Introduction to Sustainable Business Practices

Fall 2008

Instructor: Eric J. Arnould, Distinguished Professor of Sustainable Business Practices
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Phone: 766-3723
Office: Crane Hall 220
Class Time: Monday 3:10-5:40
Class Room: Classroom Building 118

Required Books: Stuart Hart, Capitalism at the Cross Roads, Donald A. Fuller, Sustainable Marketing

Recommended Book: The Green Marketing Manifesto

Guest Speakers:

Wal-mart: Jerry Nyman, Laramie Wal-Mart Super Center General Manager
Entrepreneurial Company: Heath Van Eaton, CEO Heartland Bio-Composites
Wind power, TBA
Wyoming Outdoor Council: Laurie Milford, Exec director, Wyoming Outdoor Council

Synopsis: This course takes a close look at what is happening in business practice today through the 'lens' of sustainability. Business models and systems will be discussed and a framework proposed for assessing the ways in which principles of sustainability may be embedded within corporate strategy.

Background: Sustainability is fast becoming a strategic issue for businesses in all sectors. In the last five years a number of companies in the natural resources sector have completely redefined their business strategies in line with principles of sustainability i.e., balancing the requirements for economic development, environmental quality and social justice. Examples are many including Interface, Nike, Wal-mart, and the Wyoming energy company, Enercrest. In all cases strong leadership and a willingness to embrace societal values and the needs of stakeholders external and internal to the firm have been key components of the strategic
redefinition. Today the mainstreaming of sustainability thinking at Boardroom and CEO levels goes well beyond the natural resources sector. International examples of visionary thinking and corporate re-invention include Collins and Aikman (flooring), The Body Shop and Aveda (cosmetics), Patagonia, REI and Timberland (clothing) and DuPont and Dow (chemicals). Internationally, Toyota, Honda and Mercedes leads the automotive sector, TESCO and Marks & Spencer lead in the retail sector and consumer brands such as Home Depot and Unilever are involved. In tourism, Xanterra Corporation, the Yellowstone National Park concessionaire sets a strong example. Many start-ups incorporate sustainability into their core competencies. Other companies are adopting more incremental approaches, taking significant steps towards re-aligning their businesses and product offerings.

Not all re-inventions and re-alignments have been successful; Monsanto lost their way and in doing so created significant challenges for other firms in the biotech sector; Mitsubishi, Nestle, McDonalds face significant challenges in rehabilitating their reputations for environmentally and socially sustainable business behavior. Similarly the nuclear power and coal industries face significant challenges in developing credible sustainable business platforms and communicating these to skeptical stakeholders.

**Class Learning Objectives:** The class will successively take up the following themes:

1. History and Evolving Definitions of Sustainable Business Practice
2. Sustainable Business Strategy
3. Sustainable Business Tools
   a. Systems Thinking
   b. Life Cycle Analysis
   c. Other Tools: Eco-efficiency
4. Environmental stewardship; green marketing & green washing
   a. The Greening of Big Business
   b. Ecotourism & Green Tourism
   c. Global Warming and Energy Development
5. CSR & Social Entrepreneurship
   a. Domestic CSR
   b. BOP
6. Base-of-the-Pyramid Markets
7. Personally Sustainable Consumption and Affluenza

It is my belief that these 7 themes capture the essence of Sustainable Business Practices at this point in time. Thus, consistent with these themes key learning objectives for students include:

a. Have a basic grasp of the definition of each of these seven elements;
b. Know some tools used to implement and assess these elements of SBP;
c. Know where to go for further information about these elements;
d. Demonstrate the ability to apply sustainability ideas to their own stakeholder behavior based on the semester individual project; and
e. Demonstrate basic capability to assess firm sustainability based on the semester group project.
f. Can respond comfortably to the questions listed under each course unit.

Readings and resources

Readings and Resources will be drawn from textbooks, the popular press, the academic business press, business cases, and the copious on-line sources dealing with sustainability.

My Teaching Philosophy

My philosophy of teaching is simple. I believe that students learn best (as I do) when they talk about things and experience things by actually going through and critically analyzing the process(es) we discuss. As a result, I will not (cannot!) stand up in front of the classroom and tell you everything you need to learn; instead, I will bring up major issues and lead class discussions and/or assign class projects that I believe emphasize the important points of consumer behavior. That is, I believe that students must be ACTIVE in their learning process. We are working together! I also believe that students learn best when they receive appropriate amounts of encouragement and criticism. If I always tell you that you’ve performed amazingly well, how will you really know when you have?

Assignments

Individual Student Projects: Ecological Footprint Reduction (EFR) and Journal. Each student will keep a daily/weekly journal that records weekly consumption ($ amount and description) of food (e.g., $ spent, product/brand, organic or not), transportation (e.g., gas, airplane miles, public transport fees), housing (e.g., utility bills), and any relevant lifestyle consumption behaviors that you want to comment on (e.g., donation of time or money to a cause, purchase of a locally made or organic cotton t-shirt). The first page of the journal should include ecological footprint calculations and at least 3 strategies for reducing it this semester. I recommend the following sources to calculate footprints: (1) ecological footprint calculator at www.ecologicalfootprint.org; (2) http://www.globalcool.org/myco2/ (find a “carbon coach”); (3) Buy Less Crap http://www.buylesscrap.org> (4) The PB&J Campaign; <http://www.pbjcampaign.org>, (5) We Are What We Do; http://www.wearewhatwedo.org/index.php; this site has an action tracker that you can participate in; (6) personal footprint calculator at the New American Dream Website, http://www.footprintnetwork.org/gfn_sub.php?content=calculator; (7) carbon footprint

Use the journal to record progress toward this goal. Think of it as a diary – how difficult is it to stick to your commitments? What are some of the challenges? How do you feel about these EFR actions you are taking (resentful, proud, less guilty)? Students will give periodic updates on how these efforts are proceeding. The journal will be submitted to me at the end of the semester (but you will get it back unmarred). You might consider starting a blog on your efforts, creating a short video illustrating your lifestyle changes, or joining one of the social networks indicated on the websites above. Creativity is welcomed and will be positively evaluated.

This assignment is worth 100 points.

Group project: This project will focus on assessing business sustainability principles in a Wyoming commercial or non-profit venture. Graduate students will serve as project coordinators on projects incorporating undergraduate and graduate students. The class will be divided into four groups of around 8 persons each. The project will employ the GEMI Navigator guide available at http://www.gemi.org/metricsnavigator/ in this effort. The website provides a workbook, additional blank worksheets, and a bibliography of background materials, all available for free. Students will be formed into teams during the first week of class, and should have identified a target firm by the 3rd week of the semester. This is an ambitious project that will require careful coordination and division of labor, but will constitute a real contribution to a student’s portfolio or CV. The project may involve review of company documents, interviews with company management, on-site visits, and the like. Creativity is welcomed and will be positively evaluated.

This assignment is worth 100 points.

Final Exam: Students grasp of classroom material will be assessed through an essay examination administered during final exam week as a take-home exam due at the end of exam week. Exam will be differentiated with graduate students being responsible for material presented in additional grad student readings.

This assignment is worth 100 points
Classroom Participation: Students are expected to attend class, to read material in preparation for class, and to participate actively in classroom discussion. This assignment is worth 100 points. This component of the student’s grade is subjectively assessed.

Summary of Evaluation Metrics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual Project</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Update at mid-term; due Nov. 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Project</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Due Dec. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Examination</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Due end of Exam week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
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<td>Ongoing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>400</td>
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Prerequisites

Undergraduate students outside of COB taking this course must enjoy junior status; students in COB must enjoy qualified business student status. Students taking this course for graduate credit must have been admitted to a full-time graduate program at UW.

Special Arrangements

If you require or need special accommodations in this class because of a disability or if you have special issues which you would like to discuss, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible. The classroom is equipped with auditory enhancement devices for students who may require them. Alternatively, the Undergraduate Advising Office or the Dean’s Office is available for assistance.

Classroom Decorum

UNIREG 29, Change 1, states that the student has obligations as well as rights in the classroom. The instructor can “establish reasonable standards of conduct for each class which should be made known at the outset.” Thus, you are expected to maintain professional decorum in the class by exhibiting respect for yourself, your fellow students and professor. Negative behaviors that constitute poor professionalism include cell phones and pagers going off in class, talking to your neighbor in class, text messaging in class, reading the newspaper, doing crossword puzzles, or sleeping, coming in late, leaving in the middle of class, or packing up and leaving early. I reserve the right to deduct up to 10% of your grade for excessive unprofessional behavior. Absences required due to athletic or ASUW responsibilities should be cleared in advance with the instructor.

Academic Dishonesty
Also known as “cheating,” academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in this class. Cases of academic dishonesty will be prosecuted in accordance with UNIREG 802 Rev. 2. Cheating can result in an “F” in the course. Academic dishonesty includes (but is not limited to) unapproved assistance on examinations, copying the homework of others, plagiarism or other use of published materials without complete citations, or fabrication of referenced information. Plagiarism occurs when five or more words that are NOT your own are used in succession without using appropriate quotation marks, citations, and specifying sources, including page numbers. Of course, this also includes downloading content from Wikipedia, Google, corporate websites, web rings, etc. without proper attribution.

ETS Exam

College of Business students are required to complete a comprehensive assessment during their senior capstone course, MGT 4520. This test, known as the Major Field Test in Business is developed by the Educational Testing Service and is given locally in a computer-based format. The Major Field test covers basic business knowledge and skills in eight areas: accounting, economics, finance, international issues, legal and social environment, management, marketing, and quantitative business analysis (decision science). The purpose of this test is to assess the student’s mastery and retention of basic business concepts. A minimum score is required as a condition for passing MGT 4520. Failure to obtain this minimum score will require remedial work on your part. Therefore, you are strongly encouraged to keep your materials from these courses to help you prepare for this examination.
Class Units

1. August 25th and September 1st, 2008  History/definitions; introductions; assignments

Unfortunately, Labor Day comes on a Monday so we won’t have class on Labor Day, but this will give students an opportunity to study up on basic background material on sustainability thinking and to digest material we cover during the first class meeting.

Questions:

1) What is a workable definition of sustainability?
2) What is meant by sustainable business practices?
3) How have these practices changed over time?
4) Why are SBPs important?
5) What are the drivers of SBP?
6) What do you think constrains businesses’ adoption of SBP?

Undergraduate Readings

Hart, Stuart (2005), Capitalism at the Crossroads, Chapters 1-2, 3-56.

Fuller (1999), Sustainable Marketing, Chapter 1, pp. 1-43.


Additional Graduate Student Readings:


Video: Ray Anderson, Interface Carpet, Climbing Mount sustainability 1, http://www.bigpicture.tv/videos/watch/e00da03b6
Karl Hendrik Robert, Achieving Sustainability,  
http://www.bigpicture.tv/videos/watch/621bf66dd

2. September 8th, & September 15th, 2008 Sustainable Business Strategy

2a. September 8th, 2008 Sustainable Business Strategy

Questions:

1) What is a business strategy?
2) What is a sustainable business strategy?
3) How does sustainability figure into business competitiveness?
4) What are the risks or dangers of a sustainability strategy?
5) How can sustainability create a differential position in the market for a firm?
6) How does a sustainability strategy help a company create “value”?

Required Undergraduate Reading:

Fuller, Chapter 3, pp. 77-128

Hart, Chapter 3, pp. 57-80

Optional Reading: The Green Marketing Manifesto, pp. 17-56

Video: Climbing Mount Sustainability, Part I;  
http://www.bigpicture.tv/videos/watch/e00da03b6

Case Study:

Additional Graduate Student Reading:


Additional Sources:
Charter, Martin, Ken Peattie, Jacqueline Ottman and Michael J. Polonsky (2002), Marketing and Sustainability; Centre for Business Relationships, Accountability, Sustainability and Society (BRASS), in association with The Centre for Sustainable Design, see online readings.


2b. September 8th, 2008 Sustainable Business Strategy (continued)

Discussion of GEMI measurement tools and semester assignment; review materials at http://www.gemi.org/metricsnavigator/

3. Sustainable Business Tools:

3a. September 22nd, 2008 Systems Thinking

Systems Thinking and Sustainability

Systems thinking has so much to do with sustainability, that it will be a theme that constantly reappears in our discussions throughout the semester. Systems thinking is a mental framework for seeing interrelationships rather than things, seeing patterns of change rather than static ‘snapshots’, and viewing societies and economies as integrated parts of the biosphere. Understanding what we mean when we talk about systems thinking is thus critical. For many people, systems thinking helps explain why we have found ourselves in the mess we are in. The flip side of that coin is that systems thinking explains why we are so well off, even given all the stupid stuff we are doing.

Questions:

1) What is a system?
2) What is a feedback loop?
3) What is positive feedback? Negative feedback?
4) How can systems thinking help firms reduce costs?
5) How can systems thinking help firms reduce waste?
6) How can systems thinking help firms identify new business opportunities?

**Undergraduate Readings:**


Overview of Systems Thinking by Daniel Aronson; downloaded from [http://www.thinking.net/Systems_Thinking/OverviewSTarticle.pdf](http://www.thinking.net/Systems_Thinking/OverviewSTarticle.pdf); on-line readings


**Additional Graduate Readings:**


**Other Resources:**


**Case Study:**


**Questions:**

1) What is Life Cycle Analysis?
2) What are key goals of LCA?
3) How is LCA useful to the manufacturing part of a business?
4) How is LCA useful to the marketing part of a business?
5) What is the cradle-to-cradle philosophy?
6) How can LCA be implemented? What are the obstacles to implementation?

**Undergraduate Student Reading:**

Fuller, Chapter 2 The Product System Life Cycle, pp. 47-74

**On-line video:**


**Case readings:**

Shaw industries: Ecoworx™ and Cradle-to-Cradle Innovation in Carpet Tile; on-line cases

Nike: Moving Down the Sustainability Track Through Chemical Substitution and Waste Reduction; on-line cases

**In-Class Exercise:** LCA of the Hamburger

**Visual:** Cradle to Spray Flow Chart

**Additional Graduate Student Readings**


**October 6th, 2008**

I have outlined a number of alternative tools that are available to evaluating sustainability here including eco-efficiency, design for environment, and the Global Reporting Initiative tools. I will talk primarily about the first, and secondarily about the second. Be aware that DfE is a huge movement in sustainability that involves architects and product designers. William McDonough is one of the big kahunas in the architecture side of this. However, we just don’t have the time
to get in to all of the issues. Students who are interested can pursue these issues through other channels or in subsequent courses.

1. **Eco-efficiency**

**Questions**

1) What are the principles of eco-efficiency?  
2) What are some indicators of eco-efficiency?  
3) Why do we want to measure eco-efficiency?  
4) What can measurement tell us?  
5) How can it help guide management decisions?  
6) How can eco-efficiency provide competitive differentiation in the marketplace?

http://www.wbcsd.org/templates.TemplateWBCSD5/layout.asp?MenuID=1; on line readings

Website: http://www.businessmetabolics.com/ see demo on thermodynamic analysis

**Case Reading:**

Xanterra Corporation (2008), Xanterra Sustainability Report; on line readings

**Additional Resources:**

Website: World Business Council for Sustainable Development:  


**In Class Exercises:** Using the Eco-Compass Tool

Implementing Eco-efficiency in Your Group Partner Firm
For Your Interest and for Future Investigation

2. DfE: Design for Environment


Website:


William McDonough’s website: [http://www.mcdonough.com/writings.htm](http://www.mcdonough.com/writings.htm); see Design for the Triple Bottom Line: [http://www.mcdonough.com/writings/design_for_triple.htm](http://www.mcdonough.com/writings/design_for_triple.htm); Herman Miller Case Study: [http://www.mcdonough.com/writings/anatomy_transformation.htm](http://www.mcdonough.com/writings/anatomy_transformation.htm)

Herman Miller, [http://www.hermanmiller.com/CDA/SSA/Category/0,,a10-c609,00.html](http://www.hermanmiller.com/CDA/SSA/Category/0,,a10-c609,00.html)

3. Global Reporting Initiative (GRI)

Website: [http://www.globalreporting.org/Home](http://www.globalreporting.org/Home)

Additional Resources: Sustainability Reporting Guidelines; on-line readings

4. October 13, 20 & 27, 2008    Environmental stewardship; green marketing & green washing

4a. October 13, 2008    The Greening of Big Business

Many big businesses are discovering “green“. But, is it a marketing ploy, or do they really get it? In this class, we’ll talk about WalMart, BP, Nike and other companies that are seeking to establish their reputations as “green“ companies. In addition, we will take some additional time to look at the results of your socially responsible investment portfolio. In this line of inquiry, Joel Makower driver of GreenBiz.Com, is one of the major authors and commentators along with Jaquelyn Ottman at Green Marketing; [http://www.greenmarketing.com/index.php](http://www.greenmarketing.com/index.php)

Questions:
1) What is green marketing?
2) Is green marketing real?
3) When (if ever) does green marketing really benefit the environment?
4) What is green washing?
5) What are the pros and cons of green marketing for firms?

Undergraduate Student Readings:

Hart, Chapter 4, pp. 85-105

Fuller, Chapter 4, 129-174.


Graduate Student Readings:


Peattie, Ken and Andrew Crane, (2005), “Green marketing: legend, myth, farce or prophesy?” Qualitative Market Research 8 (4), 357-370; online readings.

Websites:

http://www.greenmarketing.com/index.php/news/; good on interviews and commentary from Jaquelyn Ottman about green marketing

http://www.greenbiz.com/; lots of hot news about all aspects of environmental business initiatives


Additional Resources:


Case Reading: Clorox’s Green Works; on-line readings

The Clorox Greenworks Website:


4b. October 20, 2008 Ecotourism & Green Tourism

Guest Speakers: Laurie Milford, Executive Director and Richard Garrett, Outreach and Legislative Advocate, Wyoming Outdoor Council

Questions:

1) Why has tourism gone green?
2) What is green tourism? How does it differ from conventional tourism?
3) What are the pros and cons of ecotourism for a state like Wyoming?
4) How can we measure green tourism’s impacts?

Undergraduate Readings:


Case and In Class Activity:
Whistler: Blazing the Trail for sustainability (C), UVA BAT-1041, Darden Business School, University of Virginia

Websites:
Whistler Resort Sustainability Initiatives:
http://www.whistlerblackcomb.com/mountain/environment/sustainability.htm

International Ecotourism Society

4c. October 27, 2008  Global Warming and Energy Development

Sustainable Energy Options

One of the greatest challenges to society as we move forward is to address our appetite for energy. Global warming is a fact of life that we must account for, but our potential responses our limited because of the importance of energy use. John will talk about sustainable energy options, and will challenge us all with the proposal that nuclear should play a role.

Questions:

1) Are emissions trading schemes a “license to pollute”?
2) Are companies addressing public concerns about climate change?
3) Do market mechanisms provide a response to the challenge of climate change?
4) Are alternative energy sources capable of providing enough energy to offset sources that produce greenhouse gases?
5) Can we produce enough “clean” energy to meet global demand?

Undergraduate Student Readings:


Additional Graduate Student Readings


Additional Reading:


Websites of Interest:

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change: http://www.ipcc.ch/index.htm; The scientific committee that has established the dimensions of the climate change dilemma. Lots of interesting scientific reports can be found here.

Website on Clean Coal resources: http://www.carenergy.com/cleaner_environment/clean-coal-technology.asp

Coal Industry Website: http://www.americaspower.org/; very pro-coal

Leading Wind Power Turbine Manufacturer: www.vestas.com; lots of corporate information and some nice little videos about Vestas products at this site

American Wind Energy Association website: http://www.awea.org/

Wind Power Network Website: http://www.wind-watch.org/; generally skeptical of wind power
Case Reading: Cape Wind: Offshore Energy in the USA, HBS 708022

5. November 3 & November 10, 2008 CSR/Social Entrepreneurship

5a. November 3, 2008 Domestic CSR & Social Entrepreneurship

Questions

1. What is CSR?
2. What is social entrepreneurship?
3. What is the link between social entrepreneurship and innovation
4. How do these constructs fit into the sustainability paradigm?

Undergraduate Student Readings:


Additional Graduate Student Readings:


Website: http://www.skollfoundation.org/aboutsocialentrepreneurship/whatis.asp

Video: http://www.skollfoundation.org/tvfilm/uncommonheroes.asp; other video sources: http://www.fuqua.duke.edu/centers/case/about/videoarchive.htm

Additional Reading:

McKibben, Bill, Deep Economy, Chapter 4, pp.120-176.
Dees, J. Gregory ( ), “PHILANTHROPY AND ENTERPRISE: HARNESsING THE POWER OF BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP FOR SOCIAL CHANGE,” on-line reading


Salzmann, Oliver, Aileen Ionescu-Somers, and Ulrich Steger ( ) “The Business Case for Corporate Sustainability- Review of the literature and Research Options”; IMD/CSM Forum; see on-line readings, pp


5b. November 10, 2008, Base-of-the-Pyramid Markets

Questions:

1. What are Base-of-the-Pyramid Markets?
2. Are proposals to meet the needs of BOP consumers going to be effective in changing their quality of life?
3. Are proposal to meet the needs of BOP consumers going to contribute to global sustainability?
4. Why have western businesses been so slow to develop successful strategies for building global supply chains and customer bases?

Required Undergraduate Readings:

Hart, Stuart (2005), Capitalism at the Crossroads, Chapters 5 and 6, pp. 107-162.


Additional Graduate Student Readings:


Discussions of base of the economic pyramid (BOP) markets have, until now, relied principally on business case studies and rough estimates of market size. The Next 4 Billion uses previously unreleased data to measure market opportunity at the BOP.


On-line Video: Shea butter from Burkina Faso, Africa;
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vydnmdyUgic;
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XLEImW-cXc4&NR=1;
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0r_pkK4v2Pw&feature=related

Website:


6. November 17, 2008 Personal Sustainability Materialism/affluenza, sustainable consumption

Questions:

1. What is affluenza?
2. What is voluntary simplicity?
3. What is LOHAS?
4. How much can individuals contribute to a more sustainable economic environment?
5. What is ethical consumerism?
6. What factors constrain consumers from making more sustainable choices?
7. How might markets be segmented in terms of ethical criteria?
Required Undergraduate Readings:


McKibben, Bill (2007), “GREEN from the ground up,” Sierra, 92 (July/August), 42-73; online readings.

Video:

WWW.STORYOFSTUFF.COM View the story of stuff.

Websites:

www.lohas.com


http://www.newdream.org/ Read polls and research publications on this website. Read back issues of the newsletter; also found on the publications page.

Additional Graduate Student Readings:


Zavestocki, Stephen (2001), Environmental Concern and Anti-consumerism in the Self-Concept: Do They Share the Same Basis?” in Exploring Sustainable Consumption, Maurie J. Cohen and Joseph Murphy, eds., Pergamon/Elsevier, 173-190


Be prepared to present results of sustainable consumption journals.

7. Week of November 24, 2008. No class Thanksgiving Week
8. December 1, 2008 Group Presentations