

COURSE SYLLABUS

Dialogues for Sustainable Future: A Learning Journey

On-campus | PM



Alfred Vernis

Associate Professor

Short Biography

Alfred Vernis is an Associate Professor in the Strategy and General Management Department at ESADE Business School (Ramon Llull University). He holds a Ph.D. from the Robert F. Wagner School of Public Service at New York University (NYU). Currently, he is a member of the Center for Social Impact at ESADE and the Social Enterprise Knowledge Network (SEKN). For years, he has led a Film Forum, screening documentaries on social, environmental, and cultural issues. Additionally, he served as the Academic Director of Sustainability at the Spanish multinational Inditex. He has published numerous case studies, books and in academic journals like Long Range Planning, Organization Studies, Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, International Journal of Business in Society, among others. His topics are sustainability, nonprofit management and social entrepreneurship.

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Introduction/Course Description

Dialogues for a Sustainable Future: A Learning Journey invites students to explore the great sustainability challenges of our time through the power of film, dialogue, and reflection. Combining the rigor of science with the emotion of storytelling, the course uses award-winning documentaries and guided discussions to examine planetary boundaries, ethical dilemmas, global justice, and regenerative futures. Each session is a dialogue—scientific, moral, and personal—designed to move participants from awareness to action. By integrating visual learning, critical thinking, and self-reflection, students develop the knowledge, empathy, and agency needed to lead meaningful change in business and society.

Course Objectives

This course aims to:

- Acquire a deep understanding of sustainability concepts — including environmental, social, and economic dimensions — and explore the interconnectedness of global systems and the impact of human activities on them.
- Engage with diverse perspectives by fostering appreciation for sustainability issues presented in films from different cultures and regions, encouraging empathy toward challenges faced by various communities.
- Learn how to reflect and dialogue effectively about sustainability issues, promoting reflective thinking on personal values, beliefs, and behaviours, and facilitating meaningful student discussions on the themes presented in the films.
- Raise awareness and advocacy by increasing visibility of urgent sustainability issues through film, and empowering students to become advocates for sustainability in both personal and professional contexts.

Course Methodology

The course is based on an experiential and dialogical approach that combines academic rigor with emotional and ethical learning. Each session revolves around a powerful documentary film that serves as a catalyst for analysis, discussion, and reflection. Guided dialogues allow students to connect scientific knowledge with real-world dilemmas and personal values, fostering both critical and empathetic understanding. Complementary readings and short exercises deepen conceptual learning, while an individual online Learning Journal encourages ongoing reflection and integration.

Evaluation System

The course evaluation will be performed based on the following set of activities:

- Classwork (30%)
- Individual Project (30%)
- Team Project (30%)
- Participation (10%)

Course Prerequisites

NA

