



Syllabus:

Ecological Economics

**Dominican University of California
Fall Semester 2008**

Version 12-Sep-08

Department Name: School of Business and Leadership

Course Number: MBA 5351

Course Title: Ecological Economics

Units: 3

Semester Offered: Fall 2008

Course Meeting Days:

Course Start Date: September 12, 2008

Course End Date: December 21, 2008

Course Meeting Dates:

Selected Fridays, 2-5 pm (Sep-12, Oct-10, Nov-7, Dec-5)
Selected Sundays, 9-12 & 2-5 pm (Sep-28, Oct-26, Nov-23)
Final Class, 9 – 12 & 2 – 5 pm (Saturday, December 20)

Place: Dominican University, San Rafael, California
Course Meeting Place: Science Center, Room 227
Prerequisites: None

Instructor Contact Information:

Name: Roberto Piccioni, MS
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e-Mail Address: Roberto.Piccioni@Dominican.edu
Office Location: None
Office Hours: By appointment

1. Course Description: Mainstream neoclassical economics is directed toward a goal of allocative efficiency at optimum levels of consumer satisfaction. Such an optimum is achieved by allocating goods and services to consumers and profits to producers through prices established in a “free market”. Achieving an efficient allocation involves, among other things, choosing a mix of goods and services as well as methods of production that yield the greatest satisfaction to consumers and the lowest costs to producers. The emerging field of ecological economics offers an alternative approach. Practitioners of this field acknowledge the importance of efficiency as a societal norm, but only after measures are taken to guarantee that human activities do not threaten the viability of life on our planet and that all people can secure and produce the means for leading healthy lives. The goal of sustainability, both ecologically and socially, is a priority. Ecological economics represents a transdisciplinary attempt to integrate the social sciences, primarily economics, with the natural sciences, primarily ecology. In this course we explore how people, acting through the private, public, and nonprofit sectors, can effect change in their communities using an ecological economic approach that includes a redefinition of “efficient allocation”, as well as the overall strengths and weaknesses of current approaches.

2. General Education or Prerequisite Requirements: NA

3. Course Student Learning Outcomes. Students successfully completing this course will understand the basic elements of the evolving integration of economics and biological and social ecology. Students will be exposed to fundamental aspects of the field in a discussion format. Students will explore core concepts within the frame of sustainable enterprise, policy design, and at both the micro and macro economic levels. Ecological economic principles will be applied to students’ strategic enterprise plans.

4. Text and Resources: The primary text for the course will be:

- *Ecological Economics: Principles and Applications*, Herman E. Daly and Joshua Farley, Washington D.C. and Covelo, CA: Island Press (2004), ISBN 1-55963-312-3.
- *Sustainable Value*, Chris Laslo, Greenleaf Publishing Limited, (2008), ISBN 978-0-8047-5963-2
- *Harvard Business Review on Green Business Strategy*, Harvard Business School Publishing Company, (2007), ISBN -13-978-1-4221-2108
- Additional texts and readings may be assigned as required.
- Electronic documents, PDFs and other readings identified by the instructor and uploaded to the Dominican course website or available for download and/or viewing on a website.
- Optional Membership in the International Society for Ecological Economics is available. Students who are interested in joining this international organization have the option of doing so for a fee that varies depending on income level. Members of ISEE are also automatically enrolled as members of the regional affiliate, the United States Society for Ecological Economics (USSEE). Interested students can visit www.ecoeco.org for more information.

5. Online Components of the Course. Unless noted otherwise, assignments are to be submitted online and feedback will be given online.

6. Academic Honesty Honor Code. Students are expected to adhere to the Academic Honesty Honor Code stated in the Catalog (see <http://www.dominican.edu/academics/catalog>).

7. Diversity. The course is intertwined with the concept of diversity, from human to biologic. The field itself is trans-disciplinary. The field focuses directly on the integration of economic, ecologic and social justice issues. Students will explore a diverse set of views and perspectives from different fields and from around the globe.

8. Assessment. Students will be assessed on class attendance, discussion participation and articulation of relevant concepts from weekly readings. In addition, students will be assessed on any home work assignments given and on the application of class topics to the student's strategic enterprise plan. Finally, students will be assessed on the oral presentations of the strategic enterprise plan project. Description of the class research project is detailed at the end of this syllabus.

9. Grading. Grades will reflect a student's performance against objectives, not a curve. Your final letter grade will be based on 100 possible course points. This will be distributed between class attendance and participation (1/3), homework assignments and reading (1/3), and application of principles to the sustainable enterprise plan (1/3). Those taking the course on a pass/no credit

basis need to earn at least 84 points to pass and need to inform the instructor by October 1, 2008.

A	95-100%	C	74-76%
A-	90-94	C-	70-73
B+	87-89	D+	67-69
B	84-86	D	64-66
B-	80-83	D-	60-63
C+	77-79	F	Under 60

10. Expectations for Students. Students are expected to attend class, participate in class discussion and activities, and complete all assignments on time and in accordance with the requirements for each assignment. All written work should be in an electronic format that is readily opened and commented on (e.g. Word), unless otherwise directed. Given the discussion format, students are expected to aid their fellow classmates in productive dialogue through active listening and thoughtful comments. Students needing accommodation for documented special needs should consult Disability Services at 415-257-0187.

11. Course schedule. Please see the Green MBA master schedule and the individual class dates listed below. The following outline is intended for planning purposes. It is tentative and subject to change at the instructor's discretion. Changes will be announced electronically and/or in class, as appropriate.

Tentative Schedule:

Friday, September 12, (2:00 – 5:00 pm)

Introduction, Review of Managerial Finance & Economics, Natural Resources, Ecosystem Services

Class Pre-Work:

- Review previously studied *Ecological Economics*, Chapters 1 – 7

Sunday, September 28, (9am – 12-noon & 2 - 5pm)

Microeconomics, Market Dynamics & Ecological Impacts

Class Pre-Work:

- Read *Ecological Economics*, Chapters 8 -12, (only 10 – 12 are new to MFE students)
- Read *Sustainable Value*, Part 1
- Read HBR article, 'Bringing the Environment Down to Earth', Reinhardt
- Begin preparing first draft paper (to be submitted to Instructor by October 17)

Friday, October 10 (2:00 – 5:00 pm)

Macroeconomics: GNP, Welfare & Money

- Homework Assignment Description – 'Company Characterization of Triple Bottom Line Performance'

Class Pre-Work:

- Read *Ecological Economics*: Chapters 13, 14

- Begin preparing first draft presentation to share with class on October 26)

Sunday, October 26 (9am – 12-noon & 2 - 5pm)

Macroeconomics; Distribution, IS-LM Model

Class Pre-Work:

- Read *Ecological Economics*: Chapters 15-16
- Read *Sustainable Value*, Part 2
- Read HBR article, 'Roadmap for Natural Capitalism', Lovins & Hawken
- Complete Preparation of Draft Research Paper
- Presentation of Draft Papers by Students and associated class Q&A

Friday, November 7 (2:00 – 5:00 pm)

International Trade and Globalization

Class Pre-Work:

- Read *Ecological Economics*: Chapters 17, 18

Sunday, November 23 (9am – 12-noon & 2 - 5pm)

International Flow & Economic Policy Design

Class Pre-Work:

- Read *Ecological Economics*: Chapters 19, 20
- Read *Sustainable Value*, Part 3 & Postscript
- Read HBR article, 'Competitive Advantage on a Warming Planet', Lash & Wellington
- Present Homework Assignment Description to class – 'Company Characterization of Triple Bottom Line Performance'

Friday, December 5 (2:00 – 5:00 pm)

Scale, Distribution and Allocation

Class Pre-Work:

- Read *Ecological Economics*: Chapters 21, 22, 23
- Submit the final draft of your paper to the instructor by December 17.

Saturday, December 20 (9am – 12-noon & 2 - 5pm)

Course Summation and Final Student Presentations

Class Pre-Work:

- Be prepared to present final presentations to class for brief discussion

12. Disclaimer. This syllabus is subject to modification. The instructor will communicate with students on any changes.1.2.

Research Project Description

The purpose of the research project is to examine whether the initiative students are developing in the Strategic Enterprise Planning (SEP) course meets the ecological economics criteria of (1) sustainable scale and (2) just distribution. In

other words, you will investigate the likely impacts of your proposed product or service on the planet as well as people in order to discover whether it reflects a sustainability philosophy. You will explore ways to improve your initiative to make it more sustainable, scaleable and successful. The exploration and analysis will be achieved by applying and adapting one or more of the models or tools examined in this course and in previous courses. Several ecommerce models were examined in the first semester of the Green MBA program, including Natural Capitalism, Cradle to Cradle Design, The Natural Step, the Global Reporting Initiative and GEMI SD. Another established tool which will be presented during class is the Operational Excellence framework of DMAIC. Students are invited to reconsider these models and assess whether one or more would be applicable to their particular enterprise. Students may utilize or adapt the principles of ecological economics to their particular enterprise via their own initiative and innovation. Students are encouraged to be creative and to integrate relevant concepts from their entire Green MBA experience into their project. The research and analysis project is an integral part of the curriculum. It is essential in helping illustrate and apply the concepts and tools presented in the readings and discussed in class. Students will submit a first draft paper to the instructor early in the semester. This first draft will be followed by a draft presentation to provide an opportunity to solicit feedback from other students as well as the instructor. By midsemester, students will submit a second draft report to the instructor as well as another student in the class in order to gain additional feedback. The project will culminate in a final presentation and a final written report. It is assumed that the contents of the final written report will appear in some form in the student's final business plan developed for the SEP course. The timeline for the project is as follows:

October 19 First Draft Papers due

Submit to instructor by e-mail, 2 - 4 pages of double-spaced text plus optional cover sheet, references, figures, tables, graphics, etc.

October 26 Draft Presentations

5-minute presentation in class with 10-minutes of Q&A

December 17 Final Papers due

Submit to instructor via email 6 - 10 pages of double-spaced text plus cover sheet, references, figures, tables, graphics, etc.

December 21 Final Presentations:

10-minute class presentation with 5-minutes of Q&A