

Business Administration, Natural Ecosystems and Organisations, 7.5 ECTS***Företagsekonomi, Naturliga ekosystem och organisationer, 7.5 Hp***

Course Code/Codes	20FÖ042
Subject Area	Business Administration
School/equivalent	Örebro University School of Business
Valid from	2026-03-31
Approved	2025-11-14
Revised	
Approved by	Head of School
Translation to English, date and signature	2025-11-14 lje

1 Course content

This doctoral course explores how natural ecosystems (including flora, fauna) interact and are governed within and between organisations. Suitable for doctoral candidates in different fields of business administration such as finance, accounting, control, strategy or industrial marketing, the course examines the increasing interdependence between ecological systems and business activities, focusing on regulatory frameworks and governance models for natural ecosystems. Moving beyond a focus on climate change, students will critically analyse and discuss cases, policy impacts and strategic approaches towards considering other aspects of ecological systems as an evolving part of business strategies, activities and relationships. Students will be introduced to more critical perspectives and emerging research areas such as ecosystem services, biodiversity finance, ecojustice, animal ethics and multispecies justice, and how these affect different areas such as finance, accounting, control, management, industrial marketing or business relationships.

The course equips doctoral students with advanced scientific knowledge and tools to critically assess socio-economic and environmental risks and opportunities linked to the natural environment. It enables them to lead in research committed to responsible ecological stewardship as well as critically engage with the growing relevance of natural ecosystems in business strategy and governance research across diverse fields of business administration, and for different audiences. The course provides insights into international regulatory frameworks, biodiversity strategies and sustainability reporting standards that impact through the value chain and internal operations. Doctoral students will gain a nuanced understanding of how environmental policies shape business responsibilities and opportunities, and how to engage with them analytically and strategically in their own research. The course also fosters cross-disciplinary thinking that is essential for tackling region-specific sustainability challenges and contributing to Europe's green transition agenda.

2 Outcomes

2.1 The course in relation to the doctoral programme

The course shall primarily refer to the following intended learning outcomes for third-cycle courses and study programmes as described in the Higher Education Ordinance, i.e. the doctoral student shall demonstrate:

Knowledge and understanding

- Critically evaluate advanced theoretical and empirical research on the interdependence between natural ecosystems and business systems, with particular attention to the evolving international regulatory and governance context;
- Demonstrate deep knowledge of emerging fields such as biodiversity finance, reporting and control, multispecies justice and animal ethics, and their relevance to the core disciplines in business administration generally, and their own doctoral research specifically; and
- Understand and contextualise complex ecological policy frameworks and their implications for intra- and inter-organisational governance and business strategy.

Competence and skills

- Formulate original research questions that address the integration of ecological systems in business activities and governance, using appropriate methodologies;
- Apply and adapt conceptual tools and frameworks to critically analyse sustainability practices and ecological governance models across diverse organisational and sectoral contexts;
- Engage in advanced academic discourse with peers (during discussions and through peer review), synthesising insights from different fields of business administration and providing feedback; and,
- Communicate research findings clearly and effectively orally and in writing to both scholarly and policy-orientated, or popular science audiences.
-

Judgement and approach

- Critically reflect on the normative and ethical dimensions of incorporating nature, non-human species and ecological values into business decisions and governance models;
- Demonstrate independence and scientific integrity in assessing how natural ecosystems intersect with accountability, strategic control and organisational change; and
- Adopt a reflexive and interdisciplinary research approach that recognises the political, cultural and ecological complexities faced in Europe and the wider international context.

The intended learning outcomes are listed in the same order as in the general syllabus for the programme.

2.2 Intended course learning outcomes

Students are expected to actively participate in class discussions, develop their own research and conduct peer review, as well as present research findings in different ways. The structure of the course requires regular attendance and ongoing participation in oral discussions to pass.

To obtain a passing grade, the doctoral student shall demonstrate:

The final grade for the course is PASS/FAIL after all the above criteria have been met. If students fail to meet these assessment criteria, additional tasks may be given

To obtain a passing grade, the doctoral student shall demonstrate:

Active participation during sessions (minimum attendance of five out of the six days of the course meetings)

A 10-minute popular science presentation of an important article in your field or your

own research, related to one of the course topics

A written manuscript, such as a tentative chapter for your thesis or the beginning of a scientific article (approximately 5000 words), related to one of the course topics

Peer review of another student's written manuscript

3 Reading list and other teaching material

The following course readings and teaching material will be used on the course:

All times refer to central European time CET

Module 1. Regulatory and non-regulatory governance mechanisms Online, March 31st, 2026 (9-14, lunch break included)

- Welcome & Introductions (Leanne Johnstone, 9:00-10:00)
- Emerging Policy on Natural Capital and Biodiversity Reporting (Kristina Jonäll, 10:15-11:45)
- Financing biodiversity management (Viktor Elliot, 12:30-14:00)

Suggested readings:

- Jonäll, K., Baeckström, Y., Elliot, V., & Arvidsson, S. (2025). The biodiversity–finance nexus: A future research agenda. *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability*. Advance online publication.
- Elliot, V., Jonäll, K., Paananen, M., Bebbington, J., & Michelon, G. (2024). Biodiversity reporting: Standardization, materiality, and assurance. *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability*, 68, 101435.
- Flammer, C., Giroux, T., & Heal, G. M. (2025). Biodiversity finance. *Journal of Financial Economics*, 164, 103987.
- Hutchinson, M. C., & Lucey, B. (2024). A bibliometric and systemic literature review of biodiversity finance. *Finance Research Letters*, 64, 105377.
- Vollmer, H. (2024). Accounting and the shifting spheres: The economic, the public, the planet. *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, 113, 101574.
- Uyar, A., Al-Shaer, H., Kuzey, C., & Karaman, A. S. (2025). Internal governance, external pressure, and biodiversity disclosure. *Journal of International Accounting, Auditing and Taxation*, 59, 100703.

Module 2: Managing ecology in and between organisations, Online, April 13th (9-16), lunch break included)

- Housekeeping (9:00-9:15)
- Biodiversity-respectful leadership (Satu Teerikangas, 09:15-10:45)
- Cross-sectoral work on advancing biodiversity preservation (Asta Salmi, 11:00-12:00)
- Management controls for chemical pollutants, ecology and society (Sabina du Rietz Dahlström, 12:30-14:00)
- Workshop: Extinction accounting framework (Leanne Johnstone, 14:30-16:00)

Suggested readings:

- Asdal, Kristin, 2011. "The office: The weakness of numbers and the production of non-authority," *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, vol. 36(1), pages 1-9, January
- Du Rietz Dahlström, S., Hysing, E., Eriksson, U., & Ericson Jogsten, I. (2025). Corporate Accountability for PFAS Chemicals: The Translation of Private Rules in the Swedish Food Packaging Supply Chain. *Business & Society*, 0(0).
- Salmi, A. – Quarshie, A. – Scott-Kennel, J. – Kähkönen, A-K. (2023) "Biodiversity management: A supply chain practice view", *Journal of Purchasing and Supply Management*, 29/4, 100865,

- Heucher, K., Alt, E., Söderström, S., Scully, M. & Glavas, A. (2024). Catalyzing Action on Social and Environmental Challenges: An Integrative Review of Insider Social Change Agents. *Academy of Management Annals*, 18(1).
- Koistinen, K., Teerikangas, S., Mikkilä, M., & Linnanen, L. (2019) Active sustainability actors – a lifecourse approach. *Sustainable Development*, 1-16.
- Portugal, E., & Yukl, G. (1994). Perspectives on environmental leadership. *Leadership Quarterly*, 5(3), 271–276.
- Teerikangas, S., Sääksjärvi, I. & Turunen, M. (2025). Leadership for biodiversity – A radical management innovation. In: Eriksson, P., Montonen, T., Laine, P-M., & Hannula, A. *Elgar Encyclopedia of Innovation Management*. London: Edward Elgar.
- Teerikangas, S., Koistinen, K., Onkila, T., & Mäkelä, M. (2021). Synthesis and future research direction (pp. 404-434). In Teerikangas, S., Onkila, T., Koistinen, K., & Mäkelä, M. (2021). In *Research Handbook of Sustainability Agency*.

Module 3: (Re)imagining theories, perspectives and practices for natural ecosystems and organisations in the Post-Anthropocentric World, Online, April 27th 2026, (9-16, lunch break included)

- Housekeeping (9:00-9:15)
- Critical dialogical accounting, accountability for living beings: the promises and pitfalls of quantification (Eija Vinnari, 09:15-10:45)
- Ecosystem services and reconceptualisations of value (Nina Hasche, 11:00-11:45)
- Posthumanism - Multispecies ethics and nonhuman inclusivity in business, management and organisational studies (Astrid Huopalaainen, 12:30-14:00)
- Case study: Indigenous rights (Leanne Johnstone, 14:30-16:00)

Suggested readings:

- Bocconcelli et al. (2020). Resource interaction and resource integration: Similarities, differences, reflections, *Industrial Marketing Management*, 91, pp. 385-396
- Dillard, J. & Vinnari, E. (2019). Critical dialogic accountability: From accounting-based accountability to accountability-based accounting. *Critical Perspectives on Accounting*, 62, 16-38.
- Järvinen, J., Laine, M., Hyvönen, T. & Kantola, H. (2020). Just look at the numbers: A case study on quantification in corporate environmental disclosures. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 175(1), 23-44.
- Huopalaainen, A., Satama, S., & Tallberg, L. (2025). Aesthetic Encounters, Canines, and Care: New Multispecies Methodological Avenues in Organizational and Business Ethics. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 1-17.
- Prenekert et al., (2022). Resource interaction: Key concepts, relations and representations. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 105, pp. 48-59
- Vinnari, E. & Vinnari, M. (2022). Making the invisibles visible: including animals in sustainability (and) accounting. *Critical Perspectives on Accounting*, 82, 102324.

Module 4: Managing and communicating tensions between natural ecosystems and organisations, online, May 11th 2026, (9-14, lunch break included)

- **Panel discussion:** Biodiversity management in the Swedish Forestry Sector, including members of FSC Sweden and environmental ecologists (09:00-10:30)
- **Workshop 2:** Developing research projects, including crafting research questions, theoretical framing, contributions, methodological alignment and feasibility (Leanne Johnstone, 10:45-12:00)
- **Workshop 1:** Presenting natural ecosystem research to practitioners and the public (12:45-14:00, Tommy Borglund and representatives from Örebro University's communications department)

Final examinations, on site, Örebro University, Sweden August 24-25, 2026

- Day 5 (11-17): Popular science presentations

Day 6 (9-16): Presentations, peer review of written assignments and course evaluations

4 Teaching formats

Teaching on the course takes the following format:

This course will be delivered through a combination of interactive lectures, seminars and workshops both online and physically. The course is designed to foster advanced scholarly engagement with the complex interrelations between natural ecosystems and business systems, and the teaching methods reflect the critical nature of the subject matter and developmental needs of third-cycle (doctoral) students.

Learning activities will include:

- **Interactive lectures** led by faculty and invited experts from relevant fields of business administration (e.g., business ethics, industrial marketing, biodiversity finance, reporting and control, extinction governance, animal ethics) to provide theoretical grounding and introduce key debates and emerging research areas. During these interactive lectures, students are expected to participate and actively draw on their own research interests and disciplinary perspectives to facilitate the learning of other students and faculty staff.
- **Workshops and peer learning sessions** led by faculty that support the development of the students' own knowledge and research projects, including sessions dedicated to crafting research questions, methodological considerations, and presenting for diverse audiences (scholarly and popular science), as well as case discussions.
- **Individual assignments**, including oral presentations and manuscript development, to strengthen students' abilities to critically engage with course content and integrate ecological perspectives into their ongoing doctoral research.
- **Peer review activities**, in which students will provide constructive feedback on each other's written work and presentations, developing both evaluative and reflective skills essential for academic research and publishing.

The course will be delivered in a hybrid format, with a combination of four online and two on-campus sessions to enable broad accessibility while fostering in-person scholarly interaction. Sessions are designed to be dialogical and inclusive, allowing students from various fields within business administration to engage meaningfully with ecological governance issues. The course material will be made available to doctoral students on Örebro University's BlackBoard Learn Platform as the IT solution. Online sessions will take place on Microsoft Teams.

5 Examination

The course is assessed through an examination consisting of the components listed below. The individual components are not graded separately but together they provide the basis for assessment and grading.

The course assessment consists of the following:

1. Active oral participation during sessions (minimum attendance of five out of the six days of the course meetings)
2. A 10-minute popular science presentation of an important article in your field or your own research, related to one of the course topics
3. A written manuscript, such as a tentative chapter for your thesis or the beginning of a scientific article (approximately 5000 words), related to one of the course topics
4. Peer review of another student's written manuscript

The final grade for the course is PASS/FAIL after all the above criteria have been met. If students fail to meet these assessment criteria, additional tasks may be given.

For examinations consisting of several examination components, the following applies: If during the course it is concluded that a doctoral student is unable to complete a certain examination component, the examiner may set a substitute assignment provided that circumstances do not reasonably allow for the course component to be completed at a later date during the run of the course.

6 Grades

Examinations on third-cycle courses and study programmes are to be assessed according to a two-grade scale with either of the grades 'fail' or 'pass' (local regulations).

The grade shall be determined by a teacher specifically nominated by the higher education institution (the examiner) (Higher Education Ordinance).

To obtain a passing grade on examinations included in the course, the doctoral student is required to demonstrate that he/she attains the intended course learning outcomes as described in section 2.2. Alternatively, if the course consists of multiple examinations generating credit, the doctoral student is required to demonstrate that he/she attains the outcomes that the examination in question refers to in accordance with section 5.

A student who has failed an examination is entitled to a retake.

If an examination consists of several examination components, and a student fails an examination component, the examiner may, as an alternative to a retake, set a make-up assignment with regard to the examination component in question.

A doctoral student who has failed an examination twice for a specific course or course element is entitled, upon his/her request, to have another examiner appointed to determine the grade.

7 Admission to the course

7.1 Admission requirements

To be admitted to the course, the applicant must be registered as a doctoral student in the field of business administration at a member institution of the Nordic Academy of Management, namely:

Aalto University (Finland)
Aarhus University (Denmark)
Åbo Akademi University (Finland)
BI Norwegian Business School (Norway)
Bifröst University (Iceland)
Copenhagen Business School (Denmark)
Hanken School of Economics (Finland)
Inland School of Business and Social Sciences (Norway)
KTH Royal Institute of Technology (Sweden)
Linnæus University (Sweden)
Lund University (Sweden)
LUT University (Finland)
Mid Sweden University (Sweden)
Mälardalen University (Sweden)
NTNU Business School (Norway)
NORD University (Norway)
Reykjavik University (Iceland)
Roskilde University (Denmark)

Stockholm Business School (Sweden)
Stockholm School of Economics (Sweden)
Södertörn University (Sweden)
Tampere Universities (Finland)
Turku School of Economics (Finland)
Umeå University (Sweden)
University of Borås (Sweden)
University of Gothenburg (Sweden)
University of Iceland (Iceland)
University of Jyväskylä (Finland)
University of Oulu (Finland)
University of Vaasa (Finland)
Uppsala University (Sweden)
Örebro University (Sweden)

To gain access to the course and complete the examinations included in the course, the applicant must be admitted to a doctoral programme at Örebro University.

Applicants who are admitted to doctoral studies in Business Administration at other member institutions of the Nordic Academy of Management (see list above) may also participate in the course and the examinations included in the course.

7.2 Selection

Selection between applicants who have been admitted to doctoral programmes at Örebro University and who otherwise meet the admission requirements as listed above is made according to the following order of precedence:

The course is limited to 20 doctoral students. Selection is based on (1) the above criteria and (2) a motivational letter of maximum 2-pages as to why this course is interesting and/or important for the doctoral student.

Applicants must also fill out the Örebro University application form for admission to the doctoral course.

If no other selection criteria are specified in this section, priority shall be given to applicants with a lower number of course credits left before the award of their degree over applicants with a higher number of remaining course credits. Should two or more students have equal number of credits, selection will be done through the drawing of lots. This also applies within any selection groups listed unless otherwise stated.

7.3 Other applicants than doctoral students admitted at Örebro University

Other applicants than doctoral students admitted at Örebro University may be given access to the course on the grounds of provisions for and/or agreements regarding contracted courses, joint degrees, national graduate schools or cooperation in other respects with other universities.

Any decisions on what such other applicants may be given access to the course are made separately and on the basis of the provisions and/or agreements that occasion the student to apply for the course.

For participation in the course in other respects, the same provisions shall apply as for doctoral students admitted to Örebro University.

8 Transfer of credits for courses, study programmes and other experience

Provisions on the transfer of credits can be found in the Higher Education Ordinance and on the university's webpage.

9 Other information

A finalised reading list will be sent to successful applicants two weeks before the course start

Transitional provisions