

Sustainable Cities in the Nordic-Baltic Region 2021

5 ECTS

April 9th-12th, 2021, online event, case Riga, Latvia

Sustainable Cities in the Nordic-Baltic Region 2021 is an intensive four-day online event, master's level course and competition focusing on multidisciplinary and practical urban planning and collaboration. The course brings together students, teachers, professors, practitioners and other leading experts from the Nordic-Baltic countries to share ideas and work together on a real-life planning case, taking on the challenge of developing sustainable cities.

Theme and perspectives

The themes of the Sustainable Cities in the Nordic-Baltic Region 2021 relate to integration of new developing university campus with converting, former industrial and ecologically sensitive surrounded area. Key words are urban transformation, mobility and social innovations. During the course the students will in teams create a plan to create sustainable solutions to meet the variable demands of Nordic-Baltic urban settings and take part in inspiring lectures. The case is strongly anchored into existing concerns regarding urban development in Riga and both the city and the university are eager to hear the results of the case work and take the suggestions into account when working on the development plans. The case work also includes input from residents. The course will highlight the social-ecological approach of urban planning, which seeks to more closely integrate social and environmental considerations. The course encourages interdisciplinary thinking, which is why the students invited to the course represent various disciplines.

Model of work

The students will be divided into teams, in which they will work on the case assignment throughout the four-day course. The group work will be facilitated by doctoral students, all with different orientations around the urban planning issues. In addition, to give fresh perspectives and raise new questions for the case work, the course features inspirational talks from experts in the field. On the final day of the course the student teams will present their solutions to a wider audience, including planning practitioners from the city of Riga. Finally, a jury will evaluate the results and discuss the solutions with the teams. The course work also includes a written pre-assignment before the intensive course as well as a written report after the course on the learning experiences and case outcomes.

Participants

The participants in the course are invited by leading professors in the field, or they have applied to the course individually. The competition will bring together 25 of the brightest student minds from different disciplines dealing with urban development at Nordic-Baltic universities.

Learning objectives

The course gives the students in-depth knowledge and practical experience in actual planning work. The course enables the students to deepen and develop their knowledge with new perspectives from other disciplines and Nordic-Baltic frameworks. With the case work the students have a possibility to create sustainable solutions with real societal impact. Most of all, the course emphasizes interaction and co-creation of knowledge and gives the students the chance to build vital new networks both with fellow students as well as with experts and practitioners within the field.

The aim of the course is to give the student a chance to experience a real-life planning case in an international and collaborative environment.

After the course the students should:

- Identify and describe sustainable urban planning issues from a socio-ecological systems perspective (particularly those related to the development of the specific case area?)
- Recognise the different actors and interest groups involved in practical urban planning.

- Communicate disciplinary and/or context specific knowledge to other students from different disciplinary and international backgrounds.
- Integrate multi-disciplinary, practical and contextual knowledge, and socio-ecological systems considerations to design solutions for the case area to improve sustainability.
- Present and argue for particular solutions to a multi-disciplinary jury / audience
- Evaluate their own design and reflect on the realities of practical urban planning, multi-disciplinary teamwork and case outcomes.

Course requirements and evaluation

To complete the course the student is required to finish all the pre- and post –assignments of the course, and actively participate in all activities during the intensive course, group-work and discussions. Attendance in all parts of the intensive course is mandatory. Course work will be evaluated by the course leaders and the jury based on activity of participation in the course, as well as on the quality of the completed case assignment written and oral presentation.

Program - link

Why do we arrange the course?

The purpose of the course is to enhance the knowledge and skills of the students in the field by giving them a chance to work with a multidisciplinary, collaborative and international approach to urban development. We also hope to get an international student perspective and good ideas for the development of city planning in Riga. Finally, we want to create interaction and close networks between the students and other actors within sustainable urban development in the Nordic-Baltic countries. The course is financially supported by Nordplus Horizontal 2019-2021 and it is free of charge.

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