Course Descriptions None 2025-2026

Course Title	Sustainability and Human Health
Course Code	EBC2188
ECTS Credits	5,0
Assessment	Whole/Half Grades

Period

Period	Start	End	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
1	1-9-2025	17-10-2025		X			X

Level	Intermediate/Advanced
Coordinator	Maud Huynen For more information:m.huynen@maastrichtuniversity.nl
Language of instruction	English
Goals	Students are able to: * understand what is meant with (planetary) health; * explain how human health depends on the health of the planet by exploring relevant examples (pollution, climate change, zoonotic disease emergence) * explore mental health, well-being and behaviour in relation to sustainable development * reflect on the (central) role of human health in the sustainable development debate.
Description	Our health is (or should be) a key component in the sustainable development debate. For example, the first principle of the seminal 1992 United Nations Rio Declaration on Environment and Development states that "Human beings are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development. They are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature". Similarly, the World Health Organization argues that "sustainable development cannot be achieved when there is a high prevalence of debilitating illnesses, and population health cannot be maintained without ecologically sustainable development". Throughout the course, students will reflect on the (central) role of human health in the sustainable development debate. In the past the exploitation of the environment has benefited our health, for example by increasing food production to feed billions of people. However, the exploitation and contamination of the environment is now beginning to threaten our health. Hence, the same natural systems that have benefited us for so long (by providing key ecosystem services in support of our wellbeing), are now suffering from the consequences of human activities. It has, for example, been estimated that diseases caused by pollution were responsible for an estimated 9 million premature deaths in 2015—16% of all deaths worldwide. And climate change is now perceived by many as one of the key global health threats of the 21st century. The emerging field of planetary health explicitly accounts for the importance of natural systems in terms of averted cases of disease and the potential harm that comes from human perturbations of these systems. This course will discuss how human health depends on the health of our planet and explores relevant examples of this interlinkage (e.g. pollution, climate change, zoonotic disease emergence). Next to looking at our physical health, we will also explore mental health, well-being and human behaviour in relation to sustainable development.
Literature	Planetary health textbook, Journal papers, Internet
Prerequisites	None
Keywords	
Transitional Regulations	
Teaching methods	PBL / Lecture
Assessment methods	Written Exam / Presentation
Evaluation in previous academic year	For the complete evaluation of this course please click http://iwio-sbe.maastrichtuniversity.nl/rapporten.asp?referrer=codeUM

This course belongs to the following programme / specialisation

UM-wide minors	Minor Sustainability
SBE Non Degree Courses	Minor Sustainability