

COURSE INFORMATION

Course title:	Ethics and Sustainability	Credits:	1.5
Course code:	BA560	Class location:	DL 125
Session, term, period:	2022W	Class times:	M/W 2:00 to 4:00PM
Sections:	MM1	Program:	MM
Course duration:	Feb 27 to March 31		

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor:	Justin G. Bull, Lecturer – Sustainability and Ethics Group		
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Email:	justin.bull@sauder.ubc.ca	Office hours:	Book at calendly.com/jgbull

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines trends in sustainability that are shaping the future of business, government, and society. Using a variety of conceptual frameworks, students will understand the challenges and opportunities that sustainability presents and how to play a leadership role in navigating these issues. Social sustainability and ethical issues around responsible business, inequality, racial justice, and decolonization are also discussed. Students will learn how to manage the complexity of sustainability, identify how it motivates different stakeholders, and be exposed to frameworks that foster leadership and innovative thinking. Completing the course will leave students equipped with the tools to effectively apply sustainable thinking and leadership skills to a wide variety of professional opportunities.

COURSE FORMAT

This course will consist of lectures and in-class discussions.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- 1) Evaluate and articulate the competitive advantage sustainability offers.
- 2) Identify leadership challenges and innovation opportunities related to sustainability across a range of industries.
- 3) Navigate complex decision-making contexts and ethically challenging scenarios.
- 4) Recognize tools, concepts, standards, and frameworks used in sustainable business.
- 5) Synthesize and apply sustainability knowledge to leadership strategies.

ASSEMENT SUMMARY AND SCHEDULE

Due Date	Topic	Weight
<i>Ongoing</i>	Professionalism and Participation	10%
<i>Ongoing</i>	In-Class Activities & Lecture Responses	20%
<i>March 11</i>	Memo: Decision Traps and the Climate Crisis	10%
<i>March 18</i>	Memo: Sustainability at Scale	10%
<i>March 25</i>	Memo: Disruptive Sustainability	10%
<i>Exam Week</i>	Final Group Project	40%

ASSEMENT DETAILS

Professionalism and Participation (10% of Grade)

Participation is a vital part of the learning experience. Students will need come to each class prepared to discuss assigned readings and respond to the ideas and comments of others. Interactions are expected to be respectful, informative, and well-reasoned. Participation is evaluated on the quality (not quantity) of in-class contributions, interactions with the instructor outside of class, and active engagement with and support of peers during in-class activities.

In-Class Activities and Lecture Responses (20% of Grade)

In six instances, students will be asked to submit responses to discussion questions, complete worksheets, or submit their findings based on assigned activities during class time. These activities will allow students to apply course concepts in real-time and learn from group members and class peers about how to apply and adapt these tools to various sustainability and leadership challenges. These assignments will be due at 11:59PM PDT the day after class.

Memos (30% of Grade; 10% each)

Memo: Decision Traps and the Climate Crisis: The purpose of this assignment is to consider how decision-making traps influence how a manager navigates the climate crisis. Based on a series of traps that will be identified and discussed in class, your goal is to apply these to a corporate decision-making environment. You are encouraged to select an environment that you know well; a previous position or employer could serve as a useful reference point.

You need to write a one-page, single-spaced memo. It should identify at least three different decision-making traps, how they manifest in a manager's role, and potential strategies for avoiding the traps. You can identify more than three traps, but your analysis of each trap should be thorough and offer examples and context. Where appropriate, you should conduct background research and provide citations. In addition to the one-page memo, you are allowed a one-page appendix, as well as whatever space is required for references.

Memo: Sustainability at Scale: The purpose of this assignment is for students to identify and describe a sustainability initiative that has been **adopted at a large scale**. This means that product-market fit has

been well-established, there's no technology risk, and that a large organization (think Nike, Nestle, IKEA, etc.) has adopted and implemented the chosen initiative.

You need to write a one-page, single-spaced memo. It should briefly summarize the initiative, identify the problem it addresses, and build a compelling business case for why this initiative is of high value. Significant background research is expected, and students should not rely on press releases or corporate reports – find external validation (if possible) of all the claims being made. The best practices of writing a business memo are expected: jargon-free, descriptive headings, professional formatting, and the selective and appropriate use of visual elements. In addition to the one-page memo, you are allowed a one-page appendix, as well as whatever space is required for references.

Memo: Disruptive Sustainability: The purpose of this assignment is for students to identify and describe a sustainability innovation that contains **massive disruptive potential**. This might be a technology, business model, or even a social movement that could radically alter the status quo. The chosen initiative might still be in its early stages and significant risk and uncertainty likely remains. This also means that background research is going to be more difficult - you may have to dig deep, and find creative ways to validate (or offer skepticism) about some of the claims being made.

You need to write a one-page, single-spaced memo. It should briefly summarize the initiative, identify the problem it addresses, and make an argument for how the innovation might disrupt the status quo. Background research is expected, but there will be constraints – your chosen innovation may not be well publicized or documented. You are still expected to attempt to validate claims of fact and dig deep in evaluating the feasibility of your selected innovation. The best practices of writing a business memo are expected: jargon-free, descriptive headings, professional formatting, and the selective and appropriate use of visual elements. In addition to the one-page memo, you are allowed a one-page appendix, as well as whatever space is required for references.

Final Group Project (40% of Grade)

In lieu of a final exam, students will complete a major project in groups. Teams will be self-selected by students and should contain between 4 to 6 students. Each group will select a company and prepare a “Sustainable Breakthrough Pitch.” The audience will be the executives of a chosen company, and the presentation will critically evaluate their current corporate sustainability strategy and make recommendations about how and why it should change its approach. Students are advised to select companies that they feel are currently struggling to become more sustainable, as opposed to companies that are already considered sustainability leaders.

As a team, you have two goals:

- To persuasively communicate the business case for sustainability, using a variety of qualitative and quantitative methods
- To expand the mindset and ambitions of your audience, helping them better grasp the scale of challenge and opportunity that sustainability offers

While creativity is important this assignment, so is rigour. You have to conduct extensive primary and secondary research, come up with specific and credible recommendations, and stress-test all of your assumptions and proposals.

COURSE-SPECIFIC POLICIES AND RESOURCES

Late Assignments: Late submissions will not be accepted and will receive a zero.

Regrading Assignments: Students can appeal an assigned grade within 24 hours of receipt. Any appeal must detail in writing why a grade adjustment is deserved and should cite specific examples.

Academic Concessions: If extenuating circumstances arise, please contact the RHL Graduate School program office as early as reasonably possible, and submit an Academic Concession Request & Declaration Form <https://webforms.sauder.ubc.ca/academic-concession-rhlee>. If an academic concession is granted during the course, the student will be provided options by RHL, or by the instructor in consultation with RHL, per [UBC's policy on Academic Concession](#).

POLICIES APPLICABLE TO COURSES IN THE ROBERT H. LEE GRADUATE SCHOOL

Attendance

Excepting extenuating circumstances, students are expected to attend 100% of their scheduled class hours. Absent students limit their own academic potential, and that of their classmates, and cause unnecessary disruption to the learning environment. Students missing more than 20% of the total scheduled class hours for a course (including classes held during the add/drop period) without having received an academic concession will be withdrawn from that course. Withdrawals, depending on timing, could result in a "W" or an "F" standing on the transcript.

Punctuality

Students are expected to arrive for classes and activities on time and fully prepared to engage. Late arrivals may be refused entry at the discretion of the instructor or activity lead. Students arriving later than halfway through a scheduled class will be treated as absent for that class.

Electronic Devices

In-Person Regulations

Devices such as laptops, tablets, and cell phones are not permitted to be used in class unless directed by the instructor for in-class activities. Students who do not follow the School's policy in this regard may be required to leave the room for the remainder of the class, so that they do not distract others. Research shows that students' use of laptops in class has negative implications for the learning environment, including reducing their own grades and the grades of those sitting around them.

On-Line Lecture Regulations

During online lectures, students are not permitted to use any electronic devices other than the primary one used for attending the online lecture (e.g. laptop or desktop). Only Zoom should be open during the online lecture unless an instructor advises the use of another program/website for an in-class activity. Feedback from students indicates that personal devices are the number one distraction from effective learning and participation in the online learning environment.

Citation Style

Please use the American Psychological Association (APA) reference style to cite your sources.

Details of the above policies and other RHL Policies are available at:

<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=12,199,506,1625>

UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND RESOURCES

UBC provides resources to support student learning and to maintain healthy lifestyles but recognizes that sometimes crises arise and so there are additional resources to access including those for survivors

of sexual violence. UBC values respect for the person and ideas of all members of the academic community. Harassment and discrimination are not tolerated nor is suppression of academic freedom. UBC provides appropriate accommodation for students with disabilities and for religious observances. UBC values academic honesty and students are expected to acknowledge the ideas generated by others and to uphold the highest academic standards in all of their actions. Details of the policies and how to access support are available on the UBC Senate website at <https://senate.ubc.ca/policies-resources-support-student-success>.

Respect for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

The UBC Sauder School of Business strives to promote an intellectual community that is enhanced by diversity along various dimensions including status as a First Nation, Metis, Inuit, or Indigenous person, race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, political beliefs, social class, and/or disability. It is critical that students from diverse backgrounds and perspectives be valued in and well-served by their courses. Furthermore, the diversity that students bring to the classroom should be viewed as a resource, benefit, and source of strength for your learning experience. It is expected that all students and members of our community conduct themselves with empathy and respect for others.

Academic Integrity

The academic enterprise is founded on honesty, civility, and integrity. As members of this enterprise, all students are expected to know, understand, and follow the codes of conduct regarding academic integrity. At the most basic level, this means submitting only original work done by you and acknowledging all sources of information or ideas and attributing them to others as required. This also means you should not cheat, copy, or mislead others about what is your work. Violations of academic integrity (i.e., misconduct) lead to the breakdown of the academic enterprise, and therefore serious consequences arise and harsh sanctions are imposed. For example, incidences of plagiarism or cheating may result in a mark of zero on the assignment or exam and more serious consequences may apply if the matter is referred to the President's Advisory Committee on Student Discipline. Careful records are kept in order to monitor and prevent recurrences.

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All materials of this course (course handouts, lecture slides, assessments, course readings, etc.) are the intellectual property of the instructor or licensed to be used in this course by the copyright owner. Redistribution of these materials by any means without permission of the copyright holder(s) constitutes a breach of copyright and may lead to academic discipline and could be subject to legal action. Any lecture recordings are for the sole use of the instructor and students enrolled in the class. In no case may the lecture recording or part of the recording be used by students for any other purpose, either personal or commercial. Further, audio or video recording of classes are not permitted without the prior consent of the instructor. Students may not share class Zoom links or invite others who are not registered to view sessions.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

UBC's Point Grey Campus is located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the xwməθkwəyəm (Musqueam) people, who for millennia have passed on their culture, history, and traditions from one generation to the next on this site.

COURSE SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNED READINGS

Date	#	Topic, Readings, and Prep
Feb 27	1	<p>The Next Normal Business Roundtable Redefines the Purpose of a Corporation to Promote 'An Economy That Serves All Americans by Various Authors (Business Roundtable) The Illusory Promise of Stakeholder Governance [Presentation Slides] by Lucian A. Bebchuck and Roberto Tallarita (SSRN)</p>
March 1	2	<p>Sustainability in Context Creating Shared Value by Michael E. Porter and Mark R. Kramer (Harvard Business Review)</p>
March 6	3	<p>Towards Better Decisions: Traps, Pyramids and Frameworks How to Make Values Count in Everyday Decisions by Joel E. Urbany, Thomas J. Reynolds and Joan M. Phillips (MIT Sloan Management Review)</p>
March 8	4	<p>The Social Question Better Decisions Through Diversity, by Katherine W. Phillips, Katie A. Liljenquist and Margaret A. Neale (Kellogg Insight) Why diversity matters, by Vivian Hunt, Dennis Layton and Sara Prince (McKinsey)</p>
March 13	5	<p>Systems and Units The Sustainability Spectrum and the Sciences of Sustainability by Thomas P. Seager (Business Strategy and the Environment)</p>
March 15	6	<p>Breakthroughs: Sustainability and Technology What is the low-touch economy? by Jennifer Tsitsopoulos (Board of Innovation) Linear Risks by Various Authors (Circle Economy)</p>
March 20	7	<p>Breakdowns: The Race to the Bottom Big Business Has a New Scam: The 'Purpose Paradigm' by Maria Hengeveld (The Nation) Paul Polman: 'Businesses cannot succeed in societies that fail' by Deonna Anderson (GreenBiz)</p>
March 22	8	<p>The Uninhabitable Earth Climate tipping points — too risky to bet against by Various Authors (Nature) The Uninhabitable Earth by David Wallace-Wells (New York Magazine)</p>
March 27	9	<p>Climate is Eating Everything Pathways to Net Zero: The Decisive Decade by Various Authors (EDF, Deloitte)</p>
March 29	10	<p>Original Sin No assigned readings.</p>