Future Scenarios for Sustainable Business Solutions

Type	Frequency (e.g. every semester,…)	Semester
Elective	Once a year / every second semester	Winter 2021
Length (e.g. 14 weeks, 3 weekends,…)	**Examination Format(s)** (+ weighting of grades if multiple)	**Group Size**
14 Weeks (blocked in biweekly sessions of 4 SWS)	Reflective journal (30%) Scenario presentation in podcast/video format (70%)	10-20
ECTS-Credits	**Hours per week**	**Workload** (presence hours and self-study hours)
3ECTS	2 SWS	presence: 21h self-study: 54h total: 75h
Language	**Responsible of Module**	**Lecturer(s)**
English		Marina Schmitz

Requirements	Strategic Management, Business Management
Learning Objectives • Cognitive • Socio-emotional (including social skills as well as self-reflection skills, values, attitudes & motivation) • Behavioral (action competencies) *(Based on UNESCO 2017: Education for Sustainable Development Goals. Learning Objectives.)*	**Cognitive** *(knowledge & thinking skills; problem and solution-based knowledge)* • Understand current social, environmental and economic developments • Understand the connection between sustainable development, SDGs and business • Evaluate business sectors in regards to current global challenges • Be familiar with the field of scenario development and future studies • Develop scenarios of potential desirable futures, evaluate them and be able to use them in strategic decision making **Socio-emotional** (*includes social skills that enable learners to collaborate, negotiate and communicate as well as self-reflection skills, values, attitudes and motivations that enable learners to develop themselves*) • Reflect on their learning experience and the creative and strategic solutions development process of the class • Collaboration skills through group work • Future Literacy ("future literacy empowers the imagination, enhances our ability to prepare, recover and invent as changes occur" (UNESCO)) **Behavioral** *(describes action competencies)* • Apply creativity techniques for brainstorming and ideation/prototyping • Communication skills through group work, presentations and report/reflective journal writing
Content (Which are the main topics covered in the course?)	The course will provide a holistic picture of current social and ecological challenges as well as their implications for business sectors in the future. Through analyzing developments and trends as well as through creative methods (e.g., improv and Lego Serious Play workshops), students will develop future scenarios for business sectors and explore desirable futures. The teaching format aims to sensitize students towards the importance of clear visions for possible futures and the creation of compelling narratives for sustainable business development through the exploration of these possible future scenarios. Through analysis of retropolation and backcasting tools, students will then develop strategic implementation pathways for the respective business sectors. Besides scenario planning's usefulness as a strategic management tool, future literacy goes beyond that, as future studies can foster "exploring and developing [of] creative, novel and inclusive solutions" (Sardar, 2010, p. 180).
Which SDGs does the course address?	All SDGs will be introduced to students as a basis of outlining global challenges of today. The students will pick the respective SDGs they want to address in more detail respective to student's project/sector focus.

Brief Course Structure/Outline	We structure the overall course outline of the teaching format along the phases of the future workshop ("Zukunftswerkstatt") method: Preparation-, Critique-, Visioning-, and Implementation- Phase. For a more detailed structure, please refer to the Course Outline document.
Pedagogical approaches ("*guiding principles of designing learning processes*", *UNESCO 2017**) **e.g.:** • Lecture-based learning • Experiential learning (experience via projects, internships, community work, field trips) • Collaborative learning • Active learning (passive role of teacher) • Self-directed learning • Inter-/transdisciplinary learning • Creative learning • Other *UNESCO (2017):* *Education for Sustainable Development Goals. Learning Objectives, https://www.unesco.de/sites/default/files/2018-08/unesco_education_for_sustainable_development_goals.pdf*	Transformative Learning (Other) Self-directed (Learner-Centered) Learning Collaborative Learning With elements of: Lecture-based learning Active learning Creative learning
Teaching methods *("specific methods in line with" teaching approaches, UNESCO 2017*)*, **e.g.:** • Lecture • Group discussion • Debate • In-class role play • Virtual reality simulation • Case study • Service-learning project (for community) • Sustainability-related consulting project (e.g. for NGOs) • Sustainability-related research project • Self-reflection task/exercise • Interdisciplinary team teaching • Vision-building exercise (e.g. future workshop, scenario analysis, forecasting and backcasting) • Field trip • Outdoor, nature-related experience • Gamification (e.g. LEGO game) • Arts-based teaching and learning method (e.g. theatre, drawing exercise, music-based exercise) • Peer-teaching (e.g. student-led lecture) • Flipped classroom • Other	**Foremost:** Vision Building Group Discussion **Partly:** Lecture Self-reflection tasks Gamification Arts-based teaching Systems Thinking/Analysis (Other)
Teaching Characteristics **(none, low, medium, high)**	
• Degree of student participation / activeness	high
• Degree of student collaboration / group work	high
• Degree of student emotional involvement	medium
• Degree of inter-/transdisciplinarity	medium

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• Degree of student (self-) reflection	high
• Degree of experience of real-life situations	low
• Degree of nature-related experiences	low
• Degree of stakeholder integration	medium
• Degree of integration between theory and practice	medium
How does the course foster the following (if applicable for each, otherwise put n/a):	
Systems Thinking Competency*	Students will be introduced to global challenges in context of current developments and the SDGs. There will be a session where students will work on developing a systemic view of the sector they will be focusing on (e.g., through systems mapping and trend analysis). The course aims to foster systems thinking competency through this approach.
Anticipatory Competency*	The course scores highly on this dimension, as the group work demands students to think into an unknown future. Students need to be open for the uncertainty of the future and get sensitized towards the reality of multiple possible futures within our complex and rapidly changing world.
Normative Competency*	Students will need to incorporate and discuss normative dimensions about what constitutes desirable futures for them.
Strategic Competency*	Students will develop a future scenario for a business sector and to develop strategic recommendations to business in the respective sectors, thus strategic thinking competency is fostered by the course.
Collaboration Competency*	Students will be working in teams throughout the course on a joint project/sector and collaboration competency will be encouraged through this experience.
Critical Thinking Competency*	The course will start by introducing today's global challenges and students will be asked to critically reflect on those in regards to their chosen business sectors. Moreover, all tasks concerning the analysis of current situation, thinking about possible and desirable futures, and connecting them back to current strategic thinking will require students to apply critical thinking.
Self-Awareness Competency*	The course will be accompanied by reflection exercises along the scenario development process and final strategic recommendations. Students are asked to reflect on their procedure and outcomes to foster self-awareness.
Integrated Problem-Solving Competency*	Students will develop strategic recommendations aiming to mitigate current challenges and leading into a desirable future, thus problem-solving competency will play a role within the students learning journey.
Literature & Resources	**Bergheim, S.** (2021). *Futures - Open to Variety: A Manual for the Wise Use of the Later-Than-Now*. Zgf Publishers.
	Bregman, R. (2017). *Utopia for Realists: And How We Can Get There*. Bloomsbury.
	Gidley, J. M. (2017). *The Future A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
	Göpel, M. (2016). *The Great mindshift: How a new economic paradigm and sustainability transformations go hand in hand. The Anthropocene: Volume 2*. Springer Open. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-43766-8
	King, K., & West, J. R. (2018). *Futures Thinking Playbook*. https://issuu.com/wtforesight/docs/futuresthinkingplaybook-final
	Miller, R., Poli, R., & Rossel, P. (2018). The discipline of anticipation: Foundations for futures literacy. *Transforming the future: Anticipation in the 21st century. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge*.
	UN. The 17 Goals. Retrieved March 17, 2021 from https://sdgs.un.org/goals
	Zeddies, L. (2021). *Utopia 2048*. https://www.utopia2048.com/
	FURTHER READINGS:
	Guillo, M. (2013). Futures, communication and social innovation: using participatory foresight and social media platforms as tools for evaluating images of the future among young people. *Eur J Futures Res* 1, 17.

Patriotta, G. (2020). The future of the corporation. *Journal of Management Studies*.

Rajaniemi, H., & Weisman, J. (2019). *The New Voices of Science Fiction*. Tachyon Publications.

Roland Berger. Sustainarama – How sustainability will change the world in 2050 (2020). Retrieved Feb 18, 2021 from https://www.rolandberger.com/en/Insights/Publications/Sustainarama-How-sustainability-will-change-the-world-in-2050.html

Sachs, J. D. and Sachs, L. E. (2021). Business Alignment for the Decade of Action. *Journal of International Business Policy*, 4, 22-27.

Stanley, K. (2020). *The Ministry for the Future*. Orbit.

The Economist. The World Ahead: https://www.economist.com/the-world-ahead/

The Economist. The World If: https://www.economist.com/the-world-if/

Zietsma, C. (2020). Why Business Should Imagine Utopia. Retrieved Jan 17, 2021 from https://www.nbs.net/articles/why-business-should-imagine-utopia

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European Journal of Futures Research
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