

SAMPLE Schedule for Environment, Development, and Peace

This is a sample of what your schedule could look like.

Please note these schedules are subject to change. Courses might take place during the morning or afternoon schedule.

Environment, Development, and Peace

First Semester

Dates	Courses
24 – 25 August	Orientation Activities for new students
28 -14 September	UPEACE Foundation Course
25 September – 13 October	DED 6096 Climate Adaptation & Justice OR DED 6007 Environment, Conflicts, & Sustainability
16 - 27 October	UPM 6003 The UN System and UPMUNC (Part I)
30 October –17 November	DED 6038 Water Security and Peace OR DED 6022 Sustainable Agriculture
22 November – 13 December	DED 6097 Coastal Resources Management OR DED 6034 Forests, Forestry & Poverty

Summary First Semester: 14 credits

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Second Semester

Dates	Courses
8 - 26 January	DED 6084 Social Research Methods
31 Jan–20 February	DED 6024 Food Security OR DED 6050 Climate Change Governance
26 February - 15 March	DED 6094 Development and Conflict in Practice: Role and Application of Sustainability Frameworks in Development Projects

**Holy Week* Monday 25 March – Friday 29 March 2024*

1 April –19 April	DED 6098 Indigenous perspectives in Environment & Development OR RMSED 6058 Circular Bioeconomy
22 April –10 May	DED 6043 Urban Sustainability
13 May –31 May	DED 6095 Gender, Environment, & Development
3–5 June	Model UN Conference – Three days – UPM 6003, The UN System (Part II)

***Summary Second Semester: 19/21 credits
Total: 33 credits***



DED 6096 Climate Adaptation & Justice:

The disproportionate level of impacts that communities around the world who have contributed least to the problem of greenhouse gas emissions face, is one of the core injustices at the heart of the climate change reality. What's more, the systems that are responsible for economic inequality and various forms of social and racial injustice are also the systems that perpetuate the problem of climate change. It is of critical importance that in creating solutions going forward we not only acknowledge but also act to address and center the complexity between climate change and injustice across the world.

Using climate adaptation as the starting point, this course is an exploration of the multifaceted ways that the climate justice lens can be applied to understand, and address the root causes of the problem and enhance the ways we support people to reorient to this quickly changing world. Recognizing that there is a need for action, the goals of this course are centered around empowering students to feel they can take action in a way that supports people to adapt to climate change while simultaneously addressing the complex web of social, racial, and environmental injustices that underpin many of the most vulnerable communities.

DED 6007 Environment, Conflicts, & Sustainability:

This course analyzes the connections between environment, conflict, and security. After briefly going over some of the root causes of environmental and development crises, we will take a closer look at the different linkages between environmental change human and national security, and armed or violent conflicts. We will discuss and analyze the initial understandings of environmental security, going from older frameworks of scarcity-induced conflicts to natural resource abundance, and then move the discussion towards securitizing climate change, conservation conflicts, the increasingly visible violence suffered by environmental defenders, and end with the topic of environmental peacebuilding. Throughout the course, we will be dealing with concepts like sustainability, ecological limits, limits to growth, globalization, and emphasize the importance of including power dynamics and historical, political, ecological, and economic perspectives when analyzing and discussing concepts like development, environment, and peace and conflicts.



DED 6038 Water Security and Peace:

This course explores local water security and the “ripple” effects on societies. Students will reflect individually on how water insecurity may threaten or reinforce positive peace, particularly at the local level. The course will consist of an introduction to variations in water resources and uses over space and time, followed by an exploration of local water security, an understanding of the different ways in which we use and value water, the consequences of water insecurity, the role of intersectionality in water (in)security, and examples of how to reduce local water insecurity. The course will be interactive, consisting of presentations by the lecturer and students, readings, discussions, assignments, and group work.

DED 6022 Sustainable Agriculture:

In this course we will become familiar with contemporary issues in sustainable agriculture and critically analyze key debates in the field. To provide context to our discussions, we situate the emergence of sustainable agricultural practices within their historic contexts (e.g., green revolution) and we will examine key economic agreements that shape current agricultural markets and trade. We critically examine our global modes of production, industrial, agroecological, and sustainable intensification and we link our analysis to the most recent programs and policies regarding agriculture promoted by the FAO of the United Nations (e.g., scaling-up of agroecology).


In addition, we take on some of the most pressing agriculture issues including: climate change, livestock, water security, agricultural certifications, biotechnology (including GMOs), markets, local food, and gender. We mainstream a social justice angle in our class to ensure that we understand how programs and policies affect countries and people differently, by gender, age, and ethnicity.

DED 6097 Coastal Resources Management:

Around 40% of the world's population currently lives within 100 km of the coast, and nearly all humanity benefits from the world's coasts and oceans for a variety of cultural, economic, and environmental reasons. Despite, or perhaps because, of their value to social and ecological processes, marine resources face increasing pressures and conflicts over their utilization. Additionally, climate change acts as a main driver of major oceanic and coastal threats.

As a response to the evident crises of coastal resources, we have been able to move away from a proclaimed inexhaustibility of the ocean, predominant in Western societies in the 19th century, to the development of tools intended to help stakeholders, from the local to the national and international levels, to protect and to manage these resources more equitably, effectively, and sustainably. In this course, we will identify major challenges and threats to the world's oceans and coasts and their impact on coastal populations.

We will look into different coastal ecosystems, their functions and importance. In addition to that, we will become familiarized with innovations, strategies, and management tools related to coastal resource management.



Finally, through practical exercises, guest lectures, and field visits, students will be able to explore the complex nexus of relations between humans and coastal/marine resources as it applies to Latin America and the case of Costa Rica.

DED 6034 Forests, Forestry & Poverty:


Deforestation is considered one of the main global environmental challenges of our times, because of its significant impact on biodiversity and its important contribution to Climate Change and Global Warming, as well as on the livelihoods of millions of people. This course analyzes the way deforestation and forest degradation have been and are being explained by both mainstream and alternative narratives. It critically engages with the way deforestation is defined and measured and discusses the various attempts in stopping or reducing it. We will look at a range of conservation approaches that go from traditional protected areas over community-based strategies, and the increasingly common market-based approaches, and finally forest restoration. Illegal logging and timber trade will be looked at as a specific topic of particular importance since it is linked to development, poverty, and violent conflict. Additionally, this course looks at the links between poverty and deforestation, some of the possible strategies to reduce poverty through forest-based activities and analyzes and discusses the importance of forests for humans and the challenges faced by those who try to manage them sustainably.

DED 6084 Social Research Methods:

In this course we will critically examine research methodology. Our course is designed to take student sequentially through the process of thinking about and designing research. Together, we will explore the basic structure of research and examine the philosophical origins of different research approaches. I will guide students as they learn to link different information-gathering methods to different research approaches. My emphasis will be on qualitative research methodology, but we will introduce quantitative data gathering and sampling. To ensure that students gain hands-on experience with the process of developing methodologies and implementing different information-gathering procedures, I will complement lectures with workshops where students will learn by doing. Furthermore, I believe that learning about methods requires analyzing how these methods have worked (or not) in real-world case studies; thus, in-class discussions of current case studies will complement workshops and lectures.

DED 6024 Food Security:

The number of undernourished people in the world is on the rise despite the fact that we currently produce enough food to feed our global population. In this course, we examine how this paradox relates to inequity, conflict, and climate change.



We analyze historical events that have shaped our current food security at different scales as well as frameworks to understand food security. We evaluate food crises and how these crises link to the financialization of our food system. We also examine how different countries, organizations, and actors have adopted food sovereignty to address economic and social inequity in our food system. Other key themes in this course include food self-sufficiency and trade, food banks and pantries, food waste, nutrition and nutritional transitions, and food culture. Students have the unique opportunity to learn course themes in practice during local field visits, invited lectures, and through work on the UPEACE organic farm.

DED 6050 Climate Change Governance:

Climate change has been described as one of the biggest challenges humanity faces since it has and increasingly will affect all human activities and life of all species. The way we organize our national and global society and our economy will impact our potential for peace, development, well-being, and security, as well as all forms of life. A prime example of both global environmental change and global governance challenge, climate change continues to evade all past and present attempts of multilateral, national, and local governance. Even though thousands of experts have been meeting annually over the last 30 years to discuss and negotiate, greenhouse gas emissions have been growing at alarming rates.

This course introduces key concepts of and the general state of knowledge on climate change science, and the debates around science, policy, and politics.

Second, the course goes over the history of mainstream multilateral climate change governance institutions and analyzes the increasingly diverse actors in climate change governance networks, at local, national, and regional levels. Third, this course analyzes the increasingly apparent shortcomings of multilateral mainstream governance institutions to recognize the urgency and to act in meaningful ways to address this global and local crisis. Finally, the course discusses proposals of vision and action towards a much-needed sustainability transformation in economic, social, political, and ecological terms.

DED 6094 Development and Conflict in Practice: Role and Application of Sustainability Frameworks in Development Projects:

The course looks into the role and application of sustainability frameworks in development projects and examines how their implementation influences local dynamics. The course introduces the main international frameworks that influence development finance institutions (DFIs) and private sector development, such as the World Bank ES Safeguards, IFC Performance Standards, and Equator Principles, among others. It also focuses on the dynamics and drivers of conflict around development projects and the role of existing accountability and grievance mechanisms. The course dynamics include case studies, simulations and role play.



DED 6098 Indigenous perspectives in Environment & Development I:

The Seminar on Indigenous Perspectives on Environment & Development takes as a point of departure the fundamentals of who are Indigenous Peoples in Costa Rica and around the world.

Next, the seminar will provide an overview of the legal frameworks at the universal, regional, and national levels that protect Indigenous Peoples' rights. This will be contrasted with cases of the ongoing challenges that Indigenous Peoples face in conservation initiatives and the criminalization and violence that many face when defending their rights. The seminar will enable participants to understand and discuss traditional or indigenous knowledge systems, their relevance, and their relationship with the previous other themes of the seminar.

DED 6099 Indigenous perspectives in Environment & Development II:

In part two of the Indigenous Perspectives on Environment and Development, we will hear directly from multiple Indigenous scholars, community leaders, Elders, and activists in Costa Rica. Some of the topics covered in this course are Indigenous perspectives on gender, Indigenous approaches to project management and project implementation, Indigenous methodologies for research, Indigenous healing, Indigenous perspectives on development, and land-back movements.


The course will rely on guest speakers both on campus and students will visit Indigenous territories to learn such teachings on the land. Indigenous voices will be central to our teachings and debriefing will be led by the course facilitator.

RMSED 6058 Circular Bioeconomy:

Over the last century, much of the world's economic progress has been based on finite resources - fossil fuels such as coal, oil, and gas. While this has led to extraordinary technologies such as motorized vehicles and advances in medical equipment, it has also irreversibly changed our planet: today, we are facing environmental, health and social crises never seen before. The problem: our linear economic model aims at growth at all costs. As the planet is finite, this system has failed to respect the environment as the source on which all life depends. Circular bioeconomy seeks to break with this linear approach.

It is an economic model that offers compelling opportunities for a transition to a sustainable economic framework, emphasizing the use of renewable resources, minimizing waste, and replacing non-renewable, fossil-based products. It is an economy that prospers in harmony with the natural environment and aims to critically reduce the global ecological footprint by using materials for as long as possible and promoting emissions-reducing practices.

This model is, however, not as new as it sounds. Humanity has lived for thousands of years without using fossil fuels.



This has shifted with the Industrial Revolution, population growth, and changing consumption patterns. Today, we need to start thinking differently again. In this course, we will examine the ecological, social, cultural, and economic impacts of our current economic system and the opportunities for change offered by a sustainable and circular bioeconomy. We will examine how sustainability and circularity can be embedded into bioeconomy strategies, policies, and practices. Finally, we will hear from and visit people, projects, organizations, and companies who are already using innovative solutions for a just and more sustainable future, recognizing that there is no future for business as usual.

DED 6043 Urban Sustainability:

By 2050, it is estimated that two-thirds of the world's population will live in an urban environment. In many countries in the developing world, this is already a reality, with 80-90% of their populations living in cities, with increasing and rapid rates of urbanization. Increased urban population growth, paired with other socio-economic realities that are characteristic of cities, poses enormous challenges to ensure quality of life and well-being for everyone, leaving no one behind. Urban sustainability goes beyond how "green" a city is.

This course will be based on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) #11 Sustainable Cities and Communities and the New Urban Agenda, and will provide an understanding of how sustainability in cities is a multi-variable concept, interconnected with other SDGs and issues such as urban planning, transport planning and design, inequality, climate action, health, gender, and economic development, among others.

You will learn from case studies, site visits, and the experience of experts in the field, in addition to gaining tools and developing skills that will help you propose strategies, projects, and policies to improve your community, town, or city in order to make it more sustainable.

DED 6095 Gender, Environment, & Development:

This course will focus on the linkages between gender, environment, economy, and human development. We will examine key contemporary environmental issues such as climate change, food security, the green economy, low-carbon development and degrowth; access to water, sanitation, and energy; pollution; and biodiversity conservation from the perspective(s) of gender equality. The course will explore how sexism, racism, classism, heterosexism, colonialism, imperialism, and other forms of oppression have shaped and continue to shape environmental discourses, and how we might confront and subvert such hierarchies and inequalities. Course materials will include academic and non-academic literature (including policy and journalistic literature), activist texts, fiction, and film.