

Studium Generale 'Sustainability Thinking'

Organising institution:

University of Ghent

Faculty/Department/Programme/External partners:

Centre for Sustainable Development (Faculty of Political and Social Sciences - University of Ghent), Ghent arts centre Vooruit and student associations UGent1010 and GSR.

Abstract:

In this free series of lectures - since 2014 also the basis of the university-wide optional course 'Sustainability Thinking' - each year one sustainability theme is critically approached by a very diverse group of speakers from the viewpoint of various disciplines and types of knowledge.

Contact:

Prof. Dr. Thomas Block

Website:

www.CDO.UGent.be

Description:

To show that a sustainability issue can be approached in an inter- and multidisciplinary way (knowledge from various scientific disciplines is used) as well as in a transdisciplinary manner (not just academic knowledge, but also knowledge from, for instance, policy, business and NGO sectors), we each year organise the Studium Generale 'Sustainability Thinking'. During this free event we reflect on one sustainability theme during 4 to 5 evenings. The theme changes each year. Examples of what the programme may look like in practice and which speakers are invited are available at www.CDO.UGent.be. Over the past years, a Studium Generale was organised around 'Sustainable Food' and 'Sustainable Cities'. Currently, the central theme is 'Sustainable Economy'. During these series of lessons it becomes clear, among other things, that problems are defined differently, that attempts to find answers often differ and that sustainable development is a normative and ambiguous concept.

Since the academic year 2014-2015 this Studium Generale occupies a central position in the university-wide course 'Sustainability Thinking'. Students at the University of Ghent who take this subject are also given a number of introductory and concluding lessons before and after the Studium Generale. In the two introductory lessons we focus on the basic concepts, a brief historical outline and the most important perspectives regarding sustainability on the one hand, and on the distinction between a multi-, inter- and transdisciplinary approach on the other. The concluding lessons consist of a lesson during which students reflect between themselves and with the lecturers on the past Studium Generale and a lesson which focuses on transition thinking and as such establishes a link to how the ambitions of sustainable development can be realised.