UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
OF ESTATE MANAGEMENT

Paradigms of Sustainability

Module Descriptor

Module Code: SUS7PAR

Version: v3.00

Status: Final

Date: 08/03/2024

Summary Module Details

Module details

Module Title: Paradigms of Sustainability

Module Leader: Dr Graeme Larsen

Module Mode: Supported online learning

Semester: Autumn (UK)

Level: 7

Credits: 20

Learning Hours: 200

Contact & Study Hours

Scheduled learning and teaching activities: 33 hrs (16.5%)

Guided independent study: 167 hrs (83.5%)

Assessment Type

Coursework: 0%

Computer Marked Assessment: 30%

Self-directed Research Project: 0%

Portfolio: 70%

Module Summary

This module introduces the topic of sustainability in the context of the built environment and how it might be conceptualized theoretically (thus complementing the Realities of Sustainability module). Essential will be understanding the ontological and epistemological assumptions being made around sustainability themes, together with what is being privileged and the level of understanding sought. Candidates will be introduced to a range of different approaches for understanding sustainable innovation, change and their role. The module will challenge the assumptions and themes often privileged regarding built environment sustainability e.g. triple bottom line. The drivers of sustainability such as the United Nations sustainable development goals associated with the built environment, will be used as key touch points. The module will go into further depth in areas such as cultural and social sustainability, economic and financial sustainability and environmental sustainability, bio-diversity and climate change.

By the end of the module the candidates will have a critical understanding of the triple bottom line of sustainability within the built environment and how it impacts the wider world.

Taken on which Programmes

MSc Innovation in Sustainable Built Environments (C)

Postgraduate Diploma Innovation in Sustainable Built Environments (C)

Core (C) or Elective (E)

Module Aim

This module aims to develop awareness and robust judgement regarding the different ways in which sustainability can be conceptualised.

Module Learning Outcomes

LO1. Understand the different themes being privileged and the assumption made from different paradigms, and the strengths and weaknesses.

LO2. Distinguish between a range of paradigms and associated theoretical schools.

LO3. Develop a critical skill set to discriminate and assess competing conceptualisations around sustainability.

Indicative Module Content

Module topics

- Building blocks – understanding the fundamentals of social science, socio-technical, multi-level, open systems thinking.
- Ontology, epistemology, paradigms.
- Assumptions, privileging, objects and units of analysis.
- Sustainability as an evolving and contested discourse.
- Understand and critique paradigms regarding themes around sustainability.

The content will be reviewed and updated in-line with the advances in the body of knowledge around sustainability.

Overview of Summative Assessment

Module learning outcomes	Assessment	Word count or equivalent	Weighting
LO1, LO2	**Assessment 1** Computer Based Assessment (CBA)	500 (word count equivalent)	10%
LO1, LO2	**Assessment 2** Computer Based Assessment (CBA)	500 (word count equivalent)	10%
LO1, LO2	**Assessment 3** Computer Based Assessment (CBA)	500 (word count equivalent)	10%
LO2, LO3	**Assessment 4** Create a portfolio of selected works. Write a reflective diary	3,500 words max	70%

Module Pass Mark (as a weighted average of all assessments): 50%

Key Module Learning Resources

Core Sources and Texts

The core reading resources within each module will be provided via the specific Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) module pages and within the e-Library. Additional reference material and supplementary resources to support your studies are available through the UCEM e-Library.

Module tools

Students will have access to study materials, dedicated academic support, student forums, and learning activities via an online learning platform (VLE).

The module page on the VLE is broken down into structured study weeks to help students plan their time. Each week will have a key theme related to the module, drawing upon an evolving set of methods, including flipped learning with interactive workshops and discussions, and online Padlet discussion activities for students unable to attend the live sessions.

Online webinars/seminars led by specific academics can be attended in real time and provide opportunities to consolidate knowledge, ask questions, discuss topics and work through learning activities together.

These sessions are recorded to support students who cannot attend and to enable students to recap the session and work through it with a degree of flexibility. Module forums on the VLE provide further opportunities to discuss topics with other students, complete collaborative work and get extra help from the module team.

Professional online resources

The e-Library provides access to trusted, quality online resources, selected by subject specialists, to support students' study. This includes journals, industry publications, magazines, academic books and a dissertation/work-based library. For a list of the key industry specific and education resources available please visit the VLE e-Library.

Other relevant resources

Access is also provided to further information sources that include the British Library and Open University UK catalogues, as well as providing a monthly current awareness service entitled, ***Knowledge Foundations*** - a compendium of news, research and resources relating to the educational sector and the Built Environment.

The module resource list is available on the module website and is updated regularly to ensure materials are relevant and current.