

STUDY GUIDE

Ecological Economics: Theory and Practice for a Just and Sustainable Transition in Europe and Beyond

Course/training name	Ecological Economics: Theory and Practice for a Just and Sustainable Transition in Europe and Beyond
Host Institution(s)	University of Florence
Co-organising Institution(s) (if applicable)	/
Course level (if applicable)	Master/PhD
Name and faculty of the lecturer(s)/trainer(s)	Prof. Tiziano Distefano, Department of Economics and Management (DISEI), Via delle Pandette, 32, 50127 Firenze



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Erasmus+

Mode of delivery	Blended (online + on campus)																			
Location (if applicable)	University of Florence																			
Dates	From 2 December 2025 to 15 February 2026																			
Cost	The BIP does not require any registration fee. Selected participants may benefit from an Erasmus+ grant provided by their home university. For more information, please contact the Erasmus/ International Relations Office at your home institution.																			
Target audience(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Master's <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PhD <input type="checkbox"/> Educators <input type="checkbox"/> Researchers <input type="checkbox"/> Administrative staff																			
Prerequisites	Bachelor's degree , Fluent in English																			
Field(s) of research / study	Ecological Economics, Environmental Studies, Political Science																			
Related Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)	 <table border="1"> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> 1 - No poverty</td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 10 - Reduced inequalities</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> 2 - Zero hunger</td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 11 - Sustainable cities and communities</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> 3 - Good health & well-being</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> 12 - Responsible consumption & production</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> 4 - Quality education</td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 13 - Climate action</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> 5 - Gender equality</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> 14 - Life below water</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6 - Clean water & sanitation</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> 15 - Life on land</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7 - Affordable & clean energy</td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 16 - Peace, justice & strong institutions</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 8 - Decent work & economic growth</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> 17 - Partnerships for the goals</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> 9 - Industry, innovation & infrastructure</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		<input type="checkbox"/> 1 - No poverty	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 10 - Reduced inequalities	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 - Zero hunger	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 11 - Sustainable cities and communities	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 - Good health & well-being	<input type="checkbox"/> 12 - Responsible consumption & production	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 - Quality education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 13 - Climate action	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 - Gender equality	<input type="checkbox"/> 14 - Life below water	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6 - Clean water & sanitation	<input type="checkbox"/> 15 - Life on land	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7 - Affordable & clean energy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 16 - Peace, justice & strong institutions	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 8 - Decent work & economic growth	<input type="checkbox"/> 17 - Partnerships for the goals	<input type="checkbox"/> 9 - Industry, innovation & infrastructure	
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Number of ECTS and/or workload (in hours)	3 ECTS																			
Language(s) of instruction	English																			

Key words	Ecological Economics	Social and Climate Justice	Beyond GDP and Wellbeing	Policy scenario	Post Normal Science
Catch Phrase	Rethink the economy to rethink the future. A journey through ecological economics — from global insights to local actions, from theory to art, from students to policymakers.				
Application procedure	Internal University Procedure				
Selection criteria	<i>Strong motivation / interest in climate action, ecological economics and climate justice</i>				
Abstract	<p>This Blended Intensive Programme on Ecological Economics proposes an ambitious educational and research pathway designed to meet the urgency and complexity of contemporary ecological and socio-economic challenges. In an era defined by interlinked crises—climate change, inequality, biodiversity loss, and institutional fragility—there is an increasing need for academic programmes capable of training a new generation of critical thinkers and engaged professionals. This initiative responds to that need by combining theoretical grounding, methodological experimentation, and participatory learning in an international and interdisciplinary setting.</p> <p>The project draws on the principles of ecological economics to rethink the foundations of economic reasoning and to explore viable alternatives for a just transition. It does so by placing students at the intersection of knowledge production and policy engagement, offering an experience that is both intellectually rigorous and socially relevant. From the outset, the programme encourages participants to go beyond disciplinary boundaries, fostering a culture of cooperation across fields, institutions, and geographies. The integration of master's and PhD students in shared activities promotes mutual learning and strengthens academic collaboration at an early stage of their careers.</p> <p>A distinctive feature of the programme is its ability to connect theoretical knowledge with real-world dynamics. Through a direct engagement with the climate negotiation processes taking place at the 2025 UNFCCC COP 30, students</p>				

	<p>are invited to experience first-hand the tensions, discourses, and power relations that define the global governance of climate change. Alongside this experiential dimension, the programme introduces a set of online lectures that deepen the students' familiarity with key concepts in ecological economics. Particular attention is devoted to the plurality of perspectives emerging from the Global South and to the development of tools for visualizing and interpreting climate-related data. The final phase of the programme is designed to consolidate the learning journey through an in-person workshop in Florence, held in early 2026, which provides a space for collective reflection and creative engagement. The format of the workshop—rooted in interaction and experimentation—emphasizes the importance of urban sustainability, storytelling, the role of arts and the political dimensions to intervene towards a social and environmental just transition.</p> <p>At its core, this programme is a laboratory of ideas and practices, a space where ecological economics becomes not only a theoretical framework but also a pedagogical and political project. It is animated by the conviction that knowledge must be situated, dialogic, and transformative. The blending of online and offline activities, of technical skills and narrative methods, of academic production and political imagination, creates an educational experience that is rare in today's higher education landscape.</p> <p>The initiative also responds to a broader institutional challenge: how to reconfigure university curricula in ways that are attuned to planetary boundaries, historical injustices, and the aspirations of future generations. Beyond technical competence, what this initiative aims to cultivate is a sense of agency—an awareness that knowledge carries responsibilities, and that the transformation of our societies depends as much on our intellectual clarity as on our collective imagination.</p>
<p>Programme / session(s)' schedule</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>December 2025 – February 2026</i> <i>Florence, Italy & Online</i></p> <p>PART 1: Online Lecture Series, December 2025 (3 days between 1 and 5 December)</p> <p><i>Lecture 1 – Foundations of Ecological Economics</i> <i>Lecture 2 – Ecological Economics from the Global South</i> <i>Lecture 3 – Ecological Economics in the XXI century: Exploring alternative futures</i></p>

	<p><i>PART 2: In-Person Workshop in Florence, February 9–13, 2026</i></p> <p><i>February 9 – Opening Day</i> <i>Welcome session and student networking</i> <i>Overview of the programme and goals</i></p> <p><i>February 10 – Young Scholars’ Session</i></p> <p><i>February 11 – Cities & Sustainability</i> <i>Lectures and workshops on urban ecological transitions</i></p> <p><i>February 12 – Art & Ecological Economics</i> <i>Exploring creativity, narratives, and ecological thought</i></p> <p><i>February 13 – Policy & Closing Conference</i> <i>Political dialogue on the future of ecological economics</i></p>
<p>Developed skills and competences</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Principles of ecology - Development economics - Environmental economics - Build international relations - Technical or academic writing - Speak in public
<p>Objectives and learning outcomes</p>	<p>Ecological economics: learning the basis of ecological economics and global south perspectives on ecology and climate action</p> <p>Communicate science through art: learning about the opportunities and techniques coming from artistic world</p> <p>Integration of theoretical, empirical and practical knowledge</p>
<p>Assessment methods and criteria (if applicable)</p>	<p><i>Final evaluation of the project work and participation</i></p>
<p>Type of certification issued upon attendance or completion</p>	<p><i>Transcript of Records and Digital Badge</i></p>