

Business and Sustainability: EVPP 322
(3 credits)
Fall 2021

ONLINE SYNCHRONOUS VERSION

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Office Hours: Tues./Thurs. 10:30-12:30pm by appointment via scheduled webinar:

Office Zoom: <https://go.gmu.edu/drdannzoom>, Passcode: 926688

Note: Our main point of connection during the term will be through our Blackboard course page. Here I will post content videos, readings and other materials as well as make Discussion Boards used for asynchronous conversations about the week's topics. **The course will also have mostly synchronous online sessions that will be run using Zoom and held during the scheduled class times Tues. and Thurs. 1:30-2:45pm via <http://go.gmu.edu/evpp322zoom>.** Please aim to arrive 5 minutes prior so we start on-time. (Email me if you need phone access.) The administration has asked me to remind you all to review the Safe Return to Campus policies, for those planning to come to campus for any reason.

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 as an online with both asynchronous and synchronous sessions. See the Blackboard course page for details on individual sessions.

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 of 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. FRAMEWORK APPLICATION ASSIGNMENTS: These are three 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.

1. *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 exercise, teams 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.
- 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. Groups 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 virtual 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 video presentation, teams will create a 5-page Executive Summary that captures the key insights from the consulting project and presents the team's recommendations to senior leadership. There may be option to deliver this as a "slide doc."

A Note on Written Deliverables: Double-spaced with standard 12-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.

Assignment Evaluation:

Assessment / Deliverable:	Individual or group?	Points	% of final grade:
Insightful Participation in Weekly Discussions (14, including being active in team formation tasks)	Individual	140	14 %
Framework Application Assignments (4)	Individual	240 (60 ea.)	24 %
Sustainability Frontier Issue Evaluation	Team	200	20 %
Final Consulting Presentations (Video)	Team	100	10 %
Consulting Executive Summary (wk after video due)	Team	200	20 %
Final Exam (Assess Learning Outcomes)	Individual	120	12 %
All	Total	1000 pts.	100%

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:

- *Strategy on the Sustainability Frontier: Creating Business Value and Contributing to a Better World* (Unruh, 2020).

Recommended Text:

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

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

- [*Beyond greening: strategies for a sustainable world*](#) (Hart 1997)

- [Career Readiness Guide](#) or [accessible version](#) (University Career Services 2019).
- [Creating Shared Value](#) (Porter and Kramer 2011).
- [Creating Shared Value: the way to reimagine social change. How to make social problems a profitable business solution](#) (Kundari 2020).
- [The Globe: Is the Bottom of the Pyramid Really for You?](#) (Karamchandani, Kubzansky, and Lalwani 2011)
- [Strategies for the Bottom of the Pyramid: Creating Sustainable Development](#) (Prahalad and Hart 1999)
- [The Comprehensive Business Case for Sustainability](#) (Whelan and Fink 2016)
- [The Green Onion: a corporate environmental strategy framework](#) (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), usually by Sunday at the end of each week. Please allow sufficient time for technological and printing problems as these will not be considered valid excuses for late assignments. Readings are due the date they are assigned; because they are assigned primarily to encourage seminar discussion, you are expected to demonstrate your careful reading and consideration of materials.

Statement on technology: Quality learning experience in this course rests heavily upon interaction and exchange of ideas among students and the instructors. For this reason, there will be no electronic devices allowed. Remember, your ability to listen and engage with your peers and to contribute to class discussions thoughtfully will be heavily weighted in determining your final grades.

Mason Email: In keeping with university policy, we will correspond only with your Mason email account. Expect communication from the instructors 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 us know in advance so we can 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:
<http://integrative.gmu.edu/about/diversity>

- 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 SIS 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; www.gmu.edu/student/drc). 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. <http://caps.gmu.edu/>

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. Also, please use NCC's online writing guide, <http://classweb.gmu.edu/nccwg/>

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 <http://doit.gmu.edu/studentSection.asp?page=club>

Course Sessions:

Please note all assignments and dates are subject to revision by the course instructors.

Session	Topic	Assignments
Week 1 8/23-29	<p>(U)</p> <p>What is Business and Sustainability? Why study?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class Introductions • Course Overview • Assignments • Team project • Sustainability Case for Business 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team Formation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Form teams of 3 students. ○ Complete team formation tasks (assign roles, etc.) ○ Choose your company. ○ Upload to Assignment page • Reading: SF Preface • Reference: Hart 1997
Module 1 – The Sustainability Frontier		
Week 2 8/30-9/5	<p>Sustainability Frontier I</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Case for Sustainability • Sustainability Issues • Issue Resolution Process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teams: Prep Work on Frontier Analysis • Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ SF: Introduction <p>Reference: Wheland & Fink 2016</p>
Week 3 9/6-12	<p>Sustainability Frontier II</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The transition from Regulatory Era to Market Era to...??? • Issue resolution going forward 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teams: Start Work on Frontier Analysis ○ Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ SF: Chapter 1
Week 4 9/13-19	<p>Sustainability Strategy Framework</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction • The 6 Cs of Strategy • Intro Team Consulting Project & Rubric here or Week 6? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teams: Prepare your Frontier Analysis presentation. • Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ SF: Chapter 2
Week 5 9/20-26	<p>(U)</p> <p>Sustainability Frontier Presentations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual: Present the results of your Frontier Issue analysis. • No Reading assignments.

Session	Topic	Assignments
	MODULE 2 – Sustainability Strategy Framework	
Week 6 9/27-10/3	Clarify I <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal criteria External criteria Intro Team Consulting Project & Rubric here or Week 4? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual: Complete and Upload your Issues and Stakeholders Application assignment. Team: Work on your consulting project, applying Clarify. Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SF: Chapter 3
Week 7 10/4-10	Clarify II <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Types of Materiality Contribution Materiality The Triage Process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual: Complete & Upload your Sustainability Triage Assignment. Team: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work on your Consulting Project Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SF: Chapter 3
Week 8 10/11-17	Commit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Communication Role The Managerial Role Sustainability Reporting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team: Work on your Consulting Project applying Commit. Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SF: Chapter 4
Week 9 10/18-24	Create <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable Business Models Bottom of the Pyramid/ALOHAS Sustainable Business Practices Operational Model Innovation Customer Model Innovation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team: Work on your Consulting Project, applying Create. Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SF: Chapter 5 References: Kaaramachandi et al. 2011, Prahalad and Hart 1999, Whelan and Fink 2016
Week 10 10/25-31	Collaborate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multi-stakeholder processes/green onion Sustainability Issue Forums 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual: Complete Issues Forums assignment. Team: Work on your consulting project, applying Collaborate Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SF: Chapter 6 Reference: Valentine 2008

Session	Topic	Assignments
Week 11 11/1-7	Capture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating Shared Value • Types of Sustainability Value • Value capture tactics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team: Work on your consulting project, applying Capture. • Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ SF: Chapter 7 • References: Porter and Kramer 2011, Kundari 2020, Sustainable Brands 2016
Week 12 11/8-14	(U) Case Study <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case Discussion • INTEL Corporation CSR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team: Work on your Consulting Project presentation and Executive Summary. • Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Intel Corporation: AI for Youth case
Week 13 11/15-21	Contribute <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Future of Business & Sustainability • The role of Business in contributing to the closure of sustainability issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Team: Work on your Consulting Project presentation and Executive Summary. • Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ SF: Chapter 8
11/22-28 	Team Prep Time (Tues.) + T[of]urkey Day (Thurs.) 	
Week 14 11/29-12/5	(U) FINAL TEAM PRESENTATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team: Present the results of your Consulting Project. • Upload your executive summary.
Week 15 12/14	FINAL EXAM (4 QUESTIONS)	1:30 - 4:15pm