

Sustainable Business Law Syllabus

Summer 2023

Instructor Information

Instructor

Prof. Dr. Lela Mélon

Email

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Office Location & Hours

Upon agreement

General Information

Description

(EU) Sustainable Business Law is a 5-session course that explores the legal frameworks and regulations governing sustainable business practices in the European Union (EU). The course covers a wide range of topics, including environmental law, social responsibility, energy and climate change law, consumer protection, and reporting obligations. Through lectures, case studies, discussions, and interactive activities, students will develop a comprehensive understanding of EU sustainable business law and its practical implications for businesses.

Expectations and Goals

This course on EU Sustainable Business Law sets high expectations for students to develop a comprehensive understanding of the legal frameworks and regulations that govern sustainable business practices in the European Union (EU). By the end of the course, students are expected to demonstrate a solid grasp of the key concepts, policies, and initiatives related to sustainable business, including environmental law, social responsibility, energy and climate change law, consumer protection, and reporting obligations. Through engaging lectures, interactive activities, case studies, and discussions, students will explore real-world scenarios and analyze the practical implications of EU sustainable business law for businesses. The course aims to equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to critically evaluate and apply sustainable business principles, assess compliance requirements, and navigate emerging challenges in the EU's dynamic regulatory landscape. Ultimately, the goal is to empower students to become informed professionals capable of promoting sustainable business practices that contribute to the achievement of the EU's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Course Materials

Required Materials

Academic Articles:

- A curated selection of academic articles will be provided throughout the course, covering topics such as environmental law, social responsibility, energy and climate change law, consumer protection, and reporting obligations.
- Articles may include recent research studies, legal analyses, and scholarly perspectives on sustainable business practices in the EU.

EU Regulations and Directives:

- Copies of relevant EU regulations and directives will be provided or made available online, including the EU Taxonomy Regulation, the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD), the Directive on Due Diligence, and other pertinent legislation.

These regulatory texts will serve as the basis for understanding the legal requirements and obligations for sustainable business practices in the EU.

Case Studies:

- A collection of case studies will be utilized to examine real-world examples of sustainable business practices and the legal implications in different industries.
- Case studies may include environmental impact assessments, supply chain transparency, responsible sourcing, energy efficiency initiatives, and corporate sustainability reporting.

Additional readings, such as reports, guidelines, and policy briefs from reputable sources like the European Commission, European Parliament, and relevant NGOs, will supplement the core materials. These readings will provide students with a broader perspective on current issues and emerging trends in EU sustainable business law.

Please note that the specific textbook, articles, and supplementary readings may vary based on the instructor's preferences and the most up-to-date resources available.

Course Schedule

Day	Topic	Details	Method
Day 1	Introduction to EU Sustainable Business Law	<p>Overview of EU Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Students will gain an understanding of the SDGs and their significance in driving sustainable business practices.</p> <p>Understanding sustainable business: This session will explore the concept of sustainable business, including its economic, social, and environmental dimensions.</p> <p>EU policies and initiatives on sustainable business: Students will learn about key EU policies and initiatives that promote sustainable business practices, such as the European Green Deal and the Circular Economy Action Plan.</p>	<p>Lecture: The instructor provides a comprehensive overview of the EU Sustainable Development Goals, the concept of sustainable business, key EU policies and initiatives, and the legal frameworks and regulations governing sustainable business in the EU.</p> <p>Group Discussion: Students engage in group discussions to share their understanding of sustainable business and its relevance to the EU context. They can discuss specific examples of businesses implementing sustainable</p>

Day	Topic	Details	Method
		Key legal frameworks and regulations in the EU: This session will provide an overview of the main legal frameworks and regulations governing sustainable business in the EU, including environmental, social, and governance (ESG) standards.	practices and the potential challenges they may face. Interactive Activity: Students participate in an interactive activity, such as a case study analysis or a role-playing exercise, to understand how sustainable business practices can align with the EU's goals and legal requirements.
Day 2	Environmental Law and Sustainable Business	<p>EU environmental law and its impact on businesses: Students will examine the scope and impact of EU environmental law on businesses, including regulations on emissions, pollution, and resource management.</p> <p>Environmental impact assessments and permits: This session will focus on the requirements and procedures for conducting environmental impact assessments and obtaining permits for environmentally sensitive projects.</p> <p>Waste management and circular economy regulations: Students will explore EU regulations on waste management, recycling, and the transition to a circular economy.</p>	<p>Case Study Analysis: Students work in small groups to analyze real-world case studies that involve environmental law and its impact on businesses. They identify the legal obligations, potential risks, and strategies for businesses to comply with environmental regulations.</p> <p>Guest Speaker</p> <p>Class Debate: two groups with opposing viewpoints on a controversial environmental issue (a structured debate where students present arguments based on legal, economic, and environmental perspective)</p>
Day 3	Social Responsibility and Human Rights	<p>EU regulations on corporate social responsibility (CSR): This session will cover EU directives and guidelines on CSR, including the integration of environmental and social considerations into business practices.</p> <p>Human rights due diligence requirements: Students will learn about the legal obligations for businesses to conduct human rights due diligence, including identifying and</p>	<p>Interactive Presentation: The instructor delivers an interactive presentation on EU regulations on corporate social responsibility (CSR), human rights due diligence, and supply chain transparency. This session can include multimedia elements, such as videos or infographics, to engage students and illustrate key concepts.</p>

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		<p>addressing risks throughout their supply chains.</p> <p>Supply chain transparency and responsible sourcing: This session will focus on EU regulations promoting supply chain transparency, responsible sourcing practices, and the prohibition of certain conflict minerals.</p> <p>Directive on Due Diligence and sustainable business practices: Students will examine the Directive on Due Diligence, which aims to establish a common framework for due diligence obligations in the EU and its implications for sustainable business practices.</p>	<p>Group Activity: Students form groups and engage in a role-playing activity where they assume the roles of different stakeholders, such as businesses, NGOs, and government representatives. They negotiate and discuss the challenges and opportunities in implementing CSR and human rights due diligence in various business scenarios.</p> <p>Case Study Discussion: Students analyze case studies that highlight real-world examples of successful CSR initiatives and human rights due diligence practices. They critically evaluate the impact of these practices on businesses and society, and explore potential improvements or challenges.</p>

Day	Topic	Details	Method
Day 4	Energy and Climate Change Law	<p>EU energy policy and renewable energy targets: This session will provide an overview of EU energy policy, including renewable energy targets and the promotion of clean energy sources.</p> <p>Energy efficiency regulations for businesses: Students will learn about EU regulations on energy efficiency in buildings, appliances, and industrial processes, and their impact on businesses.</p> <p>Climate change mitigation and adaptation measures: This session will explore EU initiatives for mitigating climate change, such as carbon pricing, emission trading schemes, and adaptation strategies.</p> <p>Application of the EU Taxonomy Regulation: Students will examine the EU Taxonomy Regulation and its role in promoting sustainable finance and investments aligned with environmental objectives.</p>	<p>Hands-on Exercise: Students participate in a hands-on exercise where they assess the energy efficiency and sustainability of a mock business or building. They analyze energy consumption, identify areas for improvement, and propose energy-saving measures in line with EU energy regulations.</p> <p>Group Presentation: dividing students into groups and assigning them different renewable energy sources or energy efficiency technologies. Each group prepares a presentation highlighting the benefits, challenges, and potential applications of their assigned topic. They present their findings to the class, followed by a discussion.</p>

Day	Topic	Details	Method
Day 5	Consumer Protection and Reporting	<p>EU consumer protection laws and sustainable business practices: This session will cover EU regulations on consumer protection, including misleading advertising, product safety, and green claims.</p> <p>Product labeling and eco-design requirements: Students will learn about EU requirements for product labeling, eco-design, and the promotion of eco-friendly products.</p> <p>Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD): This session will focus on the CSRD, which expands the reporting obligations for companies, including sustainability-related disclosures.</p> <p>Integration of EU Taxonomy, CSRD, and Due Diligence: Students will explore the integration of the EU Taxonomy Regulation, the CSRD, and the Directive on Due Diligence into sustainable business practices and reporting obligations.</p>	<p>Workshop: students work in small groups to develop sustainability-focused product labels or eco-design guidelines for specific product categories. They consider EU consumer protection laws, environmental considerations, and consumer preferences in their designs.</p> <p>Interactive Case Study: a complex case study involving sustainability reporting and disclosure obligations. Students work individually or in pairs to analyze the case study, identify legal and ethical issues, and propose appropriate reporting strategies and disclosures. They present their solutions and engage in a class discussion</p> <p>Final Exam</p>

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Understand the legal frameworks and regulations governing sustainable business in the EU.
- Analyze the impact of environmental, social, and energy laws on businesses and their practices.
- Apply sustainable business principles to real-world scenarios and evaluate their implications.
- Comprehend the reporting obligations and sustainability disclosures required by the CSRD
- Evaluate the implications of the EU Taxonomy Regulation and the Directive on Due Diligence for sustainable business practices.

Assessment:

Participation in class discussions and activities: 20%

Case study analyses and assignments: 40%

Final project or exam: 40%