MGPO 440: Strategies for Sustainability
Winter 2015
Bronfman 001, Tue/Thur 4:00 to 5:25pm

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Course Description
Over the past century, technological and economic development have significantly elevated the living standards of many peoples; yet many still remain in abject poverty and different metrics show how inequity amongst populations is widening. The scope and scale of the ecological impacts of human activity have increased at an even more rapid and evidenced pace, and a reliance on technological fixes alone is no longer seen as a viable option. Humankind increasingly recognizes itself to be a truly global force with impact on the whole biosphere. As recent (and ongoing) ecological and financial crises shockingly demonstrate, globalization has significantly increased the inter-relatedness of the world’s communities. Concern for these impacts – for ecologically sustainable and socially responsible economic development – has become a matter of survival for nations, industries and firms, as well as for individuals. In this context, industries and firms are reacting in different ways to these challenges, choosing to resist, comply, compete or lead in the global sustainability agenda. The aim of this course is to equip future leaders, entrepreneurs, managers, citizens, and parents to access and make use of up-to-date knowledge and conceptual tools for addressing the difficult issues that surround the formulation and implementation of organizational (and personal) strategies for sustainable development.

Class Materials: Course pack (available at Dave’s in Bronfman Basement)

Evaluation Overview
1. Participation (class participation, reading & discussion outlines, presentation feedback) 20%
2. Mid-term take-home examination 25%
3. Corporate accountability review (individual assignment) 25%
4. Corporate strategy review (group deliverable) 30%

Evaluation Details
1. Participation
1.1 Participation: General in class discussion (10%)
Students are expected to do all the required reading and to come to class prepared to actively participate, with evidence, in discussions of the ideas and cases found therein. Learning will not be passive; thinking and creativity are expected. At times, questions will be given in class, to be answered on paper (or submitted online) by the end of the class. Questions and support of others’ points with new evidence can be as important as direct contributions. Brevity, tact and staying on topic are also signs of quality participation. Punctuality, adherence to timetables and mutual respect are important facets of professional behavior. It is impossible to participate without attending class, including the final presentation sessions. After one allowable absence, further absences can be made up with a two-page brief on the readings for each class missed.

1.2 Participation: Reading and discussion outline (10%)
You will be assigned to a discussion group (about five people per group). Prior to class marked “Group discussion” (there are 15 in total), one person per group will be responsible for creating/gathering a one-page outline for each reading due for that class. This person should also outline, in half a page (bullets are fine) the discussion provoked by the readings. Group discussions should be useful and interesting – the point is not to talk for a specified amount of time, but to gather different perspectives and supporting information. This will be a useful exercise to highlight links between topics discussed in class and real world events. The summary pages are helpful study tools. Each member of the group will be responsible for two sessions. To be counted, the summaries (one page per reading + half a page for the group discussion) should be submitted before the beginning of the following class. Please choose amongst yourselves the readings and sessions you will be responsible for.

2. Midterm take-home exam (25%) INDIVIDUAL
You will have 12 days to complete the midterm once it is distributed at the end of the class on February 26. The midterm will cover the readings, discussions and presentations up to the class in which it is delivered. It is to be submitted individually in .pdf format via MyCourse before the March 10th class and represent your own thinking and reflection on the themes and topics of the course.

3. Corporate accountability review (25%) (Due April 14th, 5pm) INDIVIDUAL
More and more companies chose to report on their “non-financial” performance and come to cover a wide range of sustainability issues. They publish sustainability reports, CSR activity reviews, social citizenship website, or leverage social media to share their vision and actions for a more sustainable industry. This “Corporate accountability” or “sustainability accounting” is meant to present the organization’s vision for and performance on sustainability, and attract a large share of the sustainability consulting themes. Using a framework explored in class, you will be asked to review and assess the reporting efforts of an organization. Please choose a Fortune 500 corporation, a large international organization or a Canadian organization for your review (note that an “organization” does not have to be a listed corporation and can be an NGO, a multilateral organization, an industry group, etc). The organization selected must be cleared with me in advance (by February 17th). 5 to 10 pages, due on March 26th.
4. Corporate strategy review (15% paper, 15% presentation) GROUP

Working in groups of 4-5 (it is helpful but not mandatory to use the same groups as the reading and discussion groups), each team should conduct an analysis of the sustainability issues and strategy of an organization. Chose an organization (different from any of the group member’s individual corporate accountability review) that has not been featured prominently in any of the required readings for the class. Each group is required to choose a different organization, permission will be granted on a first come first served basis. Validate your choice by March 17th.

Group Paper (Due March 31st at 5pm)

Write a paper (10 to 20 pages, not including references and appendices, submitted on MyCourses) exploring the following questions:

- What are the business model and the corporate strategy of the organization? (What context does it work in and how does it thrive?)
- What are the main sustainability themes and issues faced by this type of organization, and by this company specifically?
- What is the sustainability/CSR strategy of the organization?
- How are the corporate strategy and the sustainability strategy aligned?
- Is the CSR/sustainability strategy effective? To whom? Why? Why not?
- What other best practices and initiatives are seen in the industry?
- As an advisor to the long-term health of the organization, what recommendations would you have for improving the CSR/sustainability strategy?

Group Presentation

In front of the class, outline the key points of your analysis. Each group will have 15 minutes (10 minutes for presentation and at least 5 minutes for Q&A). Any presentation material is due on the first day of presentations (March 31st, beginning of class). All group members have to be present, but the role each plays is up to you.

Submission of assignments

Assignments should be 1.5 spaced, 12 pt font, with standard 1” margins. Please submit via MyCourses in PDF format, including the full names of all the group members. The title of the file should include one of the team member’s names (e.g. JPRenaut_MGPO 440_accountability review_20March2015.pdf). 25% per day are deducted for late assignments. You have 7 days (from when you receive a grade) to raise any concerns.
Course content and session descriptions
What follows is a description of the topics to be covered in each class, and the readings assigned for each session. They are subject to change, and all changes will be announced in advance (see MyCourses). The topics covered in these sessions overlap and are interconnected. Be aware of these connections in your group discussions and as we go through the course.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Jan 6</td>
<td>What is Sustainability part 1: Course overview and conceptual introduction</td>
<td>This course syllabus</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Jan 8</td>
<td>What is Sustainability part 2: concepts and definitions</td>
<td>MDG 2014 report</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Jan 13</td>
<td>Climate change part 1</td>
<td>Group discussion; Carlsson (Nowtopia, Contesting the evolution of science); Jackson (Virtues of Ignorance; Ignorance based view);</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Jan 15</td>
<td>Climate change part 2</td>
<td>Group discussion; The Economist: The Heat is on;</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Jan 20</td>
<td>Chemical pollution and the precautionary principle</td>
<td>Group discussion; Summers (1991); Case: Toffel (Precautionary Principle); Groopman (Plastic panic); Green Chemistry California Cornerstone Report; Manley 2007</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Jan 22</td>
<td>Industrial agriculture, water and soil</td>
<td>Montgomery (Ch 2 and 8)</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Jan 27</td>
<td>Water</td>
<td>Group discussion; Case: Branzei and McKague (City Water Tanzania); London and Rondinelli 2003;</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Jan 29</td>
<td>Energy</td>
<td>Group discussion; Unruh (Carbon lock-in); Unruh 2008 Bioshpere rules</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Feb 3</td>
<td>Food: Local and remote part 1</td>
<td>Group discussion; Roberts (Ch 8 - In the long Run); The Economist: article voting with your trolley;</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Feb 5</td>
<td>Food: Local and remote part 2</td>
<td>Case: Branzei and Leithwood (Make Green Delicious)</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Feb 10</td>
<td>Why should businesses care?</td>
<td>Group discussion; Lovins et al. (1999)</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Feb 12</td>
<td>Why should business care (Part 2)</td>
<td>Group discussion; Business case for sustainability. Ambeac and Lanoie 2008; Case: Larson (Method); Porter and Kramer, 2006</td>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>Notes</td>
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| 13 Feb | LCA and systems thinking                                               | *Due: choice of organization for (individual) corporate accountability review*  
|        |                                                                       | *Case: Lee and Bony (Herman Miller)*                                     |
| 14 Feb | Accountability & metrics? (Measuring sustainability part 1)           | *Group discussion*  
|        |                                                                       | *Specter (Big Foot); GHG protocol, Global Compact (overview and principles)* |
| 15 Feb | Accountability & metrics? (Measuring sustainability part 2)           | *GRI G4 (principles only); IIRC (intro only)*                            |
| 16 Feb | Group work and distribution of MIDTERM EXAM                            |                                                                        |
| 3–5 Mar| STUDY BREAK                                                            |                                                                        |
| 17 Mar | Technology and Innovation part 1                                       | *Group discussion*  
|        |                                                                       | *Due: Mid-term submission*  
|        |                                                                       | *Nidumolu 2009; Case: Read et al (TerraCycle)*                            |
| 18 Mar | Technology and Innovation part 2                                       | *Due: Composition of groups for corporate strategy review*  
|        |                                                                       | *Cases: McDaniels (Carbon Capture and Storage A and B); Greenpeace: Why carbon capture and storage won’t save the planet (exec summary); Van Noorden: Buried Trouble, Huesmann: limits* |
| 19 Mar | Role of regulations                                                    | *Group discussion*  
|        |                                                                       | *Due: Choice of organization for (group) corporate strategy review*  
|        |                                                                       | *Case: Reinhardt (Agricultural Biotech and regulation)*                   |
| 20 Mar | Working together: Partnerships and stakeholders                        | *Group discussion*  
|        |                                                                       | *Case: McMaster and Nowak (Fiji Water)*  
|        |                                                                       | *Case: Steger (Monsanto); Bowen et al, 2010*                             |
| 21 Mar | Decoupling and degrowth? part 1                                        | *Group discussion*  
|        |                                                                       | *Lovins et al (1999); Jackson (Prosperity without growth)*               |
| 22 Mar | Decoupling and degrowth? part 2                                        | *Due: Corporate Accountability Review (individual assignment)*  
|        |                                                                       | *McKibben (ch 5); Case: Reinhardt (Patagonia)*                           |
| 23 Mar | Student Presentations                                                  | *Due: all groups must submit Strategy Alignment Paper, AND presentation slides* |
| 24 Apr | Student Presentations                                                  |                                                                        |
| 25 Apr | Student Presentations                                                  |                                                                        |
| 26 Apr | Student presentations and wrap up                                      | *LAST CLASS*                                                             |
Readings

Cases


Larson, A., York, J. Method: Sustainable design for the Home as Corporate Strategy. Darden School of Business, UV0812-PDF-ENG (coursepack)

Lee, D., Bony, L (2009). Cradle-to-cradle Design at Herman Miller: Moving Toward Environmental Sustainability. HBS 9 607 003 (coursepack)


McDaniels, D., Bowen, F. (2011) Total’s Carbon Capture and Storage Project at LACQ (B): Gaining Public Acceptance of New Technology (coursepack)

McMaster and Nowak (2009) Fiji water and corporate social responsibility - Green makeover or Greenwashing? Ivey 9B09A008 (coursepack)


Readings


GHG protocols, available at: http://www.ghgprotocol.org/standards. Read the overall intro and the presentation pages of all 4 standards

Global Compact (last reviewed 2013). Available at https://www.unglobalcompact.org/AboutTheGC/index.html Read the Overview and The Ten Principles.


Roberts, P (2009). The end of food. Chapter 8: In the Long Run (coursepack)

Specter, M. (2008). Big Foot: In measuring carbon emissions, it’s easy to confuse morality and science. The New Yorker. P44. Available at: http://web.ebscohost.com.proxy1.library.mcgill.ca/ehost/results?sid=8ff8b23a-fc18-4501-8a44-1c40a81a9ee9%40sessionmgr15&vid=1&hid=25&bquery=%28SO+%28The+New+Yorker%29%29%29%28AND%28DT+2008%29AND%28TI+Big+foot%29&bdata=JmRiPWE5aCZ0eXBIPTE%3d

The Economist: The heat is on. Available at: http://www.economist.com/node/21533360

The Economist: Spin, Science and climate change. Available at: http://www.economist.com/node/15720419

The Economist: Voting with your trolley. Available at: http://www.economist.com/node/8380592
