



Ecological Economics: An Introduction

By Michael Common, Sigrid Stagl

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Assuming no prior knowledge of economics, this textbook is intended for interdisciplinary environmental science and management courses. The authors, who have written extensively on the economics of sustainability, combine insights from mainstream economics as well as ecological sciences. Part I explores the interdependence of the modern economy and its environment, while Part II focuses mainly on the economy and on economics. Part III reviews how national governments set policy targets and the instruments used to pursue those targets. Part IV examines international trade and institutions, and two major global threats to sustainability - climate change and biodiversity loss.

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Editorial Review

Review

'This book provides a coherent account of the major environmental challenges to economic and human progress of the twenty first century ... I recommended it highly to all students and scholars of the emerging field.' Neil Adger, University of East Anglia

'How refreshing to see an introductory economics textbook which begins by stating, 'The pursuit of sustainable development ... cannot be left to markets - there is an inescapable role for government'! This new text is the first I've seen which actually begins from the beginning, setting the economy in its environmental context and requiring no prior economics indoctrination ... This is an introduction to economics for the 21st century, economics as it must become if the profession - and the global economy itself - are to survive.' Patricia E. Perkins, York University, Toronto

'Here it is - the book that fills the gap! It offers students a very good introduction to environmental management as the interdisciplinary challenge it is. It integrates core elements from natural and social sciences into a coherent text - a rare feature. In doing so it is really enlightening, well structured and enjoyable to read. Moreover, it is well organized for teaching purposes - even with a web page attached to it.' Arild Vatn, Norwegian University of Life Sciences

'Commons and Stagl have written the definitive text to date for ecological/environmental economics ... This text brings environmental economics into the twenty-first century and will be the standard in the field for years to come.' John Gowdy, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

'This is the most comprehensive and readable treatment of the complex transdisciplinary field of ecological economics to date. It will be a standard reference for students and practioners for years to come.' Robert Costanza, University of Vermont

'With this excellent text, Mick Common and Sigrid Stagl have provided an authoritative introduction to ecological economics ... With extensive referencing to the current literature, the book is an excellent basis for the study of ecological economics and environmental policy.' John Proops, Keele University

'Environmental economics has existed as a powerful discipline for nearly fifty years. Ecological economics borrows heavily from it, and overlaps it significantly. But there are differences. Ecological economics perhaps invests more heavily in understanding ecological science, takes more note of discontinuities and non-linearities in ecological and economic systems, and pays less attention to notions of economic efficiency and outcomes determined by short-term human wants. Anyone wanting an explanation and exploration of these differences in a lucid and informative manner will want to own Mick Common and Sigrid Stagl's textbook. It is a very fine introduction.' David Pearce, University College London

'Clear presentations of the reasoning and facts underlying environmental science and economics, a steady focus on the high hopes of economists and the earthly fears of ecologists, and inspiring descriptions of how ecological economists are trying to make sense of life on earth. This is the book we have been waiting for.' Richard B. Norgaard, University of California, Berkeley, and former President, International Society for Ecological Economics

'This book satisfies the urgent need for an introductory text on Ecological Economics that is informative but not overly detailed on environmental sciences, strong on and where necessary critical of economics, and representative in its coverage of new theory and methods.' Jeroen C. J. M. van den Bergh, Free University, Amsterdam

'Ecological Economics: An Introduction could and should be used in core courses in academic programs aimed at integrating ecology and economics at the levels of research and praxis.' Richard B. Howarth, Dartmouth College

'... a brilliant guide ... the educational presentation is very carefully prepared and clear, ideal for beginning students.' Inge Røpke, Technical University of Denmark

'This is the most coherent book introducing ecological economics to date. Other attempts have proven to be a mishmash of standard economics and alternative thinking which is often contradictory. Common and Stagl tackle what makes ecological economics distinct head on and provide the strongest textbook currently on the market. Their coverage of ethical issues upfront is particularly welcome. The text is clear and well written for the uninitiated.' Clive L. Spash, University of Aberdeen

'This is a very good comprehensive textbook that introduces university students to the physical, economic and political aspects of ecological economics. Using historical and contemporary examples which are easy to follow, it shows how the economy is a subsystem of a physical system that can be described in terms of flows of energy and materials. It analyses the resilience of human ecosystems. It explains the reasons why market prices are blind to environmental effects, and the methods for improving micro- and macroeconomic accounting. It describes in detail the instruments of environmental policy. Finally, it shows the direct relevance of Ecological Economics for today's international debates on energy systems, globalized trade, climate change, biodiversity conservation, and the uncertainties of technological change.' Joan Martínez-Alier, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

'Ecological economics is an evolving field of inquiry. Common and Stagl show us one of the directions in which the field is moving. By differentiating their approach from others in economics, they also show in what ways the field is moving away from the mainstream. This text will help students who are interested in understanding both the interactions between the economy and its environment, and the way that this potentially changes our perception of the economic problem. In a field that still has very few clear statements of principles and how those principles can be applied, it is to be warmly welcomed.' Charles Perrings, Arizona State University

'The writing is clear and the voice is distinctive ... this is a well-written book ...' The Times Higher Education Supplement

About the Author

Michael Common is Emeritus Professor at the Graduate School of Environmental Studies, University of Strathclyde and a member of the editorial board of the journal Ecological Economics. He is highly respected both for his teaching and as author of numerous journal and book publications on the economics of the environment since 1973.

Sigrid Stagl is Lecturer in Ecological Economics at the School of Earth and Environment, University of Leeds. She is a member of the editorial board of the journal Environmental Values and is currently Vice-President of the European Society of Ecological Economics.

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Naomi Dillon:

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