

*Note: This is the text-only version of this week's lecture.*

*All media (i.e. videos, flash presentations, and PowerPoints) and learning activities (i.e. assigned readings, assignments, and discussions) are accessible only through the online course.*

## **Syllabus**

### **MGMT6226 – Sustainability and the Business Environment**

#### **Course Overview**

This course will take a broad look at the ways in which the concept of sustainability is being applied in the business context. It answers the question, “What does sustainability mean to the way we practice business?” A key characteristic of this course is its comprehensive treatment of the complex issues sustainability raises for the business world. The goal of the course is to provide the student with an introduction to the knowledge and skills they need to help organizations understand and act upon the principles of sustainability. The student will also gain a deeper understanding of the relationships among business, society, and the environment.

The central tenet of this course is that market-based economies may not fully recognize all the societal and environmental costs and benefits of a business activity. When this occurs, business decision makers, individuals, and the government will take actions which will not necessarily lead to socially optimal outcomes. Some analysts call these examples “market failures.” In this course, we will examine a variety of market failures and learn how different businesses choose to respond to them. It will explore strategies to correct these market failures – with improved product innovation, entrepreneurial activity, and government action. This course will also explore the techniques and tools of sustainability from a practical, business-oriented perspective.

In this course we will look at the ways in which the environment affects corporate strategy, public policy, and individual decision-making. For example, we will examine problems like the depletion of natural resources (e.g., water and petroleum); the selection of materials to be used in manufacturing and commerce; and the use and disposal of toxic substances. Many of these problems arise because these are resources that are available to all and so their overuse is an externality that is not included in manufacturing costs.

There are a number of ways to address environmental problems. Some individuals advocate more government regulation as a solution to these problems, using actions such as higher taxes, increased subsidies, stricter building codes, or outright prohibitions of use. Other individuals advocate purely market-based solutions to address these problems, proposing that no government involvement is required. These proponents cite the fact that many businesses today are actively working to identify sustainability issues in their own organization and in their supply chain and they are creating a variety of innovative solutions that address sustainability issues. Some examples of these actions include adopting technologies that emit no (or significantly fewer) greenhouse gases, innovative “green” product designs, producer take-back programs that eliminate waste at the end of a product’s life, and transparent corporate

environmental reporting with defined metrics and targets for improvement. Using a combination of readings, discussions, and case analyses, we will assess how both government regulations, and business solutions address these problems. Finally, we will learn how to apply these principles to improve corporate strategic plans.

*Log in to the course to view the Course Overview video.*

## Learning Opportunities

As a result of participating in the learning activities of this course, you will have the opportunity to:

- Define and characterize sustainability and its impact on business, the public, and governments.
- Characterize the types of problems that sustainability attempts to address, such as climate change, pollution of our environment, depletion of scarce resources, and health impacts on workers, consumers, and third parties.
- Become familiar with the analytical tools used to address these sustainability issues.
- Identify and explain the common types of market failures evident in the contemporary business environment.
- Apply the standard policy responses to these market failures (regulations, taxes, and trading systems).
- Describe the life cycle of physical products from raw materials through end of life, the players at each stage of manufacturing, use, and final disposition, and the contributions (or lack thereof) to sustainability at each stage.
- Construct and break down life cycles of products and perform a Life Cycle Analysis.
- Develop strategies to make these supply chains more sustainable.
- Compile data on carbon emissions and use it to construct the carbon footprint of a company and a product.
- Analyze and critique the environmental best practices of public companies.
- Analyze and critique the role consumers have played in altering the sustainability practices of public and private companies.
- Relate these concepts to corporate strategy.

## Course Materials

### Texts and Materials

Required Textbooks:

- ***A Primer on Sustainability***, Ron Whitfield and Jeanne McNett, Business Expert Press, 2014. ISBN: 9781606496343 (print); ISBN: 9781606496350 (ebook).
- ***Cradle to Cradle: Remaking the Way We Make Things***, William McDonough and Michael Braungart, North Point Press, 2002.

Course Pack Articles:

- “The Triple Bottom Line,” Andrew Savitz, Soundview Executive Book Summaries, Case No. 9-610-043.
- Creating Shared Value. Porter, Michael E.; Kramer, Mark R. In Harvard Business Review, Case No. R1101C. Published 01/01/2011, Harvard Business School, (17 pages).
- The Pharmaceutical Workhorse, ICIS Chemical Business.
- Du Pont Freon Products Division (A). Vietor, Richard H.K.; Reinhardt, Forest. Case No. 9-389-111. Published 01/20/1989, Revised 03/28/1995. Harvard Business School Publishing, (30 pages).
- Social Entrepreneurs: Correcting Market Failures (A). Phills, James; Denend, Lyn. Case No. SI72A. Published 07/12/2005, Graduate School of Business Stanford University, (36 pages).
- Burt's Bees: Leaving the Hive. Wathieu, Luc R.; Winig, Laura. Case No. 9-507-017. Published 03/02/2007, Revised 03/19/2007. Harvard Business School Publishing, (27 pages).
- Cradle-to-Cradle Design at Herman Miller: Moving Toward Environmental Sustainability. Lee, Deishin; Bony, Lionel. Case No. 9-607-003. Published 05/30/2007, Revised 12/16/2009. Harvard Business School Publishing, (21 pages).
- FIJI Water and Corporate Social Responsibility - Green Makeover or Greenwashing? McMaster, James; Nowak, Jan. Case No. 9B09A008. Published 5/13/2009, Revised 9/21/2011. Richard Ivey School of Business, 2008. (21 pages).
- Corporate Greenhouse Gas Accounting: Carbon Footprint Analysis. Larson, Andrea; Teichman, William. Case No. UVA-ENT-0113. Published 4/23/2009, Darden Business Publishing, 2009. (17 pages).
- The Precautionary Principle. Toffel, Michael W.; Uludere Aragon, Nazli Z. Case No. 9-610-043. Published 06/28/2010, Harvard Business School, (24 pages).
- Frito-Lay North America: The Making of a Net Zero Snack Chip,” Darden Business Publishing UVA-ENT-0112.

#### McGraw-Hill Readings:

- Is sustainability a realistic objective for society?
- Is monetizing ecosystem services essential for sustainability?
- Is corporate sustainability more public relations than real?
- Is the precautionary principle a sound basis for risk analysis?

#### Materials linked directly in the course:

- Can Burt's Bees Turn Clorox Green? New York Times Online, 2008.
- Pandora's Poison – The Argument.
- Cyclamates: The Triumph of Hysteria Over Science.
- Microsoft Carbon Fee: Theory and Practice, December 2013
- “Investing for a Sustainable Future,” MIT Sloan Management Review, May 2016.
- The Pharmaceutical Workhorse, ICIS Chemical Business, October 2009.
- “The Triple Bottom Line,” Andrew Savitz, Soundview Executive Book Summaries, Case No. 9-610-043.
- The Seven Sins of Greenwashing

As a Northeastern University student, you will have access to the online resources of the university's library system. Refer to the Student Handbook for the link to the library.

## Course Outline

### Week 1

Learning Activity	Description	Due Date	Point Value
Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>A Primer on Sustainability</i>, Chapters 1 and 2</li> <li>• <i>Cradle-to-Cradle</i>, Chapters 1-3</li> <li>• Savitz, “The Triple Bottom Line”</li> <li>• Is sustainability a realistic objective for society? (in <i>A Primer on Sustainability</i>, chapter 3)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Microsoft Carbon Fee: Theory and Practice</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	~	~
Videos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">The Story of Stuff</a></li> </ul>	~	~
Podcasts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lesson 1 Podcast</li> <li>• Lesson 2 Podcast</li> </ul>	~	~

Discussion 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction</li> </ul>	Initial Post by <b>Day 1</b>	Participation
Assignment 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supply Chain</li> </ul>	<b>Day 4</b>	100
Discussion 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supply Chain Critique</li> </ul>	Initial Post by <b>Day 5</b>	Participation
Discussion 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainability as an Objective</li> </ul>	Group discussion by <b>Day 2</b> Class Discussion by <b>Day 7</b>	Participation
Assignment 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carbon Fee White Paper Assignment</li> </ul>	Read assignment by <b>Day 7</b>	Participation

## Week 2

Learning Activity	Description	Due Date	Point Value
Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Porter: "Creating Shared Value"</li> <li>• Is monetizing ecosystem services essential for sustainability? (in <i>A Primer on Sustainability</i>, chapter 3)</li> </ul>	~	~

	<p>Social Entrepreneurs: Correcting Market Failure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Burt's Bees: Leaving the Hive (Case)</li> <li>• Can Burt's Bees Turn Clorox Green?</li> <li>• DuPont Freon Products Division</li> </ul>		
Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">The Tragedy of the Commons</a></li> </ul>	~	~
Videos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Founders of Burt's Bees</li> <li>• Jim Fruchterman's Evolution</li> <li>• Research on Ozone Depletion</li> </ul>	~	~
Podcasts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Lesson 1 Podcast</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Lesson 2 Podcast</a></li> </ul>	~	~
Assignment 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify Market Failure</li> </ul>	<b>Day 3</b>	100
Discussion 1	<p>Should ecosystem services be monetized?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• monetized?</li> </ul>	<p>Group discussion by <b>Day 2</b></p> <p>Class Discussion by <b>Day 7</b></p>	Participation
Discussion 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving your Supply Chain</li> </ul>	<p>Initial Post by <b>Day 5</b></p>	Participation

Assignment 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responses to Market Failures</li> </ul>	Day 6	100
Assignment 3	<input type="checkbox"/> Carbon Fee White Paper Abstract	Day 5	
Assignment 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Critiquing the Standard Responses to Market Failures</li> </ul>	Day 7	100

### Week 3

Learning Activity	Description	Due Date	Point Value
Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cradle to Cradle Design at Herman Miller</li> <li>• Fiji Water and Corporate Responsibility – Green Makeover or Greenwashing?</li> <li>• <i>The Seven Sins of Greenwashing</i></li> <li>• Corporate Greenhouse Gas Accounting: Carbon Footprint Analysis</li> </ul>	~	~
Podcasts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Lesson 1 Podcast</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Lesson 2 Podcast</a></li> </ul>	~	~

Videos	<input type="checkbox"/> William McDonough's Description of C2C	~	~
Assignment 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Herman Miller Case	<b>Day 4</b>	100
Discussion 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Herman Miller Case Discussion	Initial Post by <b>Day 5</b>	Participation
Assignment 2	<input type="checkbox"/> Fiji Water Case	<b>Day 6</b>	100
Discussion 2	<input type="checkbox"/> Fiji Water Case Discussion	Initial Post by <b>Day 7</b>	Participation

**Week 4**

<b>Learning Activity</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Point Value</b>

Readings	<p>Frito-Lay North America: The Making of a Net Zero Snack Chip</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is corporate sustainability more public relations than real?</li> </ul>	~	~
Videos	<p>Christiana Figueres: The Inside Story of the Paris Climate Agreement</p>	Day 4	Participation
Podcasts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Lesson 1 Podcast</a></li> </ul>	~	~
Assignment 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Frito Lay Case</li> </ul>	Day 5	100
Assignment 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carbon Fee White Paper</li> </ul>	Day 7	100

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### Week 5

Learning Activity	Description	Due Date	Point Value
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Readings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "The Precautionary Principle"</li> <li>• Pandora's Poison</li> <li>• Cyclamates – The Triumph of Hysteria over Science</li> <li>• "The Pharmaceutical Workhorse"</li> <li>• Is the precautionary principle a sound basis for risk analysis? (in <i>A Primer on Sustainability</i>, chapter 3)</li> <li>• <i>A Primer on Sustainability</i>, Chapter 5</li> <li>• MIT "Investing for a Sustainable Future"</li> </ul>	~	~
Podcasts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Lesson 1 Podcast</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Lesson 2 Podcast</a></li> </ul>	~	~
Discussion 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Precautionary Principle</li> </ul>	Initial Post by <b>Day 4</b>	~
Assignment 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final Paper – CEO Letter</li> </ul>	<b>Day 7</b>	100

## Sessions and Days of the Week

The course is divided into five weekly sessions. Due dates for assignments and discussions are stated in day numbers. Day 1 is **Monday**, the first day of the beginning of each weekly session.

- Day 1: Monday
- Day 2: Tuesday
- Day 3: Wednesday
- Day 4: Thursday
- Day 5: Friday
- Day 6: Saturday
- Day 7: Sunday

**“End of Day” Note:** Assignments, papers, quizzes, exams, and other graded assessments are understood to be due at the end of the day specified, unless otherwise noted. To accommodate students in different U.S. time zones, “end of day” specifically refers to 3:00 a.m. E.T. of the following morning. For example, a due date of “Week 1, Day 7” refers to a deadline of Week 2, Day 1 at 3:00 a.m. E.T. (midnight on the West Coast). However, if a time deadline is specified, it supersedes this understanding.

## Grading Criteria

### Grading Scheme

Your final grade for this course will be determined by your performance on the following assignments:

Assignment	Weight (% of Final Grade)
Class Participation and Discussions	29%
Assignments	19%
Frito Lay	10%
Cases	10%
Carbon Fee White Paper	14%
Final Paper	20%

### Grading Scale

- A: 93 – 100
- A-: 90 – 92.9
- B+: 88 – 89.9
- B: 83 – 87.9
- B-: 80 – 82.9
- C+: 78 – 79.9
- C: 73 – 77.9
- C-: 70 – 72.9

- F: 69.9 or Below

**Grading Scale Note:** This grading scale is for guidance; however final grades are determined by the lead instructor.

### Grading Cases and Assignments

Score	Analysis & Content (75%)	Organization & Prose (25%)
100	<p>Content used in analysis is appropriate to the question and is factually correct.</p> <p>Develops each point with many specific details. Answers question completely. Does not rehash the case.</p>	<p>Clear sense of order. Begins with a thesis or topic sentence. Supporting points are presented in a logical progression.</p> <p>Uses technical or scientific terminology appropriately and correctly. No major grammatical or spelling errors.</p>
90	<p>Content used in analysis is appropriate to the question but may have one or two factual errors.</p> <p>Each point supported with some details and evidence. Answers important points included.</p> <p>Does not rehash the case.</p>	<p>May lack a thesis sentence, but points are presented in a logical progression.</p> <p>Accurate word choice. No more than 2 major errors and a few minor errors.</p>
	<p>Content relates peripherally to the question;</p>	<p>Logic or argument is minimally perceivable.</p>

80	contains significant errors. Sparse details or evidence. Question only partially answered. Does not rehash the case.	Points presented in a seemingly random fashion, but all support argument. Ordinary word choice; use of scientific terminology avoided. Some serious errors (but they don't impair communication).
70 or less	Content unrelated to question. Statements unsupported by any detail or explanation. Repetitious, incoherent, illogical development. Rehashes the case.	Lacks clear organizational plan. Reader is confused. Limited vocabulary; errors impair communication.

## Academic Honesty and Integrity

The NU community and CBA take seriously the requirement for academic honesty and integrity. The policy, adopted by the Student Government Association and the Faculty Senate reads, in part:

Essential to the mission of NU is the commitment to the principles of intellectual honesty and integrity.

Academic integrity is important for two reasons. First, independent and original scholarship ensures that students derive the most from their educational experience and the pursuit of knowledge. Second, academic dishonesty violates the most fundamental values of an intellectual community and depreciates the achievements of the entire University community.

Academic dishonesty is considered a serious offense and is more fully defined at <http://www.northeastern.edu/osccr/>. Any discussion about how to understand and/or apply that policy can and should be part of an open discussion during the class.

## Plagiarism

The University defines plagiarism as intentionally representing the words, ideas, or data of another as one's own in any academic exercise without providing proper citation.

The following sources require citation:

- Word-for-word quotation from a source, including another student's work.
- Paraphrasing (using the ideas of others in your own words).
- Unusual or controversial facts not widely recognized.
- Audio, video, digital, or live exchanges of ideas, dialogue, or information.

It is important to note that simply referencing material is not sufficient. Material taken from a website needs both footnoting and end-of-paper reference listing. For additional information on proper citation see [http://turnitin.com/research\\_site/e\\_citation.html](http://turnitin.com/research_site/e_citation.html).

Students should also be sure to check for their originality score using the Turnitin feature on Blackboard before finally submitting any paper. Instructors and lead faculty are now required to report any serious violations of academic integrity including plagiarism to the university's judicial system.

## Lead Faculty's Biography

**Ronald Whitfield**

**Email:** [r.whitfield@neu.edu](mailto:r.whitfield@neu.edu)

Dr. Whitfield is executive professor and director of the Business Sustainability Institute in the College of Business Administration. He joined the faculty in 1998 after a career as a management consultant. He holds a BA in economics from Tulane University and a Ph.D. in business and applied economics from the University of Pennsylvania. As a management and economic consultant, Dr. Whitfield provided services in corporate strategy, environmental economics, market/technology assessments, and litigation support to companies in the energy, chemical, plastics, and automotive industries.

## Instructor's Biography

### Instructor's Name, Title, Accolades

**Note:** Please consult the live session chat hours and the phone numbers and email address of your assigned instructor. Remember that your instructor is a valuable resource for you in taking this course. Contact him or her whenever you have questions about your weekly content including reading assignments as well as questions on your assignments and resultant grades.

## Technical Support

Assistance to resolve technical problems is available 24 hours a day, every day of the year. This service is provided by EmbanetCompass, and is restricted primarily to problems associated with

the functionality of Blackboard. Contact EmbanetCompass' Help Desk staff for assistance to resolve problems you believe are not associated with the computer hardware and software you have purchased from a vendor. Examples of problems that fall within this category are:

- Unable to login
- Unable to access course materials
- Broken links
- Missing assignment dropbox
- Unable to view multimedia files.
- Unable to view responses to comments you have posted in the Discussion area.

If you are not sure whether the problem is due to your computer system, contact EmbanetCompass' Help Desk for guidance; otherwise, contact the vendor.

The contact information for EmbanetCompass' Help Desk is:

Toll free: 1-866-291-8058

E-mail: <https://supportcenter.embanetcompass.com/neu>

## **Software**

On occasion you will be required to use Word processing, spreadsheet, and presentation software, such as Word, Excel, and PowerPoint found in Microsoft Office. You will also need to be comfortable with various aspects of using the Internet such as:

- Search engines
- Newsgroups
- E-mail
- Podcasts
- Blogs
- Ability to download files

## **Web Resources**

To view certain media elements in this course, you will need to have several browser plug-ins such as Flash, JAVA, and Adobe Acrobat installed on your computer. Use the links in the course to download and install the appropriate software application.

With regards to plug-ins, please ensure that you are using the most recent version of each required plug-in.

Click the hyperlink below for a description of the technology requirements as well as direct links to update plug-ins.

[Technology Requirements](#)



***End of Course Overview***