Corporate Sustainability Strategy
ENVR E-135 (#13555)
Fall Semester 2015

SYLLABUS

Instructors: Suzanne Farver (farver@sopris.net) and Matthew Gardner (matthew.gardner@sustainserv.com)
Please see the course website for bios of each instructor

Office Hours: By Appointment

Course website: https://canvas.harvard.edu/courses/4087

Prerequisites: None, but note that there is a significant amount of writing. See additional details below under Course Description and in the Course Requirements, available on the course website.

Instructional Staff
Bob Breslin, Lead TA: robert_breslin@harvard.edu
Kate McCarthy, TA: k8mccart@gmail.com
Brianna Murphy, TA: bmurphy021@gmail.com

Textbook and other Materials:
The primary reading for this course is the following text, which may be purchased online at Amazon.com or at the Harvard COOP bookstore.


In addition to the primary readings, there are two supplementary books that are highly recommended for the class, listed below:


Although students can most likely complete the class without these books, they offer highly valuable information about sustainability. For any student who wishes to excel in this class, you should purchase and read the books. There will be weekly reading assignments including chapters in these books.
The Blackburn book is an extensive and comprehensive resource that includes multiple appendices that show examples of forms and tables to use as tools, and it also lists other valuable resources for the field. It approaches sustainability from mostly the environmental viewpoint, whereas the Googins book complements the other because it emphasizes the social aspects more. It has many case study examples and comes from the perspective of many interviews with actual companies.

Additional supplementary readings will be provided each week on the course website.

Course Description

This course explores sustainability from the perspective of a multi-national corporation. We will provide a number of exemplars in various industries to show how they have applied sustainability tools to their businesses. These will be publicly-traded companies, and so there will be links provided to various forms of information for you to compare and contrast as we move through the semester. Information will be presented from academic research, white papers published by respected scholars and experts, and the actual disclosures of major multi-national companies. Sustainability officers and other sustainability professionals will serve as guest speakers in the class throughout the semester.

The case method is utilized to provide a participative and realistic forum that enables students to learn about sustainability while also developing the skills to use the information. A distance learning option enables students from all over the world to participate without having to travel. Since ENVR E-135 is offered as an open enrollment course, we expect plant managers and sustainability professionals to participate in cohort group activity. The class is usually comprised of a mix of graduate students pursuing a degree in the Environmental and Sustainability Management program, professionals seeking a certificate, and others interested in honing their skills in this field.

Every week, students in each cohort group (20-25 students in each group) present their research through online discussion boards and respond to each other’s presentations. The Monday class sessions include discussion of the listed topic and a presentation of the issues that will be discussed in the upcoming week.

The classes are provided both live and as a streaming video feed linked from the class website. Distance learners can participate in the class through an online chat room, and questions can be fielded to the classroom via the chat room. There is no requirement to watch the class live, however. Classes are usually available for online viewing within 24 hours of class sessions.

Please Note: Although the course has not been formally designated as writing intensive, there is a considerable amount of writing required, including the required weekly assignments on the discussion board, midterm exercise in essay format, final exercise essay for undergraduate students and a final paper for graduate students. These exercises are open book and do not require a proctor or attendance on campus. All submissions must be supported by references to the course materials or other research and must be correctly cited with APA-style citations. This
is more fully explained in the Course Requirements, which can be downloaded from the course website.

Students develop fundamental writing skills in this course, including critical thinking and level of inquiry, which are important for many other courses in the environmental program. If you are not proficient in writing in the English language, you may struggle completing the requirements of this course.

**Course Aims and Objectives**

- **✓** Understand the business case for corporate sustainability, including sustainability as a driver of strategy, innovation and profit
- **✓** Focus on making sustainability part of the corporate fabric – its mission and vision - and not a separate silo within the corporation
- **✓** Develop skills using your sustainability knowledge by actually participating in the development of a sustainability management system for a virtual corporation
- **✓** Experience the need to address stakeholder interests, including government, NGOs and trade associations, while balancing between *all* three responsibilities involved in sustainability (economic, environmental, and social)
- **✓** Develop competencies that will enable you to contribute to a sustainability management system, including metrics and reporting, accountability and transparency
- **✓** Understand the importance of marketing, stewardship and product design; supply chain management; and internal and external communication
- **✓** See how perspectives on sustainability vary across the globe with the participation of our distance learners
- **✓** Develop critical writing skills including citation referencing that will prepare you for scholarly writing

**Registration Information**

You can register for this course by logging on the Harvard Extension School Web Site: [http://www.extension.harvard.edu/registration](http://www.extension.harvard.edu/registration)

Fall registration for 2015 opens July 20 (early registration begins July 16 for degree candidates already in the program). Course tuition: noncredit and undergraduate credit $1,350; graduate credit $2,400.

If you think you might be interested in applying to the masters degree program, you must take the course at the *graduate* credit level. If you audit (noncredit) the course, you will be allowed to participate in a cohort group. However, you will receive no feedback from the course staff on your work since you will not be involved in the mid-term, paper (grad students) or final exercise (undergrad students).

**Grading**

Below are the requirements for graduate and undergraduate students. More information on grading, expectations and requirements can be found in the Course Requirements document which can be downloaded from the course website.
Undergraduate credit students will not be required to submit a semester paper. The mid-term will be graded separately with different requirements for graduate and undergraduate students. Graduate students must submit a final paper and power point presentation based upon their final paper. Undergrad students must complete a final exercise. We strongly recommend that all open enrollment students take the course at the graduate credit level. Please consult with the Instructors if you have any questions.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>Cohort Discussion Board Participation</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 23 – Nov. 1</td>
<td>Open Book Midterm Exercise</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec. 6</td>
<td>Final Paper</td>
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<td>Dec. 13</td>
<td>Powerpoint Presentation</td>
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<td>Dec. 4 - Dec. 13</td>
<td>Open Book Final Exercise</td>
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Numerical scores for the assignments are converted to grades at the end of the semester according to the following scale.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Grading Scale</th>
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<td>A</td>
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<td>A-</td>
<td>90 to 93</td>
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<td>B+</td>
<td>87 to 89</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>83 to 86</td>
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<td>B-</td>
<td>80 to 82</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>73 to 76</td>
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<td>C-</td>
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<td>D-</td>
<td>60 to 62</td>
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<td>E</td>
<td>Below 60</td>
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**Class Information**

The class will meet on Monday evenings from 7:40 to 9:40 (Eastern Time) online and in Maxwell Dworkin classroom G115. Please see the class website for updated classroom information. The class website can be found at [https://canvas.harvard.edu/courses/4087](https://canvas.harvard.edu/courses/4087).

As mentioned above, the classes are live-streamed on the course website, and videos of the class sessions are available online within 24 hours. You do not need to attend class in person, although we welcome the participation of local students. Many students participate utilizing the distance option.

More course information is posted on the class website and will be updated throughout the semester.

**Course Schedule**

**Aug 31-Sept 6**  
**Week 1**  
*Introduction to Corporate Sustainability*

*Overview of the course*

- Keys to your success in the course
- Introduction to the Corporate Sustainability Management
- Taking the perspective of a multi-national company
- Information on **Semester Paper** topics for graduate students
- **Students post bios** on electronic discussion board (before 1st class)
- **Practice posting on discussion board with Teaching Assistants**

**Sept 7-13**  
**Week 2**  
*Business Case for Sustainability*  
**NOTE: There will be NO CLASS on Sept. 7 (Labor Day)**

- Adopting a positive view of a sustainable future
- Managing risk
- Making the business case for sustainability
- **Case**: Examining the business case for various companies

**Sept 14-20**  
**Week 3**  
*Corporate Sustainability Footprint*

- Resource use and loss – Process view and Life Cycle Assessment
- Logistics and distribution
- Buildings and infrastructure
- Industry and competition analysis
- **Case**: Investigating the sustainability footprint for Patagonia
Sept 21-27
Week 4

Corporate Regulatory Compliance and Governance

- Organizing sustainability: Roles of officers, trustees and shareholders
- Corporate governance through the eyes of various international standards, including AS 8000, AS 8002, Sarbanes-Oxley and the Global Reporting Initiative
- Corporate Citizenship and Responsibility
- *Case:* Examining the corporate governance of Cisco Systems

Sept 28-Oct 4
Week 5

Corporate Stakeholder Engagement

*Oct 4: Semester Paper Prospectus Due* (Graduate Students Only)

- Multilateral engagement (UN/World Bank/OECD)
- Government engagement
- NGO’s – influence and engagement
- Trade associations (WBCSD)
- Stakeholder *interests* and engagement
- *Case:* Identifying stakeholders and their interests through investigation of Levi Strauss.

Oct 5-11
Week 6

Environmental Responsibility

- Resources in *context* of their use
- ISO 14001, ISO 50001 and the ISO 14001 series
- Stakeholder interests
- Registry of regulatory requirements
- *Case:* Interface and environmental responsibility

Oct 12-18
Week 7

Social Responsibility

*Oct 12: COLUMBUS DAY HOLIDAY (No Class)*

- ISO 26000 approach on international level
- OHSAS 18001, AS 8003, SA 8000, People Standard
- Stakeholder interests: Obesity and alcohol use
- Registry of regulatory requirements
- *Case:* Examining Unilever and its Sustainable Living Plan

Oct 19-25
Week 8

Economic Responsibility

Review of 1st half of semester

*Midterm Exercise posted Friday October 23 (6 pm Eastern Time)*

- Using performance frameworks (Baldrige, etc.)
- Seeking awards and recognition
- Community development & Philanthropy
- Registry of regulatory requirements
- *Case:* Nestlé Purina’s economic model through the lens of its Baldrige award.
Oct 26-Nov 1  Corporate Sustainability Strategy
Week 9

Nov 1: Midterm Exercise Due (Midnight Eastern Time)

- Developing strategy through benchmarking and balanced scorecard
- Intrapreneurs and employee engagement
- Operationalizing Sustainability
- No posting this week as students work on the midterm

Nov 2-8  Corporate Sustainability Management System
Week 10

- Determining sustainability “current state” – Corporate level
- Benchmark sustainability program – Gap analysis
- Create sustainability strategy
- Implementing SMS – integrating management systems
- Case: Examining the SMS of BMW

Nov 9-15  Supply Chain Management
Week 11

- Value chain concepts - Benchmarking
- Sourcing and procurement
- Life cycle issues in operations
- Codes of Conduct, disclosures and regulation
- Case: Timberland and supply chain management

Nov 16-22  Sustainability Metrics
Week 12

- GRI and ESG sustainability results – Lagging indicators
- Performance framework ADRI method – Leading indicators
- SMS: communications, documentation and records
- Materiality of results
- Balanced Scorecard – Performance Scorecard
- Case: Examination of materiality with Marks & Spencer

Nov 23-29  Sustainability Reporting
Week 13

(Thanksgiving break: Nov. 25-29)

- Investors, customers, government & media
- Disclosing sustainability information – report and website
- Transparency and Accountability
- One Report movement – financial and non-financial together
- SMS: communications, documentation and records
- Case: Nestlé and its Shared Value strategy
- Posting optional this week over Thanksgiving break
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<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nov 30-Dec 6</td>
<td>Product Design, Marketing and Stewardship</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Review of 2nd half of semester</td>
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<td><strong>Dec 4: Final Exercise Posted (Undergrad Students Only)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Dec 6: Semester Paper Due (Graduate Students Only)</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Design for sustainability</td>
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<td>• Design management (ISO 9001)</td>
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<td>• Embedded energy and water (PAS 2050)</td>
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<td>• Greenwashing</td>
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<td>• <strong>Case:</strong> Sustainable Design at Jones Lang LaSalle</td>
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<td>• <strong>Posting Optional</strong> this week as Graduate Students complete their</td>
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<td>Dec 7-13</td>
<td>Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Knowledge brokering</td>
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<td>• Social media</td>
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<td>• Involving employees</td>
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<td>• <strong>No Case.</strong> Discussion boards will be open for student comments</td>
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<td></td>
<td>and suggestions</td>
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<td>Dec 14-21</td>
<td>Sustainability Challenges and Solutions</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>December 13: Final Exercise Due (Undergrad Students Only)</td>
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<td>December 13: Paper Power Point Presentations Due (Grad Students Only)</td>
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<td>LAST CLASS on Dec. 14</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• New horizons in sustainability</td>
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<td>• Class feedback and discussion</td>
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**Academic Integrity**

You are responsible for understanding Harvard Extension School policies on academic integrity ([www.extension.harvard.edu/resources-policies/student-conduct/academic-integrity](http://www.extension.harvard.edu/resources-policies/student-conduct/academic-integrity)) and how to use sources responsibly. Not knowing the rules, misunderstanding the rules, running out of time, submitting "the wrong draft", or being overwhelmed with multiple demands are not acceptable excuses. There are no excuses for failure to uphold academic integrity. To support your learning about academic citation rules, please visit the Harvard Extension School Tips to Avoid Plagiarism ([www.extension.harvard.edu/resources-policies/resources/tips-avoid-plagiarism](http://www.extension.harvard.edu/resources-policies/resources/tips-avoid-plagiarism)), where you'll find links to the Harvard Guide to Using Sources and two, free, online 15-minute tutorials to test your knowledge of academic citation policy. The tutorials are anonymous open-learning tools.

**Disabilities**

The Extension School is committed to providing an accessible academic community. The Disability Services Office offers a variety of accommodations and services to students with documented disabilities. Please visit [www.extension.harvard.edu/resources-policies/resources/disability-services-accessibility](http://www.extension.harvard.edu/resources-policies/resources/disability-services-accessibility) for more information.
Additional Information

The Course Requirements are posted on the course website. This document contains important information on grading, expectations and deadlines for required assignments. You should read this document carefully to properly prepare for this course.

We look forward to your participation!