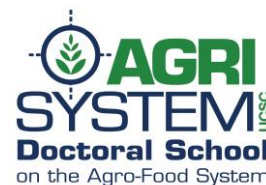




UNIVERSITÀ
CATTOLICA
del Sacro Cuore



SUSTAINABILITY MANAGEMENT

Dott. Marcello Cosa

Faculty of Economics and Law, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore - Piacenza

Course Aims

The course equips doctoral students with advanced competencies in sustainability management, with a particular focus on the agri-food system as a socio-ecological arena. The objective is to clarify how sustainability strategies intersect with not only environmental protection and economic performance, but also with the social dimension, including labor conditions, community welfare, and food security. By combining conceptual frameworks with managerial practices, the course emphasizes the role of sustainability in shaping governance and accountability processes that respond to societal expectations.

Methodology

The course adopts a seminar format that blends lectures, case-based discussion, and applied exercises. Each session introduces theoretical perspectives and examines their relevance to agri-food contexts where social and environmental issues are closely intertwined. Students will critically analyze company reports, stakeholder dialogues, and assurance practices, with particular emphasis on how agricultural and food organizations address ecological concerns, equity, inclusiveness, and community impacts.

Course description

The course is an eight-hour exploration of sustainability management and its role in corporate responsibility. It covers theoretical foundations related to social responsibility in agri-food enterprises, as well as the measurement and reporting of social value creation. It also examines supply chains with a focus on working conditions and rural development. Finally, it addresses governance and accountability, highlighting the roles of boards, assurance mechanisms, and stakeholder engagement in promoting effective sustainability practices.

Grading System:

Each student will prepare a 3,000-word paper on “Sustainability approach, management, and reporting in the food industry”. The work focuses on an agri-food supply chain selected by the student and analyzes how its leading companies address sustainability. The paper should critically examine available documents, such as websites, reports, and strategic plans, to evaluate the approach, management practices, and reporting adopted within the supply chain.

Recommended texts

- Crane, A., Matten, D., Glozer, S., & Spence, L. (2019). *Business Ethics: Managing Corporate Citizenship and Sustainability in the Age of Globalization* (5th ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Selected journal articles from *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management*, *Business Strategy and the Environment*, and *Journal of Business Ethics* (reading pack provided).
- Professional standards: GRI Standards, European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS), Integrated Reporting Framework, Sustainability Accounting Standards Board Standards.