Business and Sustainability EVPP 322 3 credits Fall Semester, 2023

Instructor:	Dr. Michelle Ryan, Ph.D.	Pronouns:	she/her
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Class Meeting:	Mondays, 4:30 p.m. – 7:10 p.m. Krug Hall Roon	n 19	

Office Hours By appointment only via Zoom or Teams. Email the professor to request a meeting time.

All times listed in the syllabus and in class are based upon the U.S. Eastern Time Zone.

Course Introduction:

Businesses, and the managers that lead them, have long played an important role in society. Historically, social expectations of businesses have been limited to the creation of wealth for owners and shareholders and the simultaneous creation of jobs and economic development for the communities in which they operate. This limited set of expectations has allowed managers to focus on profit maximization as their primary objective and source of value. However, in the last two decades, societal expectations of managers and business have shifted. Today managers are increasingly expected to not only create a profit and jobs, but also to simultaneously create social and environmental "shared value" (Porter and Kramer 2011) from their investments and operations.

Businesses have responded to this shift in two ways: Some have seen it as a threat to profitability and a company's right to operate; they have undertaken social and environmental risk management strategies. Others have seen the new social demands as a market opportunity to differentiate the company as a "socially responsible" enterprise and to create new business practices, goods and services that respond to society's desire for socially and environmentally responsible products. This course will explore these approaches and feature the emerging strategies companies are using to align business value creation with social and environmental sustainability expectations.

Content will be delivered in-person in class and via Blackboard. See the Blackboard course page for details for additional information.

Course Learning Objectives:

A key learning outcome for this course is students being able to:

Analytically consider how markets and businesses have interacted with the environment, and the pivotal role they play in developing solutions that address environmental concerns.

To this end, students should be able to:

- Analyze how businesses have interacted with the environment -- both negatively and positively -- as well as the pivotal role businesses play in developing solutions to address environmental concerns.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the shifting social expectations for corporate responsibility and business sustainability.
- Evaluate a company's social and environmental responsibilities from both internal and external perspectives.

- Appreciate and critique a company's commitments towards greater social and environmental performance.
- Understand the role that business model innovation and cross-sectoral collaborations play in corporate sustainability strategies.
- Illustrate how companies can capture business value from their commitments to greater social and environmental performance.

Course Requirements and Assignments:

This course has both individual and group assignments, described below.

- I. INDIVIDUAL ASSIGNMENTS: Students will have individual assignments that they will complete throughout the course. These will include participation in the case study discussions and completion of assignments that allow the students to apply the case concepts and approaches to their chosen actual company.
 - A. CLASS PARTICIPATION: Class participation, especially in case discussions and discussion board postings, is an important component of the course. It is not possible to earn a high participation grade solely on the frequency of participation. You are expected to regularly contribute high quality input, informed by our readings and contemporary media, that advances the discussion.
 - B. INDIVIDUAL FRAMEWORK APPLICATION ASSIGNMENTS (4): These are four short application assignments designed to allow you to apply the course frameworks to the company that you have chosen for your team project. These are to be done individually, not as a team. Instructions and rubrics for these 4 assignments will be posted in the appropriate weekly modules on the course website.
 - Issues & Stakeholder Analysis: Students will do an initial evaluation of the top 5 societal sustainability issues confronting their team's client company and identify the company's most relevant sustainability stakeholders.
 - 2. **Sustainability Issue Triage**: Students will perform a Sustainability Issue Triage for the top 5 issues they identified for their team company.
 - 3. *Sustainability Commitments*: Students will select a variety of prospective commitments the client could select to guide their addressing top issue(s).
 - 4. **Sustainability Issue Forums**: Students will identify existing multi-stakeholder issue forums where strategic issues germane to the company are being discussed.
- II. **TEAM SUSTAINABILITY FRONTIER ISSUE ANALYSIS**: In this team exercise, each team will evaluate one sustainability concern chosen from the UN Sustainable Development Goals and map the evolution of the issue using the Sustainability Frontier Framework, which will be fully explored in the module 1 online class sessions. This will result in a team presentation during class. See schedule below for details.
- III. **TEAM CONSULTING PROJECT**: Teams will complete a sustainability strategy analysis of a company of their choosing, subject to the approval of the professor. Teams will be asked to take on the role of external consultants hired to evaluate the company's current sustainability management and make recommendations for improvement. Teams will apply the framework and approaches learned in the class to their chosen company and prepare a consulting report for the

firm's executive committee. The individual Framework Application assignments will build the basis for the team's final deliverables. Instructional videos for the assignments will be posted on the course website. There are 2 deliverables for the project:

A) **FINAL TEAM CONSULTING PRESENTATION**: Teams will make a Microsoft PowerPoint presentation delivering the results of their consulting evaluation of their company's sustainability initiatives and strategy.

B) **TEAM CONSULTING EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**: In addition to the presentation in class via Zoom, teams will create a 2-page Executive Summary (MS Word file) that captures the key insights from the consulting project and presents the team's recommendations to the company's senior leadership.

Written Deliverable Requirements:

- Double-spaced with Arial font style, size 10-point font, using 1-inch margins.
- When referencing outside readings, give full bibliographic information at the end of the paper.
- Because good writing skills are important in the business world, each of your deliverables should be well-referenced, clearly, and carefully written, free of spelling and grammatical errors.

Assignments information:

Assignment Type:	Individual or Team?	Due Date(s)	Points	% of final grade:
Insightful Participation in Weekly Discussions (14 discussions, including being active in team formation tasks), and resume and cover letter assignment. Points for the resume and cover letter assignment included in your Week 1 class participation points (10 points max possible).	Individual	 Resume/Cover letter due Monday, Aug 28 Class participation for each class session 	10 pts each x 14 sessions = 140 available points	14 %
Individual Framework Application Assignments (4) (Analysis, Triage, Commitments, and Forums)	Individual	 Mon, Sep 25 Tue, Oct 10 Mon, Oct 16 Mon, Oct 30 	60 pts each x 4 assignments = 240 available points	24 %
Sustainability Frontier Issue Analysis	Team	Mon, Sep 25	200 pts	20 %
Final Consulting Presentations	Team	• Mon, Nov 27	200 pts	20 %
Consulting Executive Summary	Team	• Mon, Nov 27	100 pts	10 %
Final Exam (Assess Learning Outcomes)	Individual	 Mon, Dec 11, same time as class 	120 pts	12 %
All	Total	-	1000 pts.	100%

Please note the following about the assignments:

- There are no extra credit assignments in this course.
- Late (past the due date) assignments will lose one letter grade.

- a. Prior active planning with the instructor for known, planned absences will help abate this one letter grade loss penalty for late assignments.
 - i. Well communicated is the action between the student and instructor and the student team in advance of the planned absence in writing to the recipients' GMU email addresses.
 - ii. The recommended communication is at least 2-3 weeks in advance of the planned absence for active communications between the student, the instructor, and the student's team members with additional pre-planning preferred.

Scores from course requirements will be summed to a 0-100% scale (0-1000 points), then converted to grades as follows:

98 - 100 A+	88 - 89.99 B+	78 - 79.99 C+	60 - 69.99 D
92 - 97.99 A	82 - 87.99 B	72 - 77.99 C	0 - 59.99 F
90 - 91.99 A-	80 - 81.99 B-	70 - 71.99 C-	(Please don't fail.)

Course Readings:

Required Text*:

• <u>Strategy on the Sustainability Frontier: Creating Business Value and</u> <u>Contributing to a Better World</u> (Unruh, 2020).

Case Studies*:

- 1. Facebook
- 2. Nespresso
- 3. Intel
- 4. Pixza

Optional Text*:

• The Biosphere Rules: Nature's Sustainability Secrets for Sustainable Profits (Unruh, 2018)

*Available as a complete course pack by following the above link to the digital download page. There is a fee associated with this course pack.

Other references (list may grow in response to students' interests and emerging issues):

- <u>Beyond greening: strategies for a sustainable world</u> (Hart 1997)
- <u>Career Readiness Guide</u> or <u>accessible version</u> (University Career Services 2019).
- Creating Shared Value (Porter and Kramer 2011).
- <u>Creating Shared Value: the way to reimagine social change. How to make social problems a</u> <u>profitable business solution</u> (Kundari 2020).
- <u>The Globe: Is the Bottom of the Pyramid Really for You?</u> (Karamchandani, Kubzansky, and Lalwani 2011)
- <u>Strategies for the Bottom of the Pyramid: Creating Sustainable Development</u> (Prahalad and Hart 1999)
- The Comprehensive Business Case for Sustainability (Whelan and Fink 2016)
- <u>The Green Onion: a corporate environmental strategy framework</u> (Valentine 2008)
- 22 Research Studies Proving the ROI of Sustainability (Sustainable Brands 2016)



Course Expectations and Policies:

Attendance policy: Class participation is fundamental to a learning community and your active participation is essential, both for your success and for the success of the whole class. Attendance in all sessions is expected and any unavoidable absence needs to be communicated to the professor in advance by email.

Late policy: All work must be presented on time (defined as turning in all assignments by the specified date and time) by Sunday at the end of each week or as specified on the syllabus. Late submittals will lose one letter grade.

- Please allow sufficient time for technological and/or access and/or printing problems as these will not be considered valid excuses for late assignments.
- Readings are due as specified on the syllabus.

Statement on technology: Quality learning experience in this course rests heavily upon interaction and exchange of ideas among students and the instructor.

• If you do not participate, your final grade will be impacted negatively (see above % for class participation)

GMU Email: In keeping with university policy, usage of your GMU email account is required for communications with the instructor.

- Expect periodic communication from the instructor and class members between class times via email.
- Announcements will also be posted on Blackboard.

Religious or Cultural Observances: Some class times are in close proximity to religious or cultural observances. If a class date or assignment creates a conflict, please let the instructor know in advance to make appropriate arrangements.

Commitment to Diversity:

The College of Science and School of Integrative Studies are each an intentionally inclusive community; we promote and maintain an equitable and just work and learning environment. We welcome and value individuals and their differences including race, economic status, gender expression and identity, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, national origin, first language, religion, age, and disability. We practice the School of Integrative Studies diversity commitment, found at: <u>http://integrative.gmu.edu/about/diversity</u>

- We value our diverse student body and desire to increase the diversity of our faculty and staff.
- We commit to supporting students, faculty and staff who have been the victims of bias and discrimination.
- We promote continuous learning and improvement to create an environment that values diverse points of view and life experiences.
- We believe that faculty, staff and students play a role in creating an environment that engages diverse points of view.
- We believe that by fostering their willingness to hear and learn from a variety of sources and viewpoints, our students will gain competence in communication, critical thinking and global understanding, aware of their biases and how they affect their interactions with others and the world.

Policy on Honor Code and Academic Integrity: The integrity of the University community is affected by the individual choices made by each of us. This is especially true in the School of Integrative Studies. GMU has an honor code with clear guidelines regarding academic integrity.

Three fundamental principles to follow at all times are:

1) all work submitted must be your own

2) when using the work or ideas of others, including fellow students, give full credit through accurate citations; and

3) if you are uncertain about citation rules or assignment guidelines, ask an instructor for clarification.

No grade is important enough to justify academic misconduct. If you feel unusual pressure or anxiety about your grade in this or any other course, please let an instructor know and also seek help from university resources. The University provides a range of services to help with test anxiety, writing skills, study skills, personal issues, and related concerns.

Some projects are designed to be undertaken individually. For these projects, you may discuss your ideas with others or ask for feedback; however, it is not appropriate to give your paper to someone else to revise. You are responsible for making certain that there is no question that the work you hand in is your own. If only your name appears on an assignment, your professor has the right to expect that you have done the work yourself, fully and independently.

As in most learning communities and in many other classes, your final integrated group project is designed to be completed collaboratively. With group work, the names of all the participants should appear on the work. While you may find it necessary for different group members to take the lead on various assignments leading up to the integrated final group project, faculty expect that all group members will contribute equally and that the pieces will be conceptually integrated in the final product.

Using someone else's words or ideas without giving them credit is *plagiarism*, a serious offense. If you wish to quote directly from any text, you MUST use the exact words (including punctuation) just as the words, phrases, and sentences appear in the original text. Additionally, you must follow proper citation rules to indicate that you are quoting directly from a text (e.g., quotation marks, quote indentation, source identification). If you want to paraphrase ideas from a source, that is, convey the author's ideas in your own words, you must still cite the source, using an established citation format.

The re-use of papers, presentations, and other materials from one course in another course is not appropriate or acceptable. In every GMU course, faculty expect that submitted work has been prepared for that class only. Violations of the University Honor Code will be referred to the University Honor Committee for review and action.

For more information on the honor code: http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code-2/

Student Support:

Office of Disability Services: If you have a learning or physical difference that may affect your learning and academic work, you will need to furnish appropriate documentation to the Disability Resource Center (SUB I, Rm. 222; 993-2474; <u>www.gmu.edu/student/drc</u>). If you qualify for accommodation, the DRC staff will give you a form detailing appropriate accommodations for your instructor.

In addition to providing your professors with the appropriate form, please take the initiative to discuss accommodation with us at the beginning of the semester and as needed during the term. Because of the range of learning differences, faculty members need to learn from you the most effective ways to assist you. If you have contacted the Disability Resource Center and are waiting to hear from a counselor, please tell us.

Office of Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) provides a wide range of services to students, faculty, and staff. Services are provided by a staff of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors. The Center provides individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs -- experiences to enhance a student's personal experience and academic performance. <u>http://caps.gmu.edu/</u> **Writing Resources:** The University's Writing Center, Robinson room 114A offers free, expert tutoring to writers at all levels who want to improve their writing. Each individual session lasts for 45 minutes, and you should try to book an appointment in advance. The Writing Center (gmu.edu)

Student Technology Assistance and Resources (STAR) Center: This resource is available to assist you with questions about technology. Johnson Center 229, (703) 993-8990. http://doit.gmu.edu/studentSection.asp?page=multimedia_lab

Collaborative Learning Hub Computer Lab (CLUB): This walk-in lab features workstations ready for digital imaging, video editing, web development, scanning and many other applications. CLUB has a full schedule of free workshops as well as walk-in and prearranged consultation on how to use these resources. (703) 993-3141 <u>http://doit.gmu.edu/studentSection.asp?page=club</u>

Course Sessions:

Please note all assignments and dates are subject to revision by the course instructor. If you have questions about any of the assignments, please ask the instructor in class or contacting the instructor via the email address at the top of this syllabus.

Please note: There may be guest speakers scheduled during the semester. The instructor will announce guest speaker schedules via BB unless already indicated in the schedule.

Session	Weekly Topic	In-class agenda	In-class team break-out session	Assignments for the next class	
Introduct	ion				
Week 1 Aug 21	Introduction	 Class Introductions Course Overview & Assignments Business Case for Sustainability Breakout session Preview Week 2 Watch Video: Sustainability Development (10 mins) 	Breakout session to develop list of potential companies for team projects	 Reading: Strategy on the Sustainability Frontier: Introduction 1 page resume and 1 page cover letter assignment due by Monday, August 28, 4 p.m. ET by uploading your document to the Assignments Week 1 section, and the Discussion Board of Blackboard Reference for this week: Hart 1997, Wheland & Fink 2016 	
Module 1	- The Sustainability Front	ier			
Week 2 Aug 28	Sustainability Frontier I	 Recap of Week 1 Sustainability Issues SDGs Video: Sustainability Frontier (8 mins) Team break-out session Preview for Week 3 	 Team formation process Form teams of 2 students with one group of 3 students. Complete team formation tasks (assign roles, etc.) Choose your company. Start Frontier Analysis 	 Reading: Strategy on the Sustainability Frontier: Chapter 1 Sustainability Frontier Cartography Review Frontier Analysis material from your team and come prepared to work on the Frontier Analysis in Week 3 	
Sep 4	Labor Day	No Class			
Week 3 Sep 11	Sustainability Frontier II	 Recap Week 2 The transition from Regulatory Era to Market Era to today Issue Resolution Process Watch Video: The Regulatory Era (15 mins) Video: Sustainability Frontier Assignment (15 mins) 	 TEAM SUSTAINABILITY FRONTIER ISSUE ANALYSIS Team discussion: Frontier Analysis and align to 1 SDG goal Keep your team's responses and discussion notes for next week's team break out session 	 Reading: Strategy on the Sustainability Frontier: Chapter 2 Sustainability Frontier Strategy Overview Read the Case Study Reading: Facebook on the Frontier_Case Study.pdf Work on your <i>individual Issues</i> & <i>Stakeholder Analysis</i> assignment Continue working on your 	

Session	Weekly Topic	In-class agenda	In-class team break-out session	Assignments for the next class
		 Team breakout session Introduce the <i>Issues &</i> Stakeholder Analysis assignment Watch Video: Sustainability Frontier in the Market Era I (11 min) Preview Week 4 		team's Sustainability Frontier Analysis Presentation.
Week 4 Sep 18	Sustainability Strategy Framework	 Recap Week 3 The 6 Cs of Strategy Video: Sustainability Drivers in the Market Era (13 mins) Case Study: Facebook on the Frontier Preview Week 5 	 TEAM SUSTAINABILITY FRONTIER ISSUE ANALYSIS How was the issue(s) brought to the public and key stakeholders associated with it? What institutions in society played a role in defining the issues? What was the generic resolution to the issue? Based on last week's team session and this week's team session, prepare your team's Sustainability Issue Frontier Analysis Team Presentation for next week's class 	 Individual <i>Issues & Stakeholder</i> <i>Analysis</i> assignment due by Monday, September 25 by 4 p.m. ET to Assignments section of Blackboard Complete your team's Sustainability Frontier Analysis Presentation and practice it as a team in advance of Week 5's presentation time. Upload your team's presentation file to the Discussion Board by the start of class on Week 5.September 25
Week 5 Sep 25	Team Sustainability Frontier Issue Analysis Presentations	 Recap Week 4 Team Sustainability Frontier Issue Analysis presentations Potential for a Guest Speaker today Preview Week 6 	N/A	 Reading: Strategy on the Sustainability Frontier: Chapter 3 Clarify Work on your Individual Sustainability Issue Triage assignment due by Week 7, October 10 Watch Video: Clarify I External Criteria (19 mins)
Module 2	 Sustainability Strategy F 			
Week 6 Oct 2	Clarify I	 Recap Week 5 Video: Sustainability Strategy Framework (1.5 	TEAM CONSULTING PROJECT WORK	 Review Chapter 3 Clarify to refresh on the topic Complete the Individual

Session	Weekly Topic	In-class agenda	In-class team break-out session	Assignments for the next class
		 min) Video: Clarify II Internal (13 mins) Internal criteria External criteria Team Consulting Project & Rubric Overview, showcase example Preview Week 7 		 Sustainability <i>Issue Triage</i> assignment due to the Assignments section of Blackboard by Tuesday, October 10, 4:00 p.m. ET Watch Video: Stakeholder Mapping (7.5 mins) Work on your Individual <i>Sustainability Commitments</i> assignment due by Monday, October 16, 4 p.m.
Oct 9	Fall Break	No Class		
Week 7 Oct 10 (Tues)	Clarify II	 Recap Week 6 Video: Clarify Internal Criteria (13 mins) Video: Clarify III Triage (14 mins) Types of Materiality Contribution Materiality The Triage Process Guest Speaker scheduled Preview Week 8 	 TEAM CONSULTING PROJECT WORK Work on your Consulting Project applying Clarify 	 Reading: Strategy on the Sustainability Frontier: Chapter 4 Commit due before Week 8 Read the Case Study Reading: PIXZA Sustaining Social Commitments.pdf Individual Sustainability Commitments assignment due to the Assignments section of Blackboard by Monday, October 16, 4 p.m.
Week 8 Oct 16	Commit	 Recap Week 7 The Communication Role The Managerial Role Sustainability Reporting Video: Commit (20 mins) Case Study: Pixza Preview Week 9 	 TEAM CONSULTING PROJECT WORK Work on your Consulting Project applying Commit. 	 Reading: Strategy on the Sustainability Frontier: Chapter 5 Create Work on your Individual Sustainability Issue Forums due by Monday, October 30, 4 p.m. ET
Week 9 Oct 23	Create	 Recap Week 8 Sustainable Business Models Bottom of the Pyramid Sustainable Business Practices 	 TEAM CONSULTING PROJECT WORK Work on your Consulting Project, applying Create. 	 Reading: Strategy on the Sustainability Frontier: Chapter 6 Collaborate Read the Case Study Reading: Nespresso and CIMS_Case Study.pdf Individual Sustainability Issue

Session	Weekly Topic	In-class agenda	In-class team break-out session	Assignments for the next class
		 Operational Model Innovation Customer Model Innovation Sustainability Issue Forums Video: Create (38 mins) Preview Week 10 		Forums due to the Assignments section of Blackboard by Monday, October 30, 4 p.m. ET References for this week: Kaaramachandi et al. 2011; Prahalad and Hart 1999; Whelan and Fink 2016
Week 10 Oct 30	Collaborate	 Recap Week 9 Multi-stakeholder processes/green onion Sustainability Issue Forums Video: Collaborate (23 mins) Case Study: Nespresso and CIMS Preview Week 11 	 TEAM CONSULTING PROJECT WORK Work on your consulting project, applying Collaborate 	 Reading: Strategy on the Sustainability Frontier: Chapter 7 Capture Watch Video: Capture I (12.5 mins) Reference: Valentine 2008
Week 11 Nov 6	Capture I	 Recap Week 10 Creating Shared Value Types of Sustainability Values Value capture tactics Video Capture II (18.5 mins) Preview Week 12 	 TEAM CONSULTING PROJECT WORK Work on your Consulting Project, applying Capture. 	 Reading: Strategy on the Sustainability Frontier: Chapter 8 Contribute Watch Video: Capture III (24 mins) Read the Case Study Reading: Intel AI for Youth.pdf References: Porter and Kramer 2011, Kundari (2020)
Week 12 Nov 13	Capture II	 Recap Week 11 Video; Capture IV (11 mins) Case Study: Intel Corporation: AI for Youth Initiative Preview Week 13 	 TEAM CONSULTING PROJECT WORK Work on your Consulting Project presentation and Executive Summary. 	 Continue to work with your team on the Team Consulting Project Work
Week 13 Nov 20	Contribute	 Recap Week 12 The Future of business & sustainability 	 TEAM CONSULTING PROJECT WORK Team: Work on your Consulting Project presentation and Executive Summary. 	 Finalize with your team on the Team Consulting Project Work Upload your team's project work (presentation and Executive Summary) to the Discussion

Session	Weekly Topic	In-class agenda	In-class team break-out session	Assignments for the next class
		 The role of business in contributing to the closure of sustainability issues Preview Week 14 		Board by the start of class on Week 14, Monday, Nov 27, 4:30 p.m. ET.
Week 14 Nov 27	Team Consulting Project	 Team Presentations Provide information about the Final Exam 	 Team: Present the results of your Consulting Project. Upload your team's Executive Summary document to Blackboard, Week 14 folder 	
Week 15 Dec 4	Reading Day	Reading Day (No class meeting)	• N/A	Study for the Final Exam
Dec 11	Final Exam	Final Exam	 The final exam will consist of 4 questions to answer as text responses. A reminder the GMU Honor Code is in effect throughout the Final Exam Closed materials throughout the final exam 	N/A