

**Promising practice:**

**University:** Wageningen University

**Academic discipline:** Education and Competence Studies

**Course title:** Empowerment for Sustainability

**Course description:**

This course aims to inspire and equip students to walk the talk of sustainability. It engages them to explore the concept of (un)sustainability and to distinguish paradigms (worldviews) and mindsets impacting society and the environment. Secondly, it exposes them to their own agency and supports them to uncover their potential, through which they can contribute to a sustainable world. Thirdly, it enables them to develop competencies for being an agent of change, namely: reflexive capabilities, communication skills, personal leadership, entrepreneurial skills and self-sustainability competences. This course aims to be transformative by integrating theory, reflexive thinking and actions.

**Learning outcomes:**

After successful completion of the course students are expected to:

- have understood and have personalized concepts related to (un)sustainability, modernity, post- and trans-modernity paradigms, empowerment and agency related competencies;
- have explored and have uncovered their own agency and own competencies by creating and implementing a personal real life sustainability project of their own choice, within their own sphere of influence;
- be able to share their own personal real life sustainability project, related outcomes and learning process with clarity, inspiration and sense of ownership of own project.

**How students' learning is assessed:**

Individual paper about Empowerment for Sustainability Theory and Concepts (50%): depth of understanding and personalization of knowledge, independence of thought and constructive argumentation

Individual presentation about the Personal Sustainability Project (50%): project development (motivation and level of innovation), learning process (agency and empowerment), communication (engagement, argumentation, clarity)  
In order to pass this course, both components need a minimum mark of 5.50.

### **How students learn with civil society organisations through this course:**

Students can work with CSOs, shops, schools, businesses. The students themselves individually identify an issue or problem they would like to tackle in society or their community. The students are not merely executing somebody else idea, but they are creating their own ideas. After identifying the issue/problem they would like to tackle, they need to develop an innovation project fitting the societal context.

### **How students learn about dimensions of RRI through this course:**

**Sustainability:** By exploring the concept of (un)sustainability. And reflecting on different worldviews and personal mindset on sustainability related to society and environment.

**Ethics:** Integrity, and perspective taking ability. Reflecting on own norms and values and that of others

**Societal engagement:** Students are identifying a personal issue problem in their community/society and will develop an innovative project to tackle this issue/problem by creating a collective engagement within society.

**Anticipation:** i.e. future oriented creative and critical thinking, being well timed: Student develop and implement an innovative project that fits and is well timed.

**Reflexivity:** i.e. context awareness, perspective taking ability, critical thinking, ethical awareness, cultivating virtues, social moral disposition, reflexivity leadership: Students reflect on how they understand sustainability, their own perspectives in relation to the perspectives of others and they reflect on their own empowerment capabilities to contribute to society.

**Inclusiveness:** i.e. multiperspective taking: The students need to take into account the perspectives of the organisations and peoples that do have a stake in the issue/problem addressed by the student in their innovative project.

**Responsiveness:** i.e. disruptive agency, navigating “Wickedness”, adaptability: The issue or problem the student addresses has a ‘Wicked’ nature. Implementing the project is asking for a disruptive agency and an open attitude towards change.

### **RRI keys integrated in the course:**

Public engagement/ societal engagement; Ethics; Sustainability

### **RRI process requirements integrated in the course:**

Anticipation; Reflexivity; Inclusion; Responsiveness

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<https://ssc.wur.nl/Handbook/2015/Course/ECS-53506>