning environment that will provides to with a wide variety of transversal skills.

Individual tasks:

Peer to peer feedback is a very valuable opportunity to learn from each other and to enhance the overall learning experience. We therefore ask all students to provide constructive feedback to their peers. During each pitching session, we will hand out a feedback sheet with 3-4 questions and each student will be asked to provide feedback for one team. We will grade the feedback sheets as your classroom participation grade and will share your suggestions and recommendations anonymously together with our own feedback to help the team to improve their business opportunity.

### Assessment methods

Students' final grade will be composed of both group and individual assignments with the following weighting:

**The new sustainable venture project (group assignment): overall 75%**

(Idea presentation: 20%, mid-term business model presentation: 25%, final business presentation: 30%)

**Peer-to-peer feedback (individual assignment): overall 25%**

(Idea presentation: 8.33%, mid-term business model presentation: 8.33%, final business presentation: 8.33%)

### Supervision

Office hours	No
Assistants	Yes
Forum	Yes

### Resources

#### Moodle Link

- <https://go.epfl.ch/MGT-203>