MSUS: 434 Sustainability Around the World

Course Outline IN DEVELOPMENT

January 2024 (Tentative)

Term and year: Summer 2024
Course pre-requisite(s): None
Course co-requisite(s): None
Course schedule (class day(s) and time):
Number of credits: 3

Instructor information

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Course Overview

Sustainability efforts are taking place around the world, and there is a need to recognize, acknowledge, and engage with these movements as members of a global community.This course aims to explore global sustainability practices from a management perspective, as sustainability occurs through various means in different global contexts. This course fills a gap in understanding the realities of sustainability projects and their relationships within an international community.

The course will delve into some of the following themes and topics:

- Critical obstacles to achieving global sustainability
- Human impacts on the global environment
- Social equity and economic development
- Global development challenges, including pollution, poverty, and waste
- Sustainability successes and failures
- A critical analysis of the UN SDGs and related frameworks
- The impact of Geopolitical imbalances on sustainability efforts
- Environmental limits, considering both resources and impact investing

Learning Outcomes

- Identify international sustainability practices to articulate diverse global climate strategies and recognize their relationships.
- Apply course knowledge to critically examine sustainability projects holistically.
- Appreciate the variety of manifestations of sustainability projects.

- Recognize the complexities, trade-offs, and barriers to managing sustainability in a global context.

Assessment

Assessment Component	Weighting	Details
Sustainable Action Blueprint	50%	In this group project, teams of 3-4 students will collaborate to investigate a formal or informal group or organization's approach to sustainability. Students will critically analyze the chosen entity's sustainability initiatives, evaluating their effectiveness and identifying areas for improvement. For instance, students may examine CN Rail's sustainability plan or assess the Commission for Environmental Cooperation's efforts toward continental sustainability in North America. Alternatively, they could explore local community groups addressing climate change and evaluate their contributions to broader sustainability goals. At a high level, the assignment should highlight how the group demonstrates leadership in sustainability, both locally and globally, and highlight how their work contributes to addressing sustainability. The final submission will be through the Assignments tool in MyCourses. **Proposal (10%):** Submission of a detailed proposal outlining the scope, objectives, and approach for the Sustainable Action Blueprint. Include a rationale for why you selected the group, specify the sustainability challenges to be addressed, and outline at a high level what room for improvement you have identified or potential solutions. Proposals are to be submitted through the Assignments tool in MyCourses. The proposal should be 750 words. **Blueprint (40%):** Development of the comprehensive plan outlined in the proposal addressing identified sustainability challenges within the selected organization's practices. Propose feasible and impactful solutions, drawing insights from course materials. The blueprint should critically evaluate the organization's current contributions to sustainability, identify any existing gaps in its sustainability plan, and suggest improvements. This assignment allows for the selection of a local or international business or organization. The final submission outlines the organization's current sustainability outlook, gaps, contributions, or recommendations for improvement, depending on the type of organization.
(Option 1) Midterm	*30%*	· **Exam (30%):** Evaluation of understanding of key course materials, theories, and practices related to sustainability.
(Option 2) Sustainability Solution Showcase	*30%*	This assignment tasks students with producing a succinct video, podcast, infographic, guidebook, or poster that explains a specific sustainability challenge and showcases a group or organization actively addressing it. The goal is to effectively communicate the problem and highlight innovative solutions. · **Source Material Checkpoint (10%):** Submission of the script (if applicable to your format) outlining the structure, key points, and background material. Provision of source materials (charts, graphs, video clips) for feedback on quality and relevance. · **Peer Review Checkpoint (10%):** Peer review session where students provide feedback on each other's rough drafts. Assessment of the ability to incorporate constructive feedback into the project.

		- **Final Submission (15%):** Submission of the final project, approximately 8–10-minutes for a video or audio format, with all components integrated. Evaluation based on content understanding, research, presentation skills, creativity, and collaboration (if applicable). Clarity and relevance of the chosen sustainability topic. Demonstrated understanding of key course materials and global sustainability concepts. Integration of relevant data, statistics, or examples. Creativity in presentation and engagement. Overall professionalism/conciseness in presentation.
Quizzes	10%	- **Sustainability Knowledge Quizzes (10%):** Three quizzes worth 5% each, one at the beginning, middle, and end of the semester, to monitor and assess students' understanding of sustainability theories, practices, and current issues in a global context.
Participation	10%	- **Participation (10%):** Participation is based on two main criteria: Punctuality and Attendance (5%): - Regular attendance in class. - Timely submission of assignments and quizzes. - Consistent demonstration of preparation for class activities. Meaningful Contributions (5%): - Complete Sulitest TASK quiz at the beginning of the course and at the end to measure environmental learning. - Thoughtful engagement in class discussions. - Quality of responses, demonstrating depth and insight into topics and themes. - Collaboration and constructive interaction with peers. - Demonstrated understanding of course materials focusing on depth and relevance in engagement with class discussions. Students can earn the maximum by consistently demonstrating timely and substantive participation, encompassing both promptness and meaningful contributions to class discussions.

Draft Class Schedule

Class Number	Topic	Date	Description	Course Materials
Class 1	Introduction	TBD	Course overview, syllabus review, and introduction to sustainability	Film: 2040 Podcast: ESG in Conversation: What Does It Take To Be a Sustainability Leader in 2023 and Beyond? Podcast: Interview with indigenous Australian academic and human and earth rights activist, Dr. Anne Poelina.
Class 2	History of Sustainability, Frameworks, and SDGs		Tracing the historical roots of the sustainability movement	Book: Best Things First (Chapter 4 to 6) Paper: Sustainable development: Meaning, history, principles, pillars, and implications for human action: Literature review Blog Post: A Brief History of Sustainability

				Podcast: A Brief History of Corporate Sustainability: A conversation with John Elkington

Blog Post: The sustainability movement is 50. Why are world leaders ignoring it?

Webpage: The 17 Goals (UN)

Webpage: Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Video: Do you know all the SDGs?

Paper: The victims of unsustainability: a challenge to sustainable development goals

Paper: Using the sustainable development goals towards a better understanding of sustainability challenges

Paper: From Millennium to Sustainable Development Goals: Evolving discourses and their reflection in policy coherence for development

Blog Post: Indigenous Peoples: Defending an Environment for All
Still Only One Earth: Lessons from 50 years of UN sustainable development policy

Paper: Grassroots Innovations for Sustainable Development: Towards a New Research and Policy Agenda

Paper: Indigenous Climate Change Studies: Indigenizing Futures, Decolonizing the Anthropocene |
| Class 3 | Global South and ESG | | Examining the use of ESG frameworks in the Global South *(if we can find content on this)* | Harvard Business Review: How Board Members Really Feel About ESG, from Deniers to True Believers

Harvard Business Review: Yes, Investing in ESG Pays Off

Harvard Business Review: We Need Universal ESG Accounting Standards
Paper: The Global South and Sustainability |

				News Article: [Responsible ESG investing in the Global South requires overcoming the Global North's saviour complex](#) Blog Post: [The Global North must follow the Global South's lead](#) Blog Post: [HOW CLIMATE COLONIALISM AFFECTS THE GLOBAL SOUTH](#) Video: [A Disruptive New Model for Corporate Sustainability and ESG	Georgia Elliott-Smith	TEDxUCL](#) Paper: [Corporate Engagement Strategies in Northern Mining: Boliden, Sweden and Cameco, Canada](#) Film: [Toxic Colonialism: How Swedish Waste Poisoned Chile	ARICA (Full Film)	The Short List](#)
Class 4	Critical Obstacles to Global Sustainability		Identifying challenges to achieving global sustainability	Book Chapter: [Overcoming obstacles to sustainability: lessons from the seven countries](#) Paper: [Obstacles to Sustainable Global Business. Towards EU Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development](#) Paper: [Managerial perspectives on drivers for and barriers to sustainable supply chain management implementation: Evidence from New Zealand](#) Paper: [Analyzing the progress, pitfalls and prospects for attaining environmental-related sustainable development goals in Nigeria](#) Paper: [Identification and analysis of critical barriers for achieving sustainable development in India](#) Grey Literature: [Asia-Pacific Not on Track to Achieve Any SDGs by 2030](#) News Article: [Many of the world's poorest countries are the least polluting but the most climate-vulnerable. Here's what they want at COP27](#)

Class 5	Social Equity and Economic Development		Exploring the link between social equity and sustainable development	Harvard Business Review: The Climate-Equity Connection Harvard Business Review: We Can't Fight Climate Change Without Fighting for Gender Equity Paper: Social Equity and Responsible Business Leadership: MNCs Blog Post: Can Business Leaders Play a Bigger Role in Building Social Equity? Paper: What constitutes the social in (social) sustainability? Community, society and equity in South African water governance Paper: Advancing Social Equity as an Integral Dimension of Sustainability in Local Communities Blog Post: Integrating Clean Cooking for Peace, Justice, and Sustainability Paper: Clean cooking and the SDGs: Integrated analytical approaches to guide energy interventions for health and environment goals Podcast: 188: THE PATH TO SUSTAINABILITY IS EQUITY
Class 6	Sustainable Infrastructure		Examining the role of infrastructure in sustainable development	Harvard Business Review: Building Sustainable Cities Harvard Business Review: Why You Need a Resilience Strategy Now Blog Post: The critical role of infrastructure for the Sustainable Development Goals Blog Post: Why the world needs a fresh take on smart and sustainable infrastructure Video: Green/gray infrastructure: redefining cities	Landolf Rhode-Barbarigos	TEDxBoston Blog Post: Bogotá, Colombia's Approach to Safe, Sustainable, and Accessible Transport

				Paper: Sustainable project management through project control in infrastructure projects Paper: Sustainable infrastructure development challenges through PPP procurement process: Indian perspective
Class 7	Industry Perspective		Exploring industry practices and perspectives on sustainability	Harvard Business Review: Shareholders Are Pressing for Climate Risk Disclosures. That's Good for Everyone. Harvard Business Review: "It Will Need to Be the Most Amazing Thing Humankind Has Ever Done" A conversation with Microsoft cofounder and philanthropist Bill Gates Blog Post: Industry perspectives on the UN's sustainable development goals Paper: A systematic review on drivers, barriers, and practices towards circular economy: a supply chain perspective Paper: Developing capabilities and competence for sustainable business management as innovation: a research agenda Paper: The role of environmental management in sustainable business development: A multi-country investigation Paper: Re-Thinking Industry 4.0 Effect on Competitive Forces: Empirical Study on Innovation Paper: Value in sustainability: the process industry perspective
Class 8	Greenwashing Internationally		Analysing greenwashing from a global perspective	Blog Post: Global Greenwashing Regulations: How the World Is Cracking Down on Misleading Sustainability Claims Paper: Concepts and forms of greenwashing: a systematic review News Article: Global Executives Say Greenwashing Remains Rife Blog Post: Colombia's Green Taxonomy: a First in Latin America

				News Article: [Resisting Green Colonialism: Lithium, Bolivia, and the Green New Deal](#) Podcast: [Is Silicon Valley as Green as it Claims?](#)
Class 9	Human Impacts on Global Environment		Examining human contributions to environmental degradation	Paper: [Climate change caused by human activities is happening and it already has major consequences](#) Paper: [Culture and the Independent Self: Obstacles to environmental sustainability?](#) Blog Post: [Human Impact on the Environment](#) Video: [Are We the Last Generation — or the First Sustainable One?	Hannah Ritchie	TED](#) News Article: [Human Activities Are Drying Out the Amazon: NASA Study](#) Film: [River Blue](#) Blog Post: [Human-caused climate change superheats south Asia heatwave](#) News Article: [Experts say human-caused climate change is putting African wildlife at risk](#)
Class 10	Climate Storytelling		Understanding the role of storytelling in climate change communication	Paper: [Climate communication and storytelling](#) Paper: [The promise of climate fiction](#) Paper: [Transforming the stories we tell about climate change: from 'issue' to 'action'](#) Film: [Sustainable Futures – Communities in Action](#) Film: [WISDOM WEAVERS OF THE WORLD](#) Blog Post: [The power of Acimowin (Storytelling) for climate change policy](#)
Class 11	Analysing Sustainability and Geopolitics		Examining different geopolitical connections and	Paper: [The geopolitics of climate change](#) Paper: [Are climate and geopolitics the challenges to sustainable development? Novel evidence from the global supply chain](#)

			implications for sustainability	Paper: Canadian geopolitical culture: Climate change and sustainability Paper: Theorising the Thaw: Geopolitics in a Changing Arctic Paper: Dams as a Climate Change Adaptation Strategy: Geopolitical Implications for Pakistan
Class 12	Wetlands and Wildfires		Exploring the impact of wildfires on wetlands and Indigenous knowledge	Paper: Global conservation priorities for wetlands and setting post-2025 targets Blog Post: Drive to protect world's wetlands gains momentum Video: Ghar El Melh: building resilience in Tunisia's most precious wetlands Paper: Wildfire management in Canada: Review, challenges and opportunities Paper: Towards a comprehensive wildfire management strategy for Mediterranean areas: Framework development and implementation in Catalonia, Spain News Article: Fighting fire with fire How a B.C. Indigenous community is reintroducing traditional fire knowledge and practices to manage land vulnerable to wildfires Video: Prosperous Communities, Sustainable Forests
Class 13	Course Reflection and Future Actions		Reviewing key course concepts, discussing personal takeaways, and planning for future actions	Harvard Business Review: Designing a Climate Advocacy Strategy Harvard Business Review: What Do People Really Believe About Climate Change? And what does that mean for business? Harvard Business Review: Embracing Business Practices That Actually Improve the World

Assignment Briefs

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Sustainable Action Blueprint

Overview:
In this group project, you and your team will practice what you have learned throughout the course discussions, quizzes, and readings on sustainability by analyzing the approach of a chosen group or organization. Through critical analysis and strategic thinking, you will evaluate the effectiveness of their sustainability initiatives and propose actionable solutions for improvement. This assignment aims to provide an opportunity for you to demonstrate your understanding of sustainability leadership and its implications on local and global scales.

Task:
Form a team of 3-4 students and select a group or organization whose sustainability efforts you will scrutinize. Your investigation should encompass a thorough examination of their sustainability practices, focusing on areas of success and areas needing enhancement. You may choose entities like corporations, non-profits, local community groups, or international bodies. I would recommend picking an organization that publishes a sustainability plan or annual report where they discuss their metrics of evaluation to offer a good starting point.

Proposal (10%):
Submit a comprehensive proposal detailing your chosen group or organization, the rationale behind your selection, the team of students you are working with, and the sustainability challenges you aim to address. Your proposal should outline the objectives and approach for the Sustainable Action Blueprint, emphasizing potential solutions or areas for improvement. Be sure to draw connections to course materials and present your ideas concisely within a 750-word limit.

Blueprint (40%):
Develop a comprehensive plan based on the proposal, targeting the identified sustainability challenges within your chosen organization. Your blueprint should offer feasible and impactful solutions, grounded in insights gleaned from course materials and external research. Critically evaluate the organization's current sustainability initiatives, including what they are doing well, identify gaps in their approach, and propose tangible improvements. Whether focusing on a local business or an international entity, your blueprint should reflect a deep understanding of the organization's sustainability outlook and provide actionable recommendations for enhancement. You should look at facets of social, economic, and environmental sustainability.

Submission:
Utilize the Assignments tool in MyCourses to submit both your proposal and final blueprint by the deadlines. Ensure all components are clearly labeled and organized for easy assessment.

Assessment Criteria:
- Clarity and coherence of proposal and blueprint submissions.
- Depth of critical analysis and evaluation of sustainability initiatives.

- Appropriateness and feasibility of proposed solutions.
- Integration of course materials and external research.
- Presentation quality, including organization, grammar, and referencing.
- Holistic analysis of various sustainability issues, encompassing analysis of social, environmental, and economic sustainability.

Learning Objectives Addressed:
- Identify international sustainability practices to articulate diverse global climate strategies and recognize their relationships.
- Apply course knowledge to critically examine sustainability projects holistically.
- Recognize the complexities, trade-offs, and barriers to managing sustainability in a global context.

Important Dates:
- Proposal Submission Deadline: [Insert Date]
- Blueprint Submission Deadline: [Insert Date]

Additional Guidelines:
- Collaborate effectively within your team to distribute tasks and responsibilities.
- Consult with your instructor for any clarifications or guidance throughout the project.
- Ensure all sources are appropriately cited.

Sustainability Solution Showcase

Overview:
This assignment challenges students to create a compelling visual or auditory presentation that addresses a specific sustainability challenge and showcases an active solution to tackline it. Through various mediums such as video, podcast, infographic, guidebook, or poster, students will communicate the problem effectively and highlight innovative solutions.

Task:
Choose a sustainability challenge, and if applicable, you can select a corresponding group or organization actively addressing it, or discuss more broadly how the solution can be addressed across groups. Produce a concise and engaging video, podcast, infographic, guidebook, or poster that effectively communicates the problem and showcases innovative solutions.

Source Material Checkpoint (10%):
Submit the script (if applicable) outlining the structure, key points, and background material of your chosen format. Provide source materials such as charts, graphs, or video clips for feedback on quality and relevance.

Peer Review Checkpoint (10%):

Participate in a peer review session where you provide feedback on your peers' rough drafts. Assessment will be based on your ability to incorporate constructive feedback into your project.

Final Submission (15%):
Submit the final project, approximately 8–10 minutes for video or audio formats, with all components integrated. Evaluation criteria include content understanding, research, presentation skills, creativity, and collaboration (if applicable). Your presentation should demonstrate clarity and relevance regarding the chosen sustainability topic, understanding of key course materials and global sustainability concepts, integration of relevant data or examples, creativity in presentation, engagement, and overall professionalism/conciseness.

Assessment Criteria:
- Content understanding and research depth
- Presentation skills and creativity
- Clarity and relevance of the sustainability topic
- Integration of course materials and global sustainability concepts
- Use of relevant data, statistics, or examples
- Collaboration (if applicable)
- Professionalism and conciseness in presentation

Learning Objectives Addressed:
- Identify international sustainability practices to articulate diverse global climate strategies and recognize their relationships.
- Apply course knowledge to critically examine sustainability projects holistically.
- Appreciate the variety of manifestations of sustainability projects.

Important Dates:
- Source Material Checkpoint: [Insert Date]
- Peer Review Checkpoint: [Insert Date]
- Final Submission Deadline: [Insert Date]

Additional Guidelines:
- Choose a sustainability challenge and organization that interests you and aligns with course themes.
- Collaborate effectively during peer review sessions and provide constructive feedback to your peers.
- Ensure your final submission is polished, well-organized, and effectively communicates the chosen topic and solutions.

Sustainability Knowledge Quizzes

Overview:

The Sustainability Knowledge Quizzes consist of three assessments distributed evenly throughout the semester, each contributing 5% towards the overall course grade. These quizzes serve to gauge students' comprehension of sustainability theories, practices, and contemporary issues on a global scale.

Details:
- **Number of Quizzes:** Three (3)
- **Weightage:** Each quiz is worth 5% of the total course grade.
- **Timing:**
  o **Quiz 1:** Early in the semester
  o **Quiz 2:** Midway through the semester (before the midterm)
  o **Quiz 3:** Towards the end of the semester

Assessment Criteria:
- Understanding of sustainability theories, practices, and current issues.
- Ability to apply knowledge in a global context.
- Critical thinking and analysis skills.

Learning Objective Addressed:
- Identify international sustainability practices to articulate diverse global climate strategies and recognize their relationships.
- Recognize the complexities, trade-offs, and barriers to managing sustainability in a global context.

Format:
- Multiple-choice questions
- True/false statements
- Short answer questions

Submission:
- Quizzes will be administered online through MyCourses.
- This component of the course is individual and cannot be conducted in groups.

Grading:
- Each quiz will be graded out of a total possible score (TBD based on numbers of questions) and given a score out of 100%.
- The combined scores of all three quizzes will contribute to the overall 10% allocated for Sustainability Knowledge Quizzes.

Important Dates:
- Quiz 1: [Insert Date]
- Quiz 2: [Insert Date]
- Quiz 3: [Insert Date]

Additional Information:

Students should prepare by reviewing course materials, readings, and class discussions.