

Sustainable Development: Introducing global perspectives on sustainability transitions and transformations (58718 771)

This module focuses on the rise to global prominence of the challenges in sustainable development, marked by the global commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) since the adoption of this international policy framework in 2015. The module begins by sketching the extent and nature of the sustainability polycrisis to better understand the nature of intersecting climate, biodiversity, social, political and economic crises, and do so from a southern perspective, rooted in the African context. Such an orientation is vital for appreciating the multiple pathways towards just, equitable and sustainable futures. The module focuses in on several sustainability frameworks that demonstrate a range of values and approaches to solving for what is unsustainable. Going beyond analyses of what is unsustainable, the module draws on emerging literature on sustainability transitions and transformation to begin addressing these key questions. These bodies of literature grapple with the dynamics, scales, and modalities of change. They are instructive as they and equip students with conceptual frameworks and heuristics to observe, analyse and participate in change processes. During the module, students have the opportunity to engage with the diverse strategies of action by change agents working across diverse contexts, thus linking the theories and practices of sustainability.

#### **Dates to remember**

In-person class: 29 January 2024 - 9 February 2024

Venue: Africa Centre, Stellenbosch University main campus

Individual assignment due on 1 March 2024

Complexity Theory and Systems Thinking: Cultivating complexity literacies (11190 772)

Complexity thinking marks a pivotal moment in the history of science, as it originates from a perspective emphasising the interconnectedness of the physical, biological, and social facets of our world. The 'complexity turn' has furthered this transformation, expanding the horizons, models, and methodologies of science to encompass the characteristics and dynamics of complex interactions between humans and nature. A historical and critical examination of the theoretical and conceptual underpinnings that inform complexity thinking reveals the diversity of worldviews that shape our distinct perceptions of reality and how they influence our decisions and actions in responding to the challenges of sustainability transitions. This module underscores the critical significance of complexity literacy, which offers scholars and practitioners indispensable competencies for facilitating integrated thinking and cultivating relational practices that resonate more purposefully in our interconnected world. The module offers a foundation for a coherent framework for complexity thinking, the operationalisation of the features of complex systems, and the development of process-based strategies for practices that address the challenges of complex human-nature interactions. By doing so, it not only maps the field but also opens the door to transformative learning, research and practices that are better aligned with real-world challenges where change is both essential and urgent. It is through complexity literacy that we can navigate and thrive in the ever-evolving landscape of sustainability transitions.

### **Dates to remember**

In-person class: 11 March 2024- 15 March 2024

Venue: Africa Centre, Stellenbosch University main campus
Individual assignment due on 5 April 2024

Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services: Unpacking biodiversity and climate change (11490 772)

The overarching aim of the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services module is to highlight the interconnectedness between society and ecosystems and to explore concepts and tools to better engage with these socialecological systems. The underlying premise in this module is that the escalating biodiversity and climate change crises are embedded within complex social, political and economic systems. Firstly, the framing of social-ecological systems highlights the interconnectedness between society and nature, and is used to examine the foundational concepts of biodiversity and climate change. Secondly, ecosystem services, which demonstrate nature's (both positive and negative) contributions to people, provide a lens with which to examine human-nature relationships. Thirdly, values and worldviews govern relationships within and between socialecological systems, which influence how these systems are practically valued and measured. Finally, this module explores the range of response options for achieving just, biodiverse and sustainable futures, ranging from policy to local innovations. Although emphasising conceptual and theoretical perspectives, the module highlights several examples of application that can be applied to the management and governance of social-ecological systems.

#### Dates to remember

In-person class: 15 April 2024 - 19 April 2024

Venue: Africa Centre, Stellenbosch University main campus
Individual assignment due on 10 May 2024

Renewable Energy Finance: financing just energy transitions (11651 771)

Over the next 20 years, the fossil fuel-based material infrastructures of everyday life, in particular energy systems, need to be dismantled (where they exist) and replaced with decarbonised infrastructures. Where infrastructures still need to be constructed on scale (mainly in Africa), these cannot be the same as those that are being dismantled. Estimates suggest that this is going to cost \$3 and \$7 trillion per annum. This module will provide an introduction to how the global financial system is structured and the role played by a range of Central Banks, commercial banks, non-banking financial institutions, community banks and state-owned financial institutions. A key focus will be on the way global and national financial systems will need to change to ensure that sustainability transitions are properly financed. Africa's specific challenges to raise the funds required for the just energy transition will be a central theme.

#### **Dates to remember**

In-person class: 20 May 2023 - 24 May 2024

Venue: Africa Centre, Stellenbosch University main campus
Individual assignment due on 14 June 2024

Food System
Transitions:
Unpacking the water
and food nexus
(13359 771)

This module explores the intricate relationship between water and food systems. Water serves as a major input resource for food systems, while food system processes have a significant impact on water quality and availability. Given the social-ecological challenges arising from the complex interplay between water and food systems, reconfiguring the water-food nexus towards a more just, resilient, and sustainable dynamic is crucial. In this module, students will become more adept at navigating this critical intersection by exploring the complexities, challenges, and opportunities within the water-food nexus. Through interdisciplinary perspectives, students examine innovative approaches aimed at forging more resilient, just, and sustainable futures. Topics covered include hydrological impacts on agriculture, sustainable water management, climate resilience, and policy frameworks for an equitable water-food nexus.

#### **Dates to remember**

In-person class: 24 June 2024 – 28 June 2024

Venue: Africa Centre, Stellenbosch University main campus
Individual assignment due on 19 July 2024

Sustainable Cities: towards just and sustainable urbanisms (11199 775)

The module explores the differential dynamics of worldwide urbanisation, with particular reference to the global South. It demonstrates that these large-scale shifts in human movement, economic development and expansion of the built environment hold deeply troubling implications for sustainability. As part of understanding this phenomenon in a more rigorous manner, the module explores the latest thinking on how best to respond to the ecological implications of differential urbanisation for resource consumption and use, with a strong focus on the implications for the majority of urban citizens who find themselves in slums and reliant on informal economic and eco-system processes. The challenge of designing, building and operating more sustainable urban infrastructure systems - in other words, placemaking - is a particular focus of the course. The module looks at how sustainable urban infrastructure has manifested across the African continent as sustainable urban innovations. and is specifically interested in exploring innovative financing mechanisms. The module draws on case studies whenever possible to surface the complexity of everyday life and the institutional frameworks and structures that reproduce cities. Lastly, the module challenges students to critically reflect on the ethical implications of a commitment to building decolonial and sustainable cities and what it means to address urban challenges, and to live, work, play and collectively act with others in practical ways.

#### **Dates to remember**

In-person class: 29 July 2024 - 2 August 2024
Venue: Africa Centre, Stellenbosch University main campus
Individual assignment due on 23 August 2024

Globalisation, Governance and Development: facilitating governance and institutional change (13701 771)

This module aims to introduce and deepen participants understanding of why and how change happens, with a focus on governance and institutional change to support sustainability transitions and transformations. Additionally, students will be able to correlate the political and developmental outcomes of these change processes. Module participants will identify, evaluate, and compare the differences between these approaches and the implications for action by different actors committed to radical change. By the end of the module, students will be able to understand and apply the debates about individuals, networks, institutions and their diverse approaches and practices in driving and directing change, with a view on alternatives to the current crisis-ridden global order. The module combines both theoretical and practical approaches to governance, where conceptual frameworks are complemented with approaches to enliven the ideas in real contexts.

#### **Dates to remember**

In-person class: 2 September 2024– 6 September 2024
Venue: Africa Centre, Stellenbosch University main campus
Individual assignment due on 27 September 2024

Leading Transitions and Socio-Ecological Ethics: leading sustainability transitions and transformations (14391 774)

This module takes as its starting point that transformational change to advance sustainability transitions and transformations is no longer a choice but a dire necessity. Speaking to this need, this module is tailored specifically for futureoriented sustainability leaders eager to lead change processes that might build towards equitable and flourishing societies. The module grapples with the challenges of ethical leading while participating in sustainability transitions and transformations. Complex and intractable sustainability challenges call for caring, regenerative, creative responses at the individual and collective level, yet often happen in the context of conflict and difference. Embracing a relational perspective, this module considers what it means, and what it takes, to respond to sustainability challenges, and what work is required to cultivate such response-ability. It aims to enable participants to reflect critically on their fundamental assumptions about transitions, ethics, leading, authority, belonging, responsibility, notions of self, agency and activism, all within entanglements of human-nature connections. Students will be challenged to explore and respond to the often grueling and risky demands of exercising ethical leadership for transitions. As a capstone module, this final course in the programme invites students to draw together their cumulative learning experience in the Postgraduate Diploma in Sustainable Development.

### **Dates to remember**

In-person class: 28 October 2024 – 1 November 2024

Venue: Africa Centre, Stellenbosch University main campus
Individual assignment due on 1 November 2024

