

MACROECONOMICS AND SUSTAINABILITY

COURSE OUTLINE SUMMER 2018

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CONTENT

The ultimate goal of economic activity in an economy should be the well-being of the population now and in the future. In a sustainable economy, current activities should not compromise future well-being. However, future well-being is threatened by a variety of current developments such as climate change and environmental destruction, technological developments or rising economic inequality. Ideally, governments would be forward-looking and take early actions in order to prevent problems that reduce the well-being of their populations in the future. Forward-looking public policy is a major challenge for political and practical reasons. A key practical challenge for governments is to anticipate possible future developments.

In this module, we discuss how science could inform governments about possible future developments. We discuss the problem of how to deal with uncertainty and how it might be possible to anticipate future developments in the long-run over several decades. A popular method of foresight is scenario thinking or scenario analysis. While this method is not so often applied in academic contexts, it is often used in practice, both in the private and in the public sector. We introduce the method of scenario thinking, discuss its strengths and weaknesses, contrast it to model-based foresight methods and learn how to use it.

You will learn how to use scenario analysis in a practical example. We assume that the participants of the module are experts that advise the German government. The task commissioned by the government is to formulate possible scenarios about living conditions in Germany in 2040 and to propose policy strategies that lead desirable outcomes in 2040.

MODULE OBJECTIVES

Students

- obtain an overview over the sustainability debate,
- learn how to deal with uncertainty about the future,
- learn how to work with scenario analyses,
- train literature research and writing scholarly papers,
- train scholarly presentations and discourse.

The module stimulates critical and creative thinking. It aims at teaching methodological skills that are highly relevant for professional practice in the private and public sector, e.g. in consulting or public planning.

PREREQUISITES

You will need excellent skills in written and spoken English.
“Macroeconomics I” and “Macroeconomics II” are recommended.
The successful completion of a “Studienleistung” is required (see below).

ORGANIZATION

The module has a special format. There will be a number of seminars, which require class attendance. In these seminars, the focus is on interaction and discussion between participants and the lecturers. Participation is required because scenario analysis is typically an interactive process that cannot be learned alone.

In addition to the seminars, comprehensive study materials are provided in the Moodle course that accompanies the module (‘Macroeconomics and Sustainability (075250-SoSe18)'). **Regular self-study of this material is absolutely necessary to succeed in this module.** You are expected to work through the relevant material in the Moodle class before the seminar sessions. If you do not come prepared to the seminar sessions, reasonable work in the seminars is not possible.

You will not pass the module, if you do not attend the seminar regularly and if you do not do the preparatory exercises in the Moodle course. The exercises count as “Studienleistung”.

To participate you have to sign in to the Moodle course until **11 April 2018, 6 p.m.** as well as attend the first meeting on **13 April**. After the first session, students of the Faculty of Management and Economics also have to register in the **FlexNow system**. EELP students can participate, too. They need permission by Prof. Roos.

Participants: 20
Assessment: Term paper (70%)
Presentation (30%)

Paper due: 6 August, 12.00 h, submission seminar paper via mail (mak@rub.de) AND printed to the secretary of the chair.

Please consult the “[Guidelines on how to write a seminar paper at the chair of macroeconomics](http://www.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/mak/mam/content/leitfadenenglischjs.pdf)”, see <http://www.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/mak/mam/content/leitfadenenglischjs.pdf>.

Time and room: Seminar: Friday 8.30 – 11.45 h, GC 03/46 (not every week, see schedule below),

Start: 13 April 2018

Registration: The number of participants is limited to 20. If there are more than 20 students present in the first session, we will determine the participants by a lottery. **Only those students who are accepted in the first session can take the module, hence it is necessary to come to the first session.** After having been accepted, you must register in the FlexNow system (if you are a student in the department of management and economics) in the time from 13 April to 27 April. **If you fail to register in the FlexNow system, you cannot get credit for the module.**

SCHEDULE

Seminars

Date	Topic
13 April	Course introduction
27 April	Presentation and discussion of existing scenarios
4 May	Brainstorming session for own scenarios
18 May	Prioritization of drivers
8 June	Projections
29 June	Presentation and discussion of own scenarios
6 July	Presentation and discussion of own scenarios
20 July	Presentation of policy conclusions

In addition to the compulsory seminars, you can come to voluntary meetings on 15 June and 22 June to consult the supervisors.

Potential changes of the schedule will be announced in Moodle.

SELF-STUDY

This module contains 120 hours of self-study.

Your self-study will be guided by the accompanying Moodle course 'Macroeconomics and Sustainability (075250-SoSe18)'. The Moodle course is not just supplementary, but an integral part of the module. You have to do a number of exercises in the Moodle course to be prepared for the seminar. **If you do not do these exercises on time, you cannot submit the term paper and hence cannot get a grade and credit for the module.**

READINGS

See Moodle course 'Macroeconomics and Sustainability (075250-SoSe18)'.