



Ecology, Environment, and Economics: Market Forces and Sustainability

Faculty Contact Information

Name:

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Course Information

Course Description

The protection and sustainable management of the natural environment is an area of increasing concern across the globe. It is widely recognised that most environmental problems, whether small-scale or global, are the result of a complex interaction of natural processes with economic forces and decisions.

This course examines the continuing tension between market forces and environmental integrity and explains how economic theory views the relationship between economic activity and the natural world. Examples of local, regional, national, and international issues are presented and discussed. The course gives students the opportunity to develop a critical understanding of the different ways in which economic decisions, market forces, and government policies affect the environment while also providing a sustainable way for development and growth.

Course Goals

This course develops students' understanding of the economic impacts of environmental damage as well as the opportunities that come from managing the environment in a sustainable way. Furthermore, the course enables students to apply economic theory to environmental sustainability and develop an understanding of the conflict between market forces and environmental integrity while developing critical understanding of different ways in which economic decisions, market forces, and government policies affect the environment. In addition, the course shows students how consumer markets and business initiatives can lead the way into managing the environment in a sustainable way.

Student Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course, students will:

1. Apply economic theory to measure environmental sustainability
2. Distinguish market forces and environmental integrity
3. Interpret ways in which economic decisions, market forces, and government policies affect environment
4. Generate a critical understanding as to how consumer markets and business initiatives can result in sustainable environment

Course Assignments, Grading, and Assessment

Assignment	Percentage	Grading Requirements
Attendance and Participation	20%	
Carbon Footprint Exercise	20%	Please see rubric on MyStudy
Mid-Term Exam	20%	Please see rubric on MyStudy
Group Project	20%	Please see rubric on MyStudy
Final Exam	20%	Please see rubric on MyStudy

Brief Assessment Overview

Assessment 1: Carbon Footprint Exercise

Due:

Assignment A: Carbon Footprint Calculation

Students work out their annual carbon footprint using one of the the carbon footprint calculation tools available online, e.g. www.carbonfootprint.com/calculator.aspx to carry out calculations.

Each student then submits a 300-word report as to how they worked out the footprint.

Assignment B: Reducing your footprint

Based on the previous assignment, each student writes a 1000-word report detailing how they could reduce their own carbon footprint.

Assessment 2: Mid-Term Test

Due:

To assess student awareness of the basic framework and theoretical approaches to environmental economics, and sustainability.

Assessment 3: Group Project

Due:

Students work in small groups researching a particular aspect of environment sustainability or environmental theory and policy, for example renewable energy, recycling, green marketing, carbon neutral production/operation, environmental externalities, Environmental cost-benefit analysis, the closed-loop economy, Pigou taxes, carbon taxation, cap and trade policies, EU Environmental Policy, the UN COPs, etc.

Groups then prepare a 20-minute presentation to the class with detailed findings and an additional 10 minutes of discussion and Q&A following the formal presentation

Assessment 4: Final Exam

Due:

Covers all the theoretical and applied subject matter covered in the course

Grading

Alternative formats of the FIE Grading Rubric are available in the Student Resources area of MyStudy@FIE.

	Relevance Questions are interpreted correctly; Argument/thesis is clear and developed throughout; Discussion is focused on topic of the questions; Irrelevant content and discussion are not included	Knowledge and Understanding Recommended literature and/or research guidelines are used and interpreted appropriately; Selection and use of evidence shows understanding and insight; There is evidence of study beyond the recommended literature and that introduced in the module	Analysis, Critical Thinking and Integration of Experiential Learning Approach shows evidence of analysis and independent reasoning; Originality in argument; Evidence of critical insight and reasoned questioning of assumptions; Integration of connections and experiences outside of the formal classroom	Scholarship and Style Conclusions are well justified and complete; Facts reported and statements made are accurate; Writing is clear and fluent; All sources are appropriate, accurately acknowledged and formatted in recognised style; All work is the student's own
A 93-100%	Totally appropriate interpretation and relevant; Excellent and thorough thesis development	Comprehensive understanding and mastery of core evidence and extensive wider reading	Excellent analytical skills, outstanding evaluation of evidence, independent and original critical insight; Meaningfully integrates experiential learning where appropriate	Exceptional fluency and accurate writing using appropriate language, conclusions are well-justified; Accurate and thorough referencing
A- 90-92%	Almost wholly appropriate interpretation and relevant; Very strong thesis	Very strong understanding of evidence and clear evidence of appropriate wider reading	Well-developed analytical skills, excellent evaluation of evidence, shows strong critical insight;	Almost wholly accurate and fluent writing using appropriate language,

			Effectively integrates experiential learning where appropriate	conclusions are full and justified; Accurate referencing
B+ 87-89%	Appropriate interpretation and relevant; Good thesis throughout	Strong understanding of evidence and appropriate wider reading	Very good analytical skills, strong evaluation of evidence; Shows critical insight; Acknowledges and compares experiential learning and other perspectives	Largely accurate and fluent writing using appropriate language; conclusions are justified; Accurate referencing
B 83-86%	Largely appropriate interpretation and relevant; Thesis is clear	Good understanding of evidence and some appropriate wider reading	Good analytical skills, good evaluation of evidence; Shows critical insight; Acknowledges and compares experiential learning and other perspectives	Largely accurate and fluent writing using appropriate language; Conclusions are justified; Accurate referencing
B- 80-82%	Mostly appropriate interpretation and relevant; Thesis is underdeveloped but clear	Sound understanding of evidence and some wider reading	Sound analytical skills; Sound evaluation of data; Shows some critical judgement identifies experiential connections	Sound level of accuracy and written fluency and some use of appropriate language; Conclusions are coherent; Sound use of referencing conventions

C+ 77-79%	Some appropriate interpretation and relevant; Thesis is underdeveloped and lacks clarity	Evidence is largely understood and some wider reading	Sometimes inconsistent analytical skills; Some evaluation of data; Shows some critical judgement though often descriptive; Identifies experiential connections	Sound level of accuracy and written fluency and some use of appropriate language; Conclusions are coherent but not fully supported; Sound use of referencing conventions
C 73-76%	May contain some misinterpretation and/or irrelevant material; Thesis lacks clarity	Evidence is largely understood; Limited reading beyond material introduced in module	Mostly inconsistent analytical skills; Some evaluation of data; Scant critical judgement mostly descriptive; Identifies experiential connections	Some level of accuracy and written fluency and some use of appropriate language; Conclusions are coherent but not fully supported; Sound use of referencing conventions
C- 70-72%	Limited interpretation and relevance; Thesis is inconsistent	Weak understanding of evidence; Limited reading beyond material introduced in module	Mostly inconsistent analytical skills; Some evaluation of data; Lacks critical judgement; Little integration experiential learning	Inconsistent written fluency; Weak use of appropriate language; Weak justification for conclusions; Adequate use of referencing conventions
D 60-69%	Limited interpretation and relevance; Lacks thesis	Weak understanding of evidence and limited, inappropriate wider reading	Inconsistent and weak analytical skills, poor evaluation of	Inconsistent written fluency; No justification for conclusions;

			evidence, lacks critical insight; Little integration of experiential learning	Inaccurate use of referencing
F 0-59%	Significant misinterpretation and irrelevant material	Lacks understanding of evidence and inappropriate or no wider reading	Lacks analytical skills, lacks evaluation of evidence, lacks critical judgement; Lacks integration of experiential learning	Poorly written with little fluency; No justification for conclusions; Poor referencing; Evidence of plagiarism or inappropriate use of AI

Policies specific to this course

- **Co-curricular Activities and Field Trips:** Field trips for your FIE courses have been planned to help students achieve the learning objectives of the course and are required. They take place during class time unless otherwise noted. Details about required visits appear on the class by class schedule below. Please note that any make up for missed co-curricular activities are at the personal expense of the student.
- **Late submission of work:** Written work may be submitted later than the due date only with express permission in advance of the due date from the course instructor. Late work will receive a 5% reduction in points for each 24-hour period handed in past the deadline, including each weekend day. Work submitted a week late will be marked at a C or lower. Any extensions made beyond the last class meeting must be requested in writing to the faculty and include any information on the circumstances that require the extension, the nature of work yet to be submitted, and the date by which the work will be received. If said work is not received by the agreed extension date, barring further exceptional circumstances, the work will not be given credit.
- **Late arrivals to class or site visit:** Please arrive on time. Lateness, particularly on days with co-curricular visits, results in missed course material. Faculty may use their discretion to mark a student as 'Absent' if they feel the student has arrived too late or left too early to be considered 'Present' for that session.

Attendance and Participation

- Regular attendance is essential in order to pass a course. A class constitutes lectures, student presentations, discussions, seminars, co-curricular activities, tests, and examinations. In addition, under UK Home Office regulations class attendance is mandatory.

- Class attendance and participation is formally recorded and incorporated into a student's final grade.
- In addition to physical presence in class, a student's participation in a class is evaluated on the mastery of assigned course readings as reflected in a consistent, valid contribution to class discussions, in-class exercises, and in asking questions that enrich the on-going discourse. Consistency and validity in participation is expected in every class. Limited participation will have a negative impact on a student's participation score.
- When unexpected events cause students to miss a class, it is the student's responsibility to initiate contact with the faculty member to notify them in advance, or as soon as is reasonably possible.
- Absence from class does not relieve a student of responsibility for assignments. Students bear the ultimate responsibility for all missed class material and assessment.
- If a student misses 25% or more of a course, then they may be awarded a failure for the course and/or not permitted to finish the course.
- [See the full attendance policy here](#)

Required Readings

Barry C Field & Martha Field, *Environmental Economics*, Open access, full text available as pdf

Additional Resources and Readings

Barbier E B & Burgess J C *Economics for a Sustainable World*, (2025), Cambridge University Press

Hanley, N., Shogren, J. F., & White, B. (2019). *Introduction to Environmental Economics*. (3rd Ed.). Palgrave Macmillan

Smith, S. (2011). *Environmental Economics: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press

Tietenberg T & Lewis L (2nd ed 2025), *Environmental Economics: the Essentials*. Routledge.

Harris J.M. & Roach B. (6th ed 2026), *Environmental and Natural Resource Economics: A Contemporary Approach*. Routledge.

Students are also advised to read *The Economist*, *Financial Times*, *The Independent*, *The Guardian* (environment section online), and other UK and International newspapers, journals, and periodicals relevant to the environment and sustainability

MyStudy@FIE

MyStudy@FIE is FIE's virtual learning environment based on the open-source platform Moodle. Students are required to access MyStudy@FIE for course information, readings, link to resources, assignment submissions and communication with faculty.

FIE's Values in the Curriculum

A unique aspect to FIE's curriculum is our courses reflect an engagement with values of 1) knowledge and inclusivity, 2) ethics and human rights, 3) social and cultural engagement, and

4) sustainability. For information about each of these values and how each of FIE's courses aligns with them, please see [Our Values](#).

Topics

- Introduction to the Economics of Environment. Overview of the main issues relating to economy, environment, and sustainability
- The Politics of Environmental issues. Debates on the nature, importance and severity of environmental degradation
- Economic analysis and environmental issues; economic activity as a cause of environmental problems, externalities, social costs and benefits; Pigou taxes; the Coase argument; optimum pollution abatement
- Policy towards the environment: tools of intervention; the choice of instruments of intervention (command and control versus market solutions; prevention versus abatement of consequences; carbon taxes and carbon trading; the closed-loop economy; eco-friendly innovation and economic growth)
- Cost-benefit analysis of environmental issues. Economic information and values in environmental policy decisions
- The environment as a global issue: EU Environmental policy; UN COPs: Kyoto, the Paris Agreement and after

Possible co-curricular activities

- Borough Road food Market:
- The Darwin Centre, Natural History Museum
- Sustainability walking tours
- Visits to examples of sustainable development, for example the Olympic Park
- Visit to Thames Barrier, London's flood defences
- Film screening and debate, for example An Inconvenient Truth

Academic Integrity

By enrolling at FIE, you have joined an academic community and you are expected and required to act honestly regarding the work you submit for assessment in your courses. Academic integrity is closely related to the concept of good academic practice.

Any attempts to Cheat; Fabricate; Plagiarise; Collaborate without Authorisation; Participate in Academically Dishonest Activities; and/or Facilitate Academic Dishonesty will be viewed as a breach of this regulation.

[Please see FIE's Academic Integrity Policy in full.](#)

Most students do not have any problems understanding the rules and expectations about acting honestly at university. If you have any questions you must talk to your faculty or a member of FIE's Academic Team.

Writing and Language Support

FIE's Writing Support Tutors are available to assist students of all levels of expertise with all phases of the writing process. Available year-round and to all students. To book an appointment or for more information visit www.fie.org.uk/wst.

Please note that FIE allows the use of a foreign language/English dictionary in exam situations for students where English is not their primary language UNLESS the use of the dictionary would give the student a significant advantage (e.g. where the exam is aimed at getting the students to define terms that might be found in the dictionary).

Accommodations for Students

Students who wish to use academic accommodations at FIE can register to do so via FIE's Administration Team, by providing the appropriate supporting documentation. Students who have approved FIE academic accommodations should discuss them directly with their faculty member(s) within or around the first few class sessions, or via email. Exams are facilitated by FIE faculty and students should give 2 weeks' notice to faculty members if use of approved exam accommodations is required. The Administration team can assist students and faculty with liaison and facilitation as needed. If you have further questions or need further support, please go to the front office of Foundation House or contact admin@fie.org.uk and the member of the team designated to support accessibility will be able to help you.

Additional Policies and Resources

Mental Health and Stress Management Support

FIE offers mental health support. If students wish to seek this support, including with FIE's counselor, simply email studentlife@fie.org.uk. If you have a counselor from back home that you are seeing, we strongly encourage you to maintain contact with them throughout your time studying abroad with FIE.

Diversity and Inclusivity

FIE regards its housing and classroom facilities as safe spaces to live, study, and work with students, faculty, and staff who are understanding, supportive, and trustworthy. Inappropriate, derogatory comments and/or actions, harassment, bullying, victimisation and discrimination are not tolerated. Any such behaviour will be investigated and dealt with appropriately. Students must be respectful of diverse opinions and of all class members regardless of personal attribute and use inclusive language in written and oral work.