

# Doctoral Program in Economics



Academic year 2020/21

## HAPPINESS, SUSTAINABILITY AND WELLBEING

### Period:

Fourth Term: from September to November 2021

### Course hours:

16

### Teachers:

Stefano Bartolini (10 hours, course coordinator) and Simone D'Alessandro (6 hours)

### Exam methods:

Written exam – one single essay

### Prerequisites:

No

### D'Alessandro Module

#### Program

##### **Topic 1 – Stylized facts and theoretical discussion**

- The relationship between planetary boundaries and social goals
- Climate change, global emissions drivers and IPCC scenarios
- Decoupling, Material footprint in rich and poor countries
- Irreversibility, societal collapses and maladaptation

##### • **Topic 2 – From Sustainable Development to the Green Deal**

- Definition and limits of sustainable development approach
- Feasibility of the green growth strategy
- Alternatives to green growth

##### • **Topic 3 – *Ecohesion*: social cohesion in the ecological transition**

- Ecological Macroeconomics
- System thinking and mapping

#### Educational objectives

The main objective of this module is to allow the Ph.D. students to access to the broad (and interdisciplinary) literature on climate change and sustainability. The module aims at clarifying the interlinkages between the socioeconomic and environmental dimensions. Moreover, it introduces to the use of scenarios analysis for policy evaluation. At the end of the course the student will be able to apply system thinking methodology as a tool for group-oriented research.

#### Bibliographical references

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- O'Neill, D. (2018), "A good life for all within planetary boundaries", *Nature Sustainability* 1, 88-95.
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- Weidmann, et al. (2015) "The material footprint of nations", *PNAS* 112(20), 6271-6276.
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- Beddoe, R. et al. (2009) "Overcoming systemic roadblocks to sustainability: The evolutionary redesign of worldviews, institutions, and technologies." *PNAS* 106.8, 2483-2489.
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- Hallegratte, S., Heal, G., Fay, M., & Treguer, D. (2012). "From growth to green growth – a framework", National Bureau of Economic Research no. 17841.
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- Viçtor, P. and Jackson, T. (2015) "Towards an ecological macroeconomics" *Ecological Economics for the Anthropocene: An Emerging Paradigm* 237.
- Hårdt, L. and D. W. O'Neill (2017). "Ecological macroeconomic models: Assessing current developments" *Ecological Economics* 134, 198-211.
- D'Alessandro S. et al. (2020) "Feasible alternatives to green growth" *Nature Sustainability* 3, 329-335.

## **Bartolini module**

### **Program**

The new science of happiness, has developed in the past two decades across all social sciences thanks to the discovery of several reliable methods to measure human happiness. The measurement of happiness, through subjective and objective measures, has come to challenge established thought in economic and social theory and policy. Discussing human happiness raises issues related to the

current “crises of capitalism” under discussion by prominent scholars from all social sciences, including big questions about the level of our material consumption, the impact of the economy on the sustainability of natural and social resources. Serious consideration is now being given to happiness as a policy goal by a number of governments.

Based on the data and the research literature in psychology, sociology, and economics, this course will examine, from both the theoretical and empirical point of view, the impact of economic growth on people’s happiness. Such an impact is critically dependent on the influence of economic growth on social relationships and environmental resources. The course pays particular attention to the role of the social and economic organization in shaping such an influence and to the determinants of the happiness of individuals and communities.

### **Educational objectives**

The goal of the course is to provide students with the capacity to critically appraise the nexus between social and economic organization and happiness, in both macro social contexts and in smaller contexts concerning organizations such as a school or a company.

### **Bibliographical references**

- Stefano Bartolini, “Manifesto for Happiness. Shifting society from money to well-being”, forthcoming in 2019, Palgrave-McMillan.
- Stefano Bartolini, “Building sustainability through greater happiness”, *The Economic and Labor Relations Review*, Symposium on Development, Equity and the Environment, 25, pp. 587-602, 2014
- Kasser, T. 2002, *The High Price of Materialism*, Mit Press, Cambridge (Ma)
- Bartolini S. and Sarracino F., 2015, The dark side of Chinese growth: declining social capital and well-being in times of economic boom, *World Development*, 74: 333–351, 2015
- Bartolini S. and Sarracino F, Do People Care About Future Generations? Derived Preferences from Happiness Data”, *Ecological Economics*, 143, pp. 253–275, 2018