

SUSTAINABLE and DIGITALLY ENABLED SERVICES MANAGEMENT: THEORY AND RESEARCH

ERASMUS+ Blended Intensive Program (BIP) PhD course on sustainable and digitally enabled services marketing & management with a focus on theory and research – 7,5 ECTS will be offered in the autumn of 2026 (HT 2026). The course will focus on sustainable value creation in the transformation of service systems, including Transformative Service Research (TSR) and ethics. It will explore the theoretical foundations, key perspectives, emerging concepts, and methodological approaches in the field, with particular emphasis on the recent ‘systems turn’ in sustainable service research.

The course will use a hybrid format, allowing participants to attend in person and digitally (via Zoom). In-person sessions will be held at CTF, Service Research Center/Karlstad Business School, Karlstad University.

This is a joint ERASMUS PhD course with

- *Roma Tre University, Italy*
- *University of Macedonia, Greece*

Partner Universities:

- *Maastricht University, Netherlands*
- *University of Tuscia, Italy.*

Course aim and approach

The course aims to give doctoral students, working with service research and related fields, an overview of the evolution and most recent developments within the field. The course is designed in an interdisciplinary way. More specifically, the contents highlight the recent “digital and systems turn” and “sustainability” in service research and focus on a theme of “Digital and Sustainable System Transformation”. The doctoral students will gain an understanding of theoretical and methodological foundations, including emerging concepts within service research and service management & marketing, particularly within a systemic perspective on sustainable and digital transformation.

The following topics will be covered in-depth during the course:

1. Foundations of Service Research
2. Theoretical Foundations of Sustainable Services Marketing: Covering sustainability principles, service ecosystems, service innovation, and sustainable consumption within marketing frameworks.
3. Digital Transformation in Services Marketing: Exploring digital ecosystems, digital marketing technologies, omnichannel strategies, and the impact of digitalization on service management and consumer behavior.
4. Sustainable Service Business Models and Circular Economy: Analyzing sustainable service-based business models, circular economy practices, and strategies for sustainable development in service organizations

The pedagogical philosophy of the course supports doctoral students in conducting their own research. The approach is inspired by problem-based learning. Students are responsible for reading and analysing the assigned course materials before each seminar. This allows them to have an in-depth understanding to discuss and problematize the literature during the course.

The course also includes different learning research approaches for students to do group work and assignments.

Reading instructions and examinations

The Theory and Research in Sustainable and Digitally Enabled Services Management course is based on teamwork and active participation. Most of the lectures and seminars given are part of these interactive lectures and presentations. Therefore, all doctoral students must be prepared for the sessions by reading the articles required for each session as a reading list. They also have to prepare for group work and assignments after each session.

While reading the articles, the students are expected to make written summaries of the main results/contribution of each article, and bring the summaries to the seminars.

Background readings

See separate reading list.

Schedule

The course will start on October 1st and end on December 27th, 2026.

- The in-person session will take place between 19th – 23rd October 2026 at CTF-Service Research Center/Karlstad Business School, Karlstad University, Sweden.
- There will be two digital seminars before and two digital seminars after the in-person seminars, including an introduction and conclusion.
- The online session will be on Zoom.

Applying for the course

The course is targeted for doctoral students in Business Administration and related disciplines. The maximum number of participants is 20.

- The application should include contact information (name, university, address, e-mail, date of birth) and a short description of yourself and your research (Max. 500 words).

Contact:

Samuel Petros Sebhatu, samuel.sebhatu@kau.se or Bo Edvardsson, bo.edvardsson@kau.se or

Course Administrator:

Britt-Marie Shandrew, britt-marie.shandrew@kau.se Karlstad University

For Italian students, contact: Francesca Maria Renzi, mariafrancesca.renzi@uniroma3.it

For Greek students, contact: Rodoula H. Tsiotsou, rtsiotsou@uom.edu.gr

For Maastricht Students contact: Dominik Mahr, d.mahr@maastrichtuniversity.nl

For University of Tuscia Students, contact: Alessandro Ruggieri, ruggieri@unitus.it