



Universidad
de Alcalá

TEACHING GUIDE

Circular Economy: Economic, Business and Policy Implications

**Degree in Economics and
International Business
University of Alcalá**

Academic Year 2024/2025

Third - Fourth Year - Second Term

TEACHING GUIDE

Name of the subject:	Circular Economy: Economic, Business and Policy Implications
Code:	362012
Degree in which it is taught:	Degree in Economics and International Business
Department and Area of Knowledge:	Department: Economics and Business Administration Area: Business Organisation
Character:	Optional
ECTS credits:	6
Year and term:	3rd or 4th Year - 2nd Term
Faculty:	Dr. Totti Könnölä (coordinator) (totti.konnola@uah.es) Dr. Javier Carrillo Hermosilla (javier.carrillo@uah.es)
Tutoring Schedule:	To be agreed with the teaching staff by e-mail
Language of instruction:	English

1. INTRODUCTION

The Circular Economy (CE) draws a desirable future end state of an economic system that is fully circular and sustainable. Circular means that all resources, components and products never leave the production and consumption processes as waste, but remain as valuable inputs in subsequent processes, thus retaining value by continuously "circulating" through the economy, mitigating the environmental impacts of production and consumption activities. With this rhetoric of re-engineering the economy, rather than minimising it, the concept has attracted the interest of business and political decision-makers.

This course looks at CE from a new angle. It aims to provide an in-depth perspective on CE, contextualising it in the broader sustainability discussions and providing information on the CE practices that can be developed and adopted by companies, as well as the drivers and barriers to those practices. It also aims to facilitate the identification of appropriate policies (at both company and government level) to encourage them.

To this end, the course provides multiple perspectives on CE. First, it addresses the economic and environmental benefits of CE. This can be understood as a direct response to societal demands for sustainability, in addition to the academic imperative to consider all aspects of a phenomenon under study. Secondly, it theoretically roots CE in sustainable development, industrial ecology, eco-innovation and product-service economics, among other concepts, and addresses their interconnectedness with CE approaches. However, although comprehensive, this course focuses on the micro level and how companies can contribute to CE through new products, services, processes or business models (i.e. eco-innovations), and what competitive advantage and other benefits they can generate with them.

Respecting the SDGs

The teaching of this subject will follow the Sustainable Development Goals contained in the United Nations 2030 Agenda. In particular, the focus will be on reducing inequalities, climate action and the protection of terrestrial and marine life and ecosystems. In terms of corporate governance, the focus will be on the provision of decent work, the achievement of responsible production and consumption targets and the use of renewable and clean energy.

2. COMPETENCES

Basic competences: CB1 - That students have demonstrated knowledge and understanding in an area of study that builds on the foundation of general secondary education, and is usually at a level that, while relying on advanced textbooks, also includes some aspects that involve knowledge from the cutting edge of their field of study. CB2 - Students are able to apply their knowledge to their work or vocation in a professional manner and possess the competences usually demonstrated through the development and defence of arguments and problem solving within their field of study. CB3 - Students have the ability to gather and interpret relevant data (usually within their area of study) in order to make judgements that include reflection on relevant social, scientific or ethical issues. CB4 - Students are able to communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences. CB5 - That students have developed those learning skills necessary to undertake further studies with a high degree of autonomy.

General competences: CG1 - Acquire capacity in the negotiation techniques used in international institutions and companies. CG2 - Ability to analyze data and reports coming specifically from international sources (companies, international institutions such as the IMF, the WTO or the Bank for International Settlements). CG3 - Interest in updating the permanent demands for organization and planning techniques of international business and public activities. CG4 - Ability to assess the multiplicity of social, political, technical, etc. factors. that come together in international business and institutional decisions. CG5 - Acquire current ethical criteria that can be permanently updated, expressed in different countries through anti-corruption codes, international economic rights charters, etc. CG6 - Ability to integrate into interdisciplinary teams that include people from very different countries and backgrounds. CG7 - Scientific and professional curiosity for the permanent use of analytical and conceptual instruments typical of international economic relations. CG8 - Motivation for the search for quality in professional practice and its development. CG9 - Curiosity for learning new techniques and instruments that are continually presented in the international world. CG10 - Written and oral expression skills that can be used in different environments. CG11 - Ability to use the English language to search for information and use resources in that language, and in the preparation and presentation of academic activities.

Cross-cutting competences: CT1.- Acquire techniques and skills related to professional practice, including the application of the appropriate ethical regulations. CT2.- Know the resources available for accessing information and use them effectively. CT3.- Acquire oral and written communication skills in modern languages, both in professional environments and in other types of contexts CT4.- Understand the ideas and arguments expressed in a foreign language, in writing and orally, both in everyday situations and in professional and specialised contexts. CT5.- Manage in an advanced way the most frequently used office tools in a professional environment (word processing, databases and spreadsheets) and advanced use of electronic communication, navigation and data search programmes (e-mail and Internet). CT6.- Design presentations using computer programmes and the ability to structure information appropriately and transmit it clearly and efficiently, with a basic knowledge of the operation of data transmission networks. CT7.- Know the main techniques of management, conflict resolution, labour selection and motivation of human teams in a work environment with the use of effective strategies in time management. CT8.- Plan and develop research in a specific field of study, in accordance with the academic and scientific requirements that are specific to it. CT9.- Know the history of the University of Alcalá, the functioning of European institutions and the historical, social, economic and cultural reality of European and Latin American countries.

Specific competences: CE7 - Acquire the minimum skills to defend economic-business points of view, using the minimum tools necessary to be able to express orally and in writing, in a scientific way, economic data of a company/institution. CE13 - Ability to select bibliography and materials on social institutions in relation to economic institutions and analyze documents and texts on the social dimension of economic activity. CE15 - Acquire the ability to critically analyze, synthesize and summarize economic-business information using quantitative tools in different economic-business fields. CE19 - Acquire basic capabilities of economic and historical analysis to understand from a technical perspective the content and method of economics and history, as well as for the correct understanding of the behavior of economic phenomena and the evolution of economic doctrines.

3. CONTENTS

This course has three parts, sequentially interrelated:

The first part of the course provides a broad overview of the topic, contextualising it in the broader discussion on sustainability and other concepts and approaches. It provides an analysis of CE in the broader context of sustainable transitions.

The above discussion is central to the second part of the course, which focuses on the micro level of CE. It explains how CE is operationalised at the micro level, i.e. what CE practices exist at this level. The discussion of different case studies illustrates the CE practices that can be developed or adopted by companies, as well as the drivers and barriers of these practices.

The third part of the course focuses on the managerial and public policy implications of the analysis in the second part. It therefore analyses the measures that business managers and governments can take to move towards CE by activating drivers or mitigating barriers to CE at the micro level.

4. TRAINING ACTIVITIES AND TEACHING METHODOLOGIES

- Lectures to introduce the subject, introduce students to a complex topic, draw conclusions.
- Practical classes for solving exercises and practical application of theoretical content.
- Completion of assignments, presentations and exercises.
- Reading, analysis and interpretation of articles, books and different documents.
- Discussions on a topic proposed by the teacher.
- Participation in forums/blogs.
- Search for information and use of electronic resources (websites, online dictionaries, etc.).
- Seminars, workshops, conferences, etc.
- Attention to students individually or collectively for the holding of tutorials, in order to carry out an adequate follow-up of the students.
- Consultations with the teacher in the Virtual Classroom.
- Application of innovative teaching techniques (cooperative learning, flipped learning, role-playing games, gamification methods, blended learning, etc.).
- Visits to companies.
- Projects based on service-learning.

We will collaborate with CRAI-Library professionals so that students carry out an activity that develops informational competencies in the use and management of information. As agreed at the last Faculty Meeting on 11 March 2019, it is important that a university student possesses information skills and competences and it is appropriate that the training is provided by the Library.

5. EVALUATION SYSTEMS

Students will have the right to two assessment calls, one ordinary and one extraordinary. The ordinary call is based on continuous assessment, except in the case of students who have been granted the right to final assessment.

The type, characteristics and modality of the instruments that form part of the assessment process, as well as their weighting, are based on continuous assessment. If the student does not participate in the teaching-learning process as established in this teaching guide, he/she will be considered to have **failed** the ordinary exam.

Students may only opt for the final assessment in the ordinary call of the academic year in the case of adequately justifying the following circumstances: the completion of on-site work placements, family obligations, health reasons and disability. However, part-time study does not entitle the student to opt for the final assessment.

In order to make use of the final assessment, students must apply in writing to the dean within the first two weeks of the course, explaining the reasons that prevent them from following the continuous assessment system. In the case of those students who, for justified reasons, have not formalised their enrolment on the starting date of the course or of the period in which the subject is taught, the period indicated will begin to be calculated from the date of their incorporation to the degree course. After 15 working days have passed without the student having received an express written response to their request, it will be understood that the request has been accepted.

Students who have followed the continuous assessment system and have not passed it will not be able to take the final assessment in the ordinary exam session. However, any student who chooses the continuous assessment system and does not pass the course will have the right to take an exam in the extraordinary exam session.

CONTINUOUS EVALUATION

Students' performance will be assessed by their work, knowledge and skills acquired and the improvement of their learning process. The methods to be used will be:

- a) Attendance at theoretical and practical group classes and seminars. Assessment of the active participation of students.
- b) Resolution of practical cases and individual or team work.
- c) Public presentation of readings and/or the result of projects or information research.
- d) Successful completion of any partial tests that may be held.
- e) Successful completion of a final theoretical-practical exam.

The grading system will be the one established by current legislation (Royal Decree 1125/2003, of 5 September, which establishes the European credit system and the grading system for official university degrees).

• Qualification criteria:

- Acquisition of theoretical and practical content, by means of a final written theoretical-practical exam: 40% of the final mark. It will be necessary to demonstrate sufficient and balanced knowledge in both parts of the exam in order to be able to average the marks for continuous assessment.
- Practical application, capacity for analysis, elaboration of ideas, participation in the preparation and presentation of practical cases, as well as the performance of partial tests of theoretical or practical knowledge, during the teaching period of the subject as part of the continuous assessment process: 25% of the final mark. Within this 25%, partial tests account for 10%.
- Final report prepared in a team during the teaching period as part of the continuous assessment process: 25% of the final mark.
- Attendance and active participation: 10% of the final mark (the student must have attended at least 80% of the classroom sessions in which attendance has been checked).

In order to pass the course, the student must satisfactorily pass all the tests, in the understanding that all of them together evaluate the acquisition of all the competences developed.

FINAL EVALUATION

Students who, for justified reasons, do not opt for continuous assessment must demonstrate the generic and specific competences of the subject by means of a **specific final** oral and/or written **exam**, with theoretical and practical content, which constitutes **100%** of the final mark.

In the extraordinary call, the student's evaluation will be based on the qualification of the exam that the Faculty will call for this purpose, in which the student must demonstrate the generic and specific competences of the subject by means of an exam, with theoretical and practical content, which constitutes 100% of the final mark.

During the development of the evaluation tests, the guidelines set out in the Regulations establishing the Rules of Coexistence of the University of Alcalá must be followed, as well as the possible implications of irregularities committed during these tests, including the consequences for committing academic fraud according to the Disciplinary Regulations of the Student Body of the University of Alcalá.

6. BIBLIOGRAPHY

For the acquisition of theoretical knowledge and as a basis for the presentations of the topics, the reference manual detailed below, developed by the course lecturers together with other authors, will be used. In addition, in order to reinforce this knowledge, different case studies on the content of the subject will be discussed. In addition, articles, complementary readings, videos, multimedia materials, etc. will be used to carry out other activities such as presentations, comments and debates. All the materials necessary to follow the theoretical and practical classes will be available to students on the Virtual Platform.

- Reference manual:

Del Río, P., Kiefer, C., Carrillo-Hermosilla, J. and Könnölä, T. *The Circular Economy: Economic, Managerial and Policy Implications*. Springer, 2021. ISBN 978-3-030-74791-6.

Additional literature may be suggested throughout the course.