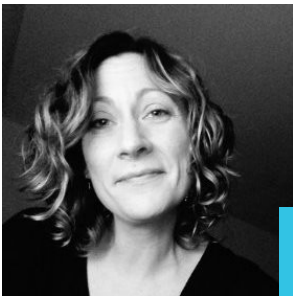


## SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGIES FOR COMPLEX CHALLENGES



**Jennifer Goodman**  
Audencia Business School

June 21 – July 2

Monday - Friday  
(6:30 am – 9:30 am)

Online

### DESCRIPTION

This course explores grand challenges and sustainability strategies from a systems thinking perspective. The course will examine complex and pressing environmental and social challenges including ocean and land pollution, climate change and inequality and others to develop a systems thinking approach and explore response strategies for business. Students have the opportunity to experience the difficulties and opportunities that grand challenges can present. Beginning by situating environmental and social issues within the SDG framework and then unpacking selected challenges, their many stakeholders and their complexity, the first sessions offer insights into systems thinking. The course then moves on to map the materiality of issues to more specific sectors and businesses. The final section of the course identifies opportunities and business strategies including product, service and business model innovations, cross-sector partnerships and other aspects of systemic change. Throughout the learning journey opportunities for personal and professional reflection on grand challenges will be included.

The course is recommended for those facing the complexity of dealing with grand challenges in their businesses and those who want to rethink the idea of “business as usual” from a sustainability perspective.

## OBJECTIVES

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

1. Situate complex grand challenges in wider systems
2. Analyse and determine the materiality of social and environmental challenges to specific sectors and businesses
3. Compare and contrast different stakeholder perspectives
4. Identify business opportunities and develop innovative solutions and strategies for addressing grand challenges
5. Think critically about “business as usual” and reflect on both individual values and systems change

## METHODOLOGY

The class can be imparted either virtually or face to face.

Over the duration of the course a variety of methods will be employed. A mix of class lectures using a variety of media, lively discussions, role-play, case studies and group challenges will bring grand challenges alive. Moments of reflection will be included throughout the course to give the students an opportunity to consider critical questions and to relate the class material to their own lives, personal values and management dilemmas.

A strong emphasis on group work and communication underlies the methodology and attempts to offer experiential insights into working with those from different backgrounds: a key aspect of addressing grand challenges.

## EVALUATION

Due to Universidad de los Andes policies, the final grading system for all the 2020 International Summer School courses will be Pass/ Fail. Your final grade will be defined in accordance to the accomplishment of the courses learning goals. The individual numerical grades will serve as a key input for the definition of the Pass/ Fail grade and feedback.

A passing score of 60% will be required.

## 20% Individual participation

In-class discussion and groupwork

Assessment is based on the demonstration of critical reflection in class contributions and peer evaluation of final groupwork.

## 35% Stakeholder brief

Teams will prepare a one page stakeholder brief

Due date: Session 3

Assessment is based on the identification of a range of relevant interests and concerns of stakeholders.

## 45% Company team project

Students a social or environmental challenge from the perspective of a specific company of their choice. The final report will include an introduction to the company, stakeholder and materiality mapping and systems analysis, and innovative recommendations and proposals to enable the firm to address the issue and analysis of systems impact.

Due date: Presentations in session 10. Feedback given will help students finalize their report

Due date: Report by midnight, 4 days after the end of the course

Only the final report will be assessed. The presentation serves as an opportunity to have feedback to improve the written report. Assessment is based on the demonstrated ability to develop a materiality analysis of a particular company; to identify key stakeholder interests; to identify embedded systems impact; to identify opportunities and innovative, feasible solutions and recommendations; and to reflect on potential challenges to implementation.

## PRE-REQUISITES

An interest in learning about the impacts of grand challenges on businesses and vice versa. No prior expertise on the topic is necessary.