

Practicing interdisciplinary teamwork

An Erasmus+ Blended Intensive Program offered by NTNU

Course Description

- Academic responsibility: Nina Haugland Andersen and Martha Kalvig Anderson
- Topic: "Sustainable cities"
- Credits: 4 ECTS (applied for at home institution)
- When: Spring semester 2026
- Language: English
- Form of participation: Blended

Good solutions to complex challenges often depend on cooperation across boundaries. A growing number of enterprises organize their work in interdisciplinary teams to meet this need. However, differences and disagreements occur in all teamwork, and this is especially true of interdisciplinary teams, where the team members speak from the perspectives of different disciplines and working methods. Good teamwork skills are needed to enable a team to realize the potential that lies in interdisciplinary differences, instead of getting stuck in them. As digital collaboration is increasingly a part of modern work life, team members need skills in how they can actively create well-functioning teamwork in both digital and physical working environments.

In this course, students develop these skills by working on projects in teams together with students from a variety of study programs and across institutions and national borders, both digitally and physically. You learn *through* teamwork, by *reflecting* on specific teamwork situations that occur as the project progresses, both individually and as a team. Each team defines their team project within the topic sustainable cities.

Intended learning outcomes

- Students can describe behaviors and structures that facilitate effective teamwork in both a physical and digital work environment.
- Students can communicate and use skills they have developed in their own field in collaboration with students from other disciplines on the topic of sustainable cities.
- Students can analyze how their own and teammates' behavior affect the social climate in the team, and the way that the team communicates, plans, decides, accomplishes tasks, handles differences, and gives/receives feedback.
- Students can reflect on how their collaborative process and interdisciplinarity influences the project work and the project result.

Learning method

The learning method is experiential. Students apply their academic learning in cooperation with people from other subject areas and jointly define problems and explore possible solutions to them. The students are organized into project teams across disciplines and institutions. Situations that arise as the team members work together form the foundation of the students' reflection and learning. Students develop teamwork skills by reflecting on how each team member's actions influence the

teamwork, and how the team members together are responsible for contributing to performance, good working relationships and individual well-being.

Each team defines and works on a project autonomously, taking initiative and responsibility for their own work and progress in light of uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity.

The teams will occasionally receive process facilitation meant to support their reflection. This means that the teams will be observed by an external facilitator while they work together. The facilitator shares his/her observations of the team interaction and asks open-ended questions to stimulate awareness and reflection on the teamwork. The facilitators are not involved in the grading process.

As this course is blended and has a special focus on team interaction, it is a prerequisite to partake using both camera and microphone in digital activities.

Learning activities

The course starts with a digital introduction seminar, before the students gather in Trondheim, Norway for one week of start-up activities.

Thereafter, the course is fully digital, consisting of both student-active seminars and self-directed teamwork in accordance with the course calendar. Individual work is also expected. Activities will be both in plenary and in interdisciplinary teams of five to six students. The student teams do reflection activities together as well as a variety of exercises aimed at creating awareness about different aspects of both the project and the collaborative process (e.g. competence mapping, feedback exercises and more). Seminars consist of both teacher- and student-directed activities.

The course has three phases.

Start-up phase:

Focus is on creating a safe and constructive environment for learning, paving the way for students to challenge themselves and each other. Development of project idea within the topic sustainable cities, and in accordance with the individual student's academic competencies and interests. Writing the cooperation agreement.

Work phase:

The teams engage in self-directed work on the projects and on further developing their teamwork. Personal and team reflection is an essential activity. Revision of cooperation agreement. Exercises, observations and reflections are vital.

Completion phase:

Students complete their project work and final deliverables. Final oral presentation and team reflection.

Course ends on May 20, 2026.

Compulsory activities

- Attendance on the physical seminar in Trondheim, and on 80% of the virtual seminars, plus a minimum of 10 hours of compulsory team meetings
- Written reflections hand-ins
- Three perspective dialogues with the course teachers at the end of each of the three phases in the course. Each team member needs to participate in these reflections to receive a grade

NB: The compulsory activities must be approved to pass the course.

Approx. workload summarized: 100 hours

Final assessment

Final oral team presentation of how the team has reached the intended learning outcomes followed by questions and feedback from course teachers.

The presentation is assessed as pass or fail, and the team receive one common grade.

Required prior knowledge

A bachelor's degree or equivalent is required to participate in this course. Students from any study program at any of the ENHANCE partner institutions are invited to apply. Students must be confident in speaking and writing English.

Course material

Will be announced at the start of the course.