

## Rational Use of Materials (E065460)

**Course size** *(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)*

**Credits 5.0**

**Study time 150 h**

**Course offerings in academic year 2026-2027**

A (semester 1)

English

Gent

**Lecturers in academic year 2026-2027**

Depover, Tom

TW11

lecturer-in-charge

**Offered in the following programmes in 2026-2027**

**crdts**

**offering**

|                                                                                                     |   |   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|
| Master of Science in Teaching in Science and Technology(main subject Chemistry)                     | 5 | A |
| Master of Science in Teaching in Science and Technology(main subject Physics and Astronomy)         | 5 | A |
| Master of Science in Chemistry(main subject (Bio)Organic and Polymer Chemistry)                     | 5 | A |
| Master of Science in Chemistry(main subject Analytical and Environmental Chemistry)                 | 5 | A |
| Master of Science in Electromechanical Engineering(main subject Control Engineering and Automation) | 5 | A |
| Master of Science in Business Engineering(main subject Data Analytics)                              | 5 | A |
| Master of Science in Electromechanical Engineering(main subject Electrical Power Engineering)       | 5 | A |
| Master of Science in Electromechanical Engineering(main subject Maritime Engineering)               | 5 | A |
| Master of Science in Chemistry(main subject Materials and Nano Chemistry)                           | 5 | A |
| Master of Science in Electromechanical Engineering(main subject Mechanical Construction)            | 5 | A |
| Master of Science in Electromechanical Engineering(main subject Mechanical Energy Engineering)      | 5 | A |
| Master of Science in Business Engineering(main subject Operations Management)                       | 5 | A |
| International Master of Science in Sustainable and Innovative Natural Resource Management           | 5 | A |
| Master of Science in Biology                                                                        | 5 | A |
| Master of Science in Physics and Astronomy                                                          | 5 | A |
| Postgraduate Programme in Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Engineering – Advanced                 | 5 | A |
| Postgraduate Programme in Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Engineering – Foundations              | 5 | A |

**Teaching languages**

English

**Keywords**

Sustainable transition, sustainable development, life cycle analysis, materials properties, sustainable material selection, recycling technology, material scarcity, precious metals, light weight materials

**Position of the course**

This course takes a closer look on the complete life cycle of different products and on the role materials play in this life cycle. Materials properties determine material selection during design, but also affect the recyclability of the product afterwards. Different recycling options and advanced recycling technologies are discussed. The scarcity debate is elaborated. The differences between the recycling of bulk materials (steel, aluminum, composites) and special/technology materials (precious metals) and their specific life cycle structure is given. Waste products of one life cycle can offer valuable materials for another life cycle. Dedicated material

selection problems are solved, including for example the CO<sub>2</sub> footprint. This will lead to a common knowledge on recycling, the scarcity debate and other related environmental and climate related issues. This in line with the European climate ambition to be net CO<sub>2</sub> neutral by 2050.

## **Contents**

- Introduction on the different material groups and their properties. Link between material processing, structure, properties and performance.
- Significance of special and precious metals. Relation with sustainable energy transition (wind energy, solar energy). Scarcity debate
- Opportunities and challenges for recovering valuable materials. Factors determining recycling efficiency for technology materials. Significance of life cycle structures.
- Materials selection for light weight vehicles. Overview of different materials available (metals, polymers, ceramics, composites)
- Introduction on life cycle analysis and exercises on sustainable materials selection taking into account eco-properties such as CO<sub>2</sub> footprint. The aluminum life cycle as an example of cradle to cradle life cycle.
- Recycling and life cycle issues for lightweight vehicles. Overview terminology. Complexity of the recycling process, overview of available and advanced recycling technologies.
- Difficulties in lightweight materials recycling. Effect of presence of coatings. Difficulties in recycling polymer matrix composites
- Sustainable use of materials in function of their life span in the use phase. Lifetime extension, ecological and economic impact, material integrity and degradation. Energy transition.

## **Initial competences**

Basics on chemistry and physics as lectured in the bachelor

## **Final competences**

- 1 Understanding the impact of material properties on the material selection process during design and how this affects the recyclability of the final product
- 2 Knowledge on advanced recycling technologies and how material properties can be used during recycling as well
- 3 Understanding the difference between the recyclability of special/precious metals and bulk materials. Insights in complete life cycle, importance of material's life span and the role of recycling in life cycle analysis
- 4 Being able to enter a broad societal discussion concerning environmental issues, recycling and material scarcity

## **Conditions for credit contract**

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is determined after successful competences assessment

## **Conditions for exam contract**

This course unit cannot be taken via an exam contract

## **Teaching methods**

Seminar, Lecture

## **Study material**

Type: Slides

Name: Slides

Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty

Optional: no

Available on Ufora : Yes

Online Available : Yes

Available in the Library : No

Available through Student Association : No

## **References**

## **Course content-related study coaching**

## **Assessment moments**

end-of-term assessment

**Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the first examination period**

Written assessment

**Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the second examination period**

Written assessment

**Examination methods in case of permanent assessment**

**Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment**

not applicable

**Extra information on the examination methods**

During examination period: written exam (theory + exercise)

**Calculation of the examination mark**