

Name of university
Course: Strategy for a Sustainable World
Term 20xx

Introduction

Sustainability is increasingly becoming a strategic issue for businesses in all sectors. Global drivers such as climate, environment, population growth and social inequity are redefining the competitive landscape, and are demanding higher levels of attention, transparency and social responsibility from corporate entities. In recent years, a number of companies have completely redefined their business strategies in line with principles of sustainability in order to maximize value creation for the organization and its stakeholders. A sustainability framework is becoming especially salient for leading organizations that are looking for ways to create synergies between various operational demands, rather than being locked into a sub-optimizing 'tradeoffs' mindset.

In this course we examine the **global drivers for sustainability, frameworks for sustainable business, and the requisite skills in critical and integrative thinking to embrace and advance a sustainability agenda**. We take a "triple bottom line" approach, defining sustainability in business as balanced progress towards economic performance, social justice and environmental quality. Through discussions, cases, and assignments, we will critically examine sustainability drivers, organizational conceptions of sustainability, strategic approaches to value creation, and the challenges and opportunities for organizations to re-invent approaches to creating business value and contributing to broader societal well-being.

Objectives of the Course

This course is designed to provide an introduction to the relevance of sustainability as a strategic framework for driving value creation, and to enhance critical and integrative thinking skills that will prepare leaders to more effectively formulate and implement strategic sustainability initiatives for organizations.

The course aims to:

- **explore issues** in sustainability that form the macro context for human and business activity;
- **encourage an awareness** of different conceptions of sustainability that exist in organizations, and how these conceptions influence an organization's strategic imagination or the vision of what is possible for the firm;
- **create alignment** between external drivers for change and organizational opportunities by viewing these drivers through the appropriate set of sustainability 'lenses';
- **develop integrative thinking capacity** to enhance our ability to see connections among seemingly disparate forces, and to search for value creation opportunities on multiple fronts;
- **promote a critical understanding** of the contribution sustainability approaches make to decision-

making and value-creation in companies;

- ♦ **develop reflective management practitioners** who can effectively identify, formulate and ultimately implement strategic sustainability initiatives in an organizational setting.

Required Materials

Core texts:

Kurucz, E., B. Colbert, D. Wheeler (2013). *Reconstructing Value: Leadership Skills for a Sustainable World*. UTP/Rotman: Toronto. ISBN 9781442611535

Hart, Stuart L. (2010). *Capitalism at the Crossroads: Next Generation Business Strategies for a Post-Crisis World*. Wharton: Upper Saddle River, NJ. ISBN: 978-0-13-704232-6

Links to required journal articles will be provided. Students are required to familiarize themselves with this material and to read articles linked to specific lectures in advance. **Additional short materials drawn from news and current affairs sources will be assigned throughout the course, so that we can regularly relate the course ideas to current business practice.**

Approach to Learning

In this course we use a range of learning methods including dialogue, short lectures, guest speakers, video & audio clips, projects and group exercises. Familiarity with materials in the course package will be an essential but not sufficient support to students in successfully navigating and completing the course. Students will also be required to conduct online research and to critically read news sources to reflect on current business issues as they relate to sustainability through the structuring of the course assignments.

Learning Teams

We will organize into Learning Teams in Session 1. This will be your team for the Strategic Sustainability Re-invention project, as well as for in-class dialogue exercises. It is essential that students ensure the groups remain cohesive and supportive if effective learning is to occur. Teams will be required to sign and submit a contract signed by all members committing to agreed-upon group norms by Session 3. In the event of misunderstandings, the first course of action is to attempt to resolve these within the group. If this is not possible, it is the responsibility of the student(s) to raise these issues with the Instructor. The default position is that all students in a group will receive the same grade for group-based work. If there is a situation where a student is not fairly contributing to the production and completion of the group assignment and does not respond to group requests to enhance her or his efforts, the other group members should contact the Instructor. In special cases such as this, a process will be instituted to enable group members to each assess a fair allocation of marks for the work completed. *This assessment may result in group members receiving different grades for the same assignment.* Such instances in this course are extremely rare and the expectation is that all group members will direct their efforts toward proactively resolving internal issues working in teams, using their group contract as a basis for establishing expectations and resolving conflicts.

Assessment:

Due	Evaluation Item	Weight
Week 4, 5,6, 7, 9 or 10	Agenda: Roundtable Discussion (individual component)	20%
	(team interaction)	10%
Week 6	Synopsis of the focus for Re-invention project (250 words)	Req
Week 12	Strategic Sustainable Re-invention (team report)	20%
	Corporate & Civil Society partnership (team presentation)	10%
Week 12	Class Participation: peer evaluation (individual)	20%
Week 13	Learning Log & Summary Reflection (individual, 1000 words)	20%
	Total	100%

Submitting Assignments:

****Note: All assignments must be submitted electronically via designated dropboxes on MyLearningSpace. For filing purposes on the receiving end, please use the following format for naming your files:**

Your Last Name Your First Name – BU701 w2013 – Assignment name

For example:

Hansen, James – BU701 w2013 – Agenda prep – Water Wars

Hansen, James – BU701 w2013 – Agenda slides – Water Wars

Hansen, James – BU701 w2013 – Learning Log Summary

1. **The Agenda: Dialogue and Debate on Sustainability Issues – 30%** (20% individual preparation & performance, 10% team interaction) – to be presented in Weeks 4, 5, 6, 7, 9 or 10. **TOPICS: See class schedule; details to be announced in Week 1.**

We will explore some topics in sustainability through roundtable dialogue and debate modeled on TVOntario's public affairs program *The Agenda* (televised weeknights at 8pm and 11pm, interactive and archived at www.tvo.org/agenda). Each class member will sign up for a table on one of several topics, and each participant in the roundtable will be responsible for articulating a particular point of view on the topic of the roundtable. **You will research the work and position of a real person, and will role play that person in the dialogue.**

Working from your assigned perspective, each participant will prepare:

- ♦ A written summary of the position on the issue from the point of view of the person you are representing – 750 words – for submission

***Please footnote/endnote your sources – notes not included in the word count**

- ♦ Up to 4 Powerpoint slides (images, charts, maps, words) to use to illustrate your perspective as necessary – for submission and use in the dialogue
- ♦ Bullet-format 'talking points' – notes for you to use in the dialogue – do not submit these

****NOTE: SUBMIT YOUR POSITION PAPER AND ILLUSTRATIVE SLIDES TO THE MyLS Dropbox 48 HOURS PRIOR TO THE CLASS IN WHICH YOUR ROUNDTABLE WILL TAKE PLACE.**

Format for presentation:

- We will present the dialogue and debate in front of a live studio audience (the rest of the class). The discussion will be moderated by the instructor, who will pose questions to the participants and facilitate the dialogue.
- You will be able to reference your illustrative slides and call up them up as required during the session, and you may look at the notes you prepared.
- You would do well to research the possible positions of others on the panel to be prepared to address their points of concern or disagreement with your perspective.
- Thirty minutes will be reserved for the roundtable, and a further 20 minutes for questions from the studio audience (for class participation).
- **We will then apply a critical thinking process to examine the arguments made around the table, and brainstorm some design questions for a sustainable world.**

TOPICS: See class schedule page 7; details to be announced in Session 1.

2. **Class Participation – 20%:** A peer evaluation, completed by learning team members by Week 13 (one week after the end of the course), validated by the instructor.

Individuals will be evaluated by their peers for the contribution they have made through each session to the group's learning process.

Rating Criteria:

- **Minimal:** Rarely spoke, did not impact group learning in a significant way.
 - **Occasional:** Heard from occasionally, with some impact on group learning.
 - **Good:** Regular contributor, added good ideas to group discussions.
 - **Excellent:** Regular contributor, often led the group discussion and added a valuable perspective.
 - **Exceptional:** Stood out as a leader in the group: regularly added a valuable perspective, constructively challenged the thinking of the group, and ensured all group members were heard from.
3. **Strategic Sustainable Re-Invention: Team Report and *Interactive Team Presentation* – 30%:** Written Team Report (20%), Interactive Team Presentation (10%), group contract due in Week 3, group report and presentation due in Weeks 11 & 12. The Assignment will contain the following elements, with further details to be announced Week 2.
 - Conceptions of Sustainability – what kind of *sustainability conversations* are evident in the company's communications?
 - Sectoral scan – PEST-E analysis – Global Sustainability Drivers
 - Underlying values, assumptions, beliefs in the sector: about PEST-E forces, and at various levels: individual, organizational, societal/cultural.
 - Select a potential CSO/NGO partner
 - Core sustainability drivers opening new opportunities – frame case using Canadian Index of Wellbeing criteria (vs only ROI)

By Week 6, each group must submit a 250 word synopsis outlining: their focal company, the NGO/CSO partner, and the general sustainability issue to be examined.

Guidelines for your presentations:

- ♦ **Don't** make your presentation simply a powerpoint version of your report. The objective of the presentation is to pitch your main idea concisely and persuasively, as though you were presenting to the company executives.
- ♦ **Don't** spend time going through the PEST-E factors, or a lot of background on the company.
- ♦ **Do** give us the main points of your storyline - company, NGO, key issue, your idea for strategic sustainability re-invention.
- ♦ **Do** make the presentation engaging - involve the audience, make us care about the topic.

The general presentation evaluation criteria are:

- ♦ Employed models and concepts covered in class to analyze the industry and company context
- ♦ Effectively engaged the class in considering the issues in the sector, and encouraged us to think about them differently.
- ♦ Challenged the basic assumptions of the sector and the company in light of the sustainability issues we explored this term; conveyed a stretch idea for creating business and societal value.

4. **Learning Log Summary – 20%** – To encourage reflective management practice, students will be required to keep an ongoing Learning Log, available on MyLS, to capture useful insights, thoughts provoked, and ideas for practical application. **Learning Logs will be electronically submitted for mid-term check in Week 6 – they will not be graded at this time.** Logs will be electronically submitted **within one week of the course end (week 14)** with a 1000 word reflective summary of key takeaways.

Learning Log Summary Guidelines

To conclude the course, students are asked to complete a summary reflection of the learning log maintained throughout the term. This is a chance to practice 'integrative thinking': to look back across the thoughts that you captured after each session, and to crystallize a few thematic 'takeaways' – things you might like to take forward in your life and work.

Process:

Read through your notes from each session, and consider the many conversations you have been part of, both in class and in your Learning Team work on the Strategic Sustainability Re-Invention project.

- ♦ Are there any ideas that stand out for you?
- ♦ Are there any themes that you can see running through those ideas?
- ♦ Can you see any shift in your thinking from the beginning of the term?

Write a summary (1000 words) of the ideas you think are worth remembering, and why. Please upload both the summary and the learning log to the dropbox folder.

Rating criteria:

- ♦ Above standard; polished and well written; synthesizing, integrating ideas
- ♦ Good solid reflection piece; explored concepts independently
- ♦ Complete but not as deeply considered (typing vs writing)
- ♦ Did not fully complete the exercise

A two-week turnaround in grading time will be the default unless otherwise specified by the Instructor. Word counts must be added to every piece of work submitted. Table of contents, executive summaries, references and appendices are not included in the word count. No material should be introduced in the appendix that is not referenced in the body of the report. **Please pay careful attention to the requested length of each assignment, as submitting an assignment that does not meet the word count requirements or does not include a word count will result in a penalty to the final grade.**

BU701

Winter 2013

Course Schedule & Readings

RECONSTRUCTING VALUE = RE-THINKING + RELATING + RESPONDING + RE-INVENTING

Part 1: RE-THINKING: HOW DO WE THINK ABOUT SUSTAINABILITY & GLOBAL ISSUES?

Week 1

January 10

Course Introduction

COURSE OVERVIEW

SUSTAINABILITY DEFINITIONS & WORLDVIEWS

LEARNING TEAMS FORMED

LEARNING LOG ASSIGNED

THE AGENDA: DIALOGUE & DEBATE ASSIGNED

ASPEN CASE COMPETITION OVERVIEW

Pre-Reading:

- Hart, S. (2010): Prologue – “Reinventing capitalism for the post-crisis world”
- Hart (2010): Chapter 1 – “From obligation to opportunity”
- Kurucz, E., B. Colbert, and D. Wheeler (2013). “Preface.”
- Kurucz, E., B. Colbert, and D. Wheeler (2013). “Chapter 1: New questions for business.”
- Markevich (2009). “The Evolution of Sustainability.” MIT Sloan Management Review, **51**(1), p. 13-14.

Week 2

January 17

Considering Consumerism & Sustainability

CRITICAL, INTEGRATIVE AND DESIGN THINKING

CONSUMERISM CONSIDERED – Benjamin Barber

Pre-Reading:

- Kurucz, E., B. Colbert, and D. Wheeler (2013). “Chapter 2: Envisioning a new way of doing business: Thinking skills for sustainable organizations.”
- Fishman, C. (2006). “The Wal-Mart Effect: Who knew shopping was so important?” *Academy of Management Perspectives*. **20**(3): 6-25.
- Turner, C. (2010). How Walmart is Saving the World.” *Canadian Business Magazine*, December 6, 2010.

Part 2: RELATING: HOW DO WE RELATE TO SOCIETY & GLOBAL ISSUES?

Week 3

January 24 **Global Sustainability Business Drivers**
GLOBAL ISSUES, WORLDS IN COLLISION
TEAM CONTRACT DUE
TEAM PROJECT AND PRESENTATION ASSIGNED

Pre-Reading:

- ♦ Hart (2010): Chapter 2 – “Worlds in Collision”
- ♦ Kurucz, E., B. Colbert, and D. Wheeler, (2013). Chapter 3: “Transforming organizations and society: Learning our way forward.”

Supplemental:

- ♦ Hardin, G. (1968). “The Tragedy of the Commons.” *Science* **62**: 1243-1248.
- ♦ Network for Business Sustainability (2012). *Canadian Business Sustainability Priorities 2012*. Available at: <http://nbs.net/knowledge/knowledge-priorities/>

Week 4

January 31 **Conversation and Change**
SUSTAINABILITY CONVERSATIONS
THE AGENDA 1: WATER WARS
ONLINE FEEDBACK INITIATED

Pre-Reading:

- ♦ Brown, J. and W. Isaacs (2005). “Conversation as a Core Process: Co-creating Business and Social Value.” *Reflections* **6**(4/5): 23-28.
- ♦ Kurucz, E., B. Colbert, and D. Wheeler (2013). **Section on Water (p.95-100)** from Chapter 4: “Complex global issues as the context for value creation.”
- ♦ Kurucz, E., B. Colbert, and D. Wheeler, (2013). Chapter 6: “Sustainability Conversations.”
- ♦ Kurucz, E., B. Colbert, and D. Wheeler, (2013). Chapter 7: “The social dynamics of sustainability.”

Week 5

February 7 **Stakeholders, Sustainability and Design Thinking**
STAKEHOLDER THINKING
DESIGN THINKING
THE AGENDA 2: POWERING ONTARIO: ELECTRICITY GENERATION

Pre-Reading:

- ♦ Kurucz, E., B. Colbert, and D. Wheeler, (2013). Chapter 5: “Managing for stakeholders in a complex world.”
- ♦ Kurucz, E., B. Colbert, and D. Wheeler (2013). **Section on Energy & Climate (p.107-117)** from Chapter 4: “Complex global issues as the context for value creation.”
- ♦ Watch the TED talk: *Tim Brown (CEO of IDEO) Urges Designers to Think Big*: http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/en/tim_brown_urges_designers_to_think_big.html
- ♦ Surf the OpenIDEO website – an open innovation platform to solve big challenges for social good: <http://www.openideo.com/>

Supplemental:

- ♦ Hart (2010): Ch. 7 – “Broadening the Corporate Bandwidth”
- ♦ Network for Business Sustainability (2010). *Primer: Climate Change*. Available at: <http://nbs.net/knowledge/climate-change/primer/>

Part 3: RESPONDING: HOW DO WE FORMULATE RESPONSES TO GLOBAL ISSUES?

Week 6

February 14

The Sustainable Value Framework 1

COST & RISK REDUCTION

REPUTATION & LEGITIMACY

INNOVATION & REPOSITIONING

THE AGENDA 3: CARBON POLICY AND BUSINESS IMPLICATIONS

ONLINE FEEDBACK REVIEWED

SYNOPSIS OF THE FOCUS FOR RE-INVENTION PROJECT DUE

SUBMIT LEARNING LOGS FOR MIDTERM REVIEW – Electronic dropbox

Pre-Reading:

- ♦ Hart, S. (2010): Chapter 3 – “The Sustainable Value Framework”
- ♦ Posner, B. (2009). “One CEO’s Trip from Dismissive to Convinced.” MIT Sloan Management Review, **51**(1).

Supplemental:

- ♦ Lueneburger, C. & D. Goleman, 2010. *The Change Leadership Sustainability Demands*. MIT Sloan Management Review, **51**(4).

– READING WEEK –

Week 7

March 7

The Sustainable Value Framework 2

BASE OF THE PYRAMID

SUSTAINABLE LOCAL ENTERPRISE APPROACHES

THE AGENDA 4: POPULATION & POVERTY

Pre-Reading:

- ♦ Hart, S. (2010): Ch. 6 – “Raising the Base of the Pyramid”
- ♦ Wheeler, McKague et al. (2005). “Creating Sustainable Local Enterprise Networks.” MIT Sloan Management Review, **41**(1), p. 33-40.
- ♦ Kurucz, E., B. Colbert, and D. Wheeler (2013). **Section on Population (p.87-95)** from Chapter 4: “Complex global issues as the context for value creation.”

Week 8

March 14

Consumerism Revisited: Green Marketing

ARE CONSUMERISM AND SUSTAINABILITY RECONCILABLE?

Learning Team Dialogue: Green Marketing Framework

Pre-Reading:

- Kurucz, E., B. Colbert, and D. Wheeler (2013). **Section on Food (p.101-107)** from Chapter 4: “Complex global issues as the context for value creation.”
- Network for Business Sustainability (2011). *Primer: Socially Conscious Consumerism*. Available at: <http://nbs.net/knowledge/consumerism/primer/>

Part 4: RE-INVENTING: HOW CAN WE SHIFT OUR CURRENT TRAJECTORY?

Week 9

March 20 **5:00pm – Guest Speaker: CEO, Clean Tech Company**

March 21 **Clean Technology**
THE AGENDA 5: TRANSPORTATION AND SUSTAINABLE CITIES

Pre-Reading:

- Hart, S. (2010): Ch. 4 – “Clean Technology and Creative Destruction”
- Surf IBM’s Smarter Cities: www.ibm.com/thesmartercity

Week 10

March 27 **Societal Learning: Multi-sector Collaboration**
SOCIETAL LEARNING: SINGLE, DOUBLE, TRIPLE LOOP
THE AGENDA 6: THE FOOD ISSUE

Pre-Reading:

- Kurucz, E., B. Colbert, and D. Wheeler (2013). **Section on Food (p.101-107)** from Chapter 4: “Complex global issues as the context for value creation.”
- Kurucz, E., B. Colbert, and D. Wheeler, (2013). Chapter 8: “From stakeholder management to social integration: building collaboratively competitive organizations.”
- Kurucz, E., B. Colbert, and D. Wheeler, (2013). Chapter 9: “Reconstructing Value: Leadership in re-inventing notions of success.”
- Hart, S. (2010): Ch 10 – “Building the Sustainable Global Enterprise”

Supplemental:

- Surf the Ashoka Canada website – social innovation and entrepreneurship: <http://canada.ashoka.org/>
- Check out the WISER Earth website – the social network for sustainability: <http://www.wiserearth.org/>

Week 11

April 4 **Interactive Team Presentations I**
TEAM REPORT & PRESENTATIONS DUE

Week 12

April 11 **Interactive Team Presentations II**
GROUP PARTICIPATION PEER EVALUATION