

**Commerce 4SG3
Corporations and Society
Fall 2018 Course Outline**

**Strategic Management Area
DeGroote School of Business
McMaster University**

COURSE OBJECTIVE

The goal of this course is to familiarize students with a variety of concepts related to the relationship between corporations and society. Using cases, simulations, guest speakers, an experiential group project and reflections, students will sharpen their ability to critically analyze and debate complex and systemic issues from an informed position. Students will gain tools to help management address many of the challenging social and environmental issues facing our organizations and our society. Students will emerge from this course understanding both the business challenges and opportunities inherent at the interface between corporations and society.

INSTRUCTOR AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Dr. Brent McKnight

Instructor

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Skype: brent.mcknight

Office: DSB #210

Office Hours: Monday 2:30-4:00 (DSB 210 / Skype)

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TA's Name: Britney Hawkins

TA's Email:

hawkinba@mcmaster.ca

Course Website: Avenue

COURSE ELEMENTS

Credit Value:	3	Leadership:	Yes	IT skills:	No	Global view:	Yes
Avenue:	Yes	Ethics:	Yes	Numeracy:	No	Written skills:	Yes
Participation:	Yes	Innovation:	Yes	Group work:	Yes	Oral skills:	Yes
Evidence-based:	Yes	Experiential:	Yes	Final Exam:	No	Guest speaker(s):	Yes

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The role of corporations in society has been evolving over the past couple of decades from a fringe business issue, to one of central concern to managers. Senior managers are treating sustainability issues as strategic and of increasing importance in today's business world.

At the core of this course are the relationships that firms build and maintain with social (a so called license to operate) and ecological systems (which provide invaluable inputs and essential services). The importance of these relationships cannot be understated both because of the enormous presence of business in our modern life but also because such relationships significantly impact the long term viability of the firm. This course focuses on those relationships.

In the past, environmental and social issues were seen as constraints on business; unwelcome interruptions on the path towards increased profitability. They were peripheral. Today firms of all stripes, from mining and forestry, to food and beverage, and banking are adopting strategies and practices that take into account a broader set of stakeholders including their environment, society, governments and non-governmental Organizations (NGOs).

It might have been inevitable that firms would adopt these strategies and practices. To quote the late Ray Anderson, CEO of Interface Carpets and a highly regarded environmentalist:

"the only institution on earth that is large enough, powerful enough, wealthy enough, pervasive enough, and influential to lead humankind out of the mess it's making for itself is the same institution that is doing the most damage -- the institution of business and industry, my institution." - Ray Anderson, CEO Interface Carpets

The issues we raise and discuss in class are among the most critical and exciting challenges confronting business today. Sustainability is the quintessential problem of our current generation. In this class, our joint task is to learn how we can think globally and act strategically in ways that also add the most value to the societies within which we operate as business leaders.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course you will:

- Gain familiarity with a variety of concepts related to corporations and society including triple bottom line, resilience, stakeholder engagement, the tragedy of the commons, sustainability and technology, sustainability reporting, social finance, and sustainable business models;
- Understand key challenges facing organizations addressing environmental and social issues and some of the tools and solutions used to address those challenges;
- Critically evaluate corporate initiatives in the context of complex and systemic environmental and social issues;
- Understand the challenges and opportunities inherent in social and environmental issues;

- Apply business acumen to solve sustainability-related business challenges with a real organization;
- Clarify and articulate your own values and opinions on issues related to corporations and society.

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS AND READINGS

Avenue registration for course content, readings and case materials • http://avenue.mcmaster.ca	\$ FREE
Custom Courseware: Commerce 4SG3 Corporations and Society •purchase at the bookstore	\$ ~75
	prices subject to change

EVALUATION

- **Classroom Engagement:** 20%
- **Reflections:** 20%
- **Editorial:** 20%
- **Group Project – Written Report:** 20%
- **Group Project – Learning Deliverable:** 10%
- **Group Project – Final Presentation:** 10%

CLASSROOM ENGAGEMENT (20%)

Classroom engagement comprises two components: classroom discussion of cases and weekly class tickets related to course content.

Classroom discussion (10%): Classroom discussion represents a unique opportunity to develop and enhance your confidence and skill in articulating a personal position, reacting to new ideas, and receiving and providing critical feedback from a group of assertive and demanding colleagues. Much of your learning will come from these classroom experiences.

You are expected to come to each class, having read cases and assigned readings and with a readiness and willingness to contribute to the class discussion. Your contribution to the learning of others, through the experience and insights you share is a key part of this learning process. Contribution will be graded based on quality, quantity and consistency. Some of the things that will determine a contribution include:

- ◆ Are you listening, not just for a few minutes, but the duration of the class?
- ◆ Are your contributions relevant to the discussion? Do your comments relate to the comments of others and to the themes that the class is exploring together? Do you build on the class discussion?
- ◆ Do your comments add to our understanding of the situation? Are you incisive? Do you cut to the core of the problem?
- ◆ Are you willing to challenge the ideas that are being expressed in the classroom?

- ◆ Are you willing to test new ideas or are all comments “safe”?
- ◆ Do you bring in your own experience, personal or professional, in order to add value to the class discussion

Participation will be graded using a peer grading system that each student will participate in at most once throughout the course.

Class tickets (10%): Each class in this course focuses on a particular topic regarding the role of corporations in society. To guide you in this learning, there is a “ticket” associated with each class to help you reflect on and consider key concepts. For some classes this will be integrated with the reading required prior to the class while at other times you will be asked to answer questions pertaining to the content covered in class.

The ticket assignments can be found on Avenue under the Class Content associated with each class.

To get full grades on these tickets, students will need to complete 7 of 8 tickets satisfactorily. The professor and TAs reserve the right to penalize for lackluster responses.

Tickets are **due on dropbox in Avenue. Tickets will be either due prior to the start of class, or at 11:59pm the Sunday following class.** Pay attention to which tickets are due prior to class and which ones afterward. Late tickets will impair your ability to receive full marks.

REFLECTIONS (20%)

A key aim of this course is to provide the opportunity for students to think critically about issues presented throughout the course. Students are encouraged to actively reflect on what they have learned. At two points in the course, students will submit structured reflections.

The **first reflection is worth 10%** and will be due on Sunday October 14th at 11:59pm. The **second will be worth 10** and will be due on Sunday November 18th at 11:59pm..

This reflection assignment uses the Reflective Learning Framework developed by Kate Whalen and Antonio Paez. Engaging in such a structured reflection helps draw meaning from experiences so that they can shape future learning. This framework encourages higher order reflection through first recounting experiences and subsequently discussing those experiences in context while connecting them to the course objectives and content. While more detail is available on Avenue, the figure shows the different components of a reflection. Incorporating these components is key to a successful reflection in this course.



Figure 1 Reflection Learning Framework

Submissions will only be accepted through Avenue. Reflections must be **no more than 2 pages, 12 point Times New Roman font, 1.5 line spacing, and 1 inch margins. Reflections should be submitted in Word (or equivalent) format.** Late submissions will be penalized at 10% a day. A rubric is viewable in Avenue.

Please acknowledge intellectual debts and facts and figures in your reflection using a superscript number and endnotes to reports. Draw on the library citation guide (<https://library.mcmaster.ca/sites/default/files/businesscitation.pdf>) paying particular attention to page 6 and page 15 for endnote and citation support.

OPINION EDITORIAL (20%)

A key aim of this course is to help develop skills associated with taking and articulating a strong opinion on an issue related to corporations and society. In this course you will work with the professor and DeGroot's writer-in-residence, Gordon Pitts, to craft a hard hitting and possibly controversial editorial.

Students will first submit a high quality draft of an editorial. This initial draft will be worth **10%** of your grade. Following this submission, both the professor and Gordon Pitts, DeGroot's writer in residence, will review your editorial and offer content and writing guidance to improve your work. Students are expected to engage with this feedback and revise their editorial accordingly. The final editorial submission will be worth **10%**.

Editorials should be between 650 and 800 words. Formatted in a word document that includes the proposed title for the piece, your name and email address.

Publishing Competition. Students are encouraged to submit the final version of their editorial on www.medium.com. Students who receive sufficient "claps" by the end of the course could be invited to work with the professor to develop the piece for publication in www.theconversation.ca.

Please acknowledge intellectual debts and facts and figures in your reflection using a superscript number and endnotes to reports. Draw on the library citation guide (<https://library.mcmaster.ca/sites/default/files/businesscitation.pdf>) paying particular attention to page 6 and page 15 for endnote and citation support.

GROUP PROJECT – ENGAGING PRACTICE FOR IMPACT (40%)

In groups of (between 4 and 6 pending enrollment) students will work on a real life problem facing a specific organization. This will provide students with an exciting opportunity to engage with practice using learning from this course.

Key deadlines and deliverables

1. Form group and email professor your top 3 ordered choices of companies to work by **11:59pm September 17th**. The professor will assign groups to projects, copying the group on an email introducing them to their company contact.
2. Submit a Scope document through Avenue by **11:59pm Friday October 5th**

A scope statement is a high level overview of what the student groups are developing and delivering on over the semester. It should explicitly identify and elaborate on the deliverables associated with the project including documents, research, models, and reports. A scope statement helps to ensure that the student group and the company partner are aligned. Expect that you will receive feedback from both the company and the professor to ensure the scope statement is feasible, valuable to your company, and is suitable to the course objectives.

You can find a template for the scope statement on Avenue.

3. Complete a 30 minute professor “check-in” during the **week of October 29th** including written answers and discussions regarding the following 5 questions:
 1. Describe the progress you have made to date.
 2. Describe the activity that you are planning on taking.
 3. What is going as planned with the project?
 4. Where are the challenges with the project?
 5. What other issues would you like to discuss?

Students will respond to a doodle poll in order to schedule a professor meeting.

An interim peer evaluation report must be submitted by email to the professor (see final page of the syllabus)

4. **Deliverable (10%):** Key learning deliverable due through Avenue by **11:59pm Sunday October 28th**

Produce a deliverable that displays in an interesting manner, learning that the group gained in the process of the project. Usually this is the result of some research (primary or secondary). Discuss the nature of this deliverable with your client and professor. The deliverable should be in a creative and useful format such as an infographic, video, podcast, diagram or animation, etc.

5. **Deliverable (20%):** Group project – Final Paper and/or other deliverables due through Avenue, Riipen and by email to your company contacts by **11:59pm Friday November 30th**.

Produce a report providing analysis and detailing recommendations addressing the scope of work agreed upon with the industry partner. Because scope of work for each project differs, each report will be unique. A rubric on Avenue details how this will be graded; but as with all experiential learning, the true “grade” associated with this project will be how well it serves the needs of the client.

The report will be at least 10 pages single spaced. Due to the variation across different projects, there is no set format for the report. In some situations it may be useful to include the following sections: Executive Summary, Scope, Background and Context,

Research and Analysis, Options Considered, Recommendation, and an Implementation Plan.

A final peer evaluation report will be submitted on Avenue (see final page of the syllabus). If % of work allocated is uneven, these differences will be reflected in individual grades proportionally.

6. Deliverable (10%): Final project showcase on **Monday December 3rd**

On the final day of class we will hold a project showcase. In support of this, your group will prepare a 2-3 minute “lightning pitch” that will be made to the entire class and client guests. The purpose of the lightning pitch is to draw attention to your project. In addition, you will prepare a longer presentation supported by a PowerPoint presentation or a poster. This showcase format will provide plenty of opportunity to discuss your solutions with clients and fellow students.

Grade Conversion

At the end of the course your overall percentage grade will be converted to your letter grade in accordance with the following conversion scheme.

LETTER GRADE	PERCENT	LETTER GRADE	PERCENT
A+	90 - 100	C+	67 - 69
A	85 - 89	C	63 - 66
A-	80 - 84	C-	60 - 62
B+	77 - 79	D+	57 - 59
B	73 - 76	D	53 - 56
B-	70 - 72	D-	50 - 52
		F	00 - 49

Communication and Feedback

Students who wish to correspond with instructors or TAs directly via email must send messages that originate from their official McMaster University email account. This protects the confidentiality and sensitivity of information as well as confirms the identity of the student. Emails regarding course issues should NOT be sent to the Area Administrative Assistants.

Instructors are required to provide evaluation feedback for at least 10% of the final grade to students prior to Week #8 in the term.

Instructors may conduct an informal course review with students by Week #4 to allow time for modifications in curriculum delivery.

Students who wish to have a course component re-evaluated must complete the following form:

http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/Form_A.pdf

In order for the component to be re-read:

- the component must be worth 10% or more of the final grade in the course
- students pay a fee of \$50 in Gilmour Hall #209 and the receipt is then brought to Student Experience - Academic Office (formerly the APO) in DSB 104
- the Area Chair will seek out an independent adjudicator to re-grade the component
- an adjustment to the grade for the component will be made if a grade change of three points or greater on the 12 point scale (equivalent to 10 marks out of 100) has been suggested by the adjudicator as assigned by the Area Chair
- if a grade change is made, the student fee will be refunded

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that result, or could result, in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy:

www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which other credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations

In this course we will be using a web-based service (Turnitin.com – accessed through Avenue to Learn) to reveal plagiarism. To see the Turnitin.com Policy, please go to;

www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity

REQUESTING RELIEF FOR MISSED ACADEMIC WORK

1. Students may request relief from a regularly scheduled midterm, test, assignment or other course component in the following ways:

- a) **for absences from classes lasting up to three (3) days; or**
- b) **for absences from classes lasting more than three (3) days.**
- c) **for conflicts arising from Student Experience - Academic Office approved events**

a) For absences from classes lasting up to three (3) days

Students must use the MSAF (McMaster Student Absence Form). This is an on-line, self-reporting tool, for which submission of medical or other types of supporting documentation is normally not required. Students may use this tool to submit a maximum of one (1) request for relief of missed academic work per term as long as the weighting of the component is worth less than **25%** of the course weight. Students must follow up with their course instructors regarding the nature of the relief within two days of submitting the form. Failure to do so may negate the opportunity for relief. It is the prerogative of the instructor of the course to determine the appropriate relief for missed term work in his/her course. Details are described below.

If the value of the component is worth **25%** or more, students must report to their Faculty Office (the Student Experience – Academic Office for Commerce students) to discuss their situation and will be required to provide appropriate supporting documentation.

Please visit the following page for more information about MSAF:

[http://academiccalendars.romcmaster.ca/content.php?catoid=13&navoid=2208#Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work](http://academiccalendars.romcmaster.ca/content.php?catoid=13&navoid=2208#Requests_for_Relief_for_Missed_Academic_Term_Work)

b) For absences from classes lasting more than three (3) days

Students cannot use the MSAF. They **MUST** report to their Faculty Office (the Student Experience – Academic Office for Commerce students) to discuss their situation and will be required to provide appropriate supporting documentation.

Students who wish to submit more than one request for relief of missed academic work per term cannot use the MSAF. They must report to the Student Experience – Academic Office and discuss their situation with an academic advisor. They will be required to provide supporting documentation and possibly meet with the Manager.

c) For conflicts arising from Faculty Office approved events

Students unable to write a mid-term at the posted exam time due to the following reasons: religious; work-related (for part-time students only); representing university at an academic or varsity athletic event; conflicts between two overlapping scheduled mid-term exams; or other extenuating circumstances, have the option of applying for special exam arrangements. Please see the DeGroot Missed Course Work Policy for a list of conflicts that qualify for academic accommodation

<http://ug.degrootemcmaster.ca/forms-and-resources/missed-course-work-policy/>

Such requests must be made to the Student Experience – Academic Office at least ten (10) working days before the scheduled exam along with acceptable documentation.

Non-Commerce students must submit their documentation to their own Faculty Office and then alert the Student Experience – Academic Office of their interest in an alternate sitting of the midterm.

Adjudication of all requests must be handled by the Student Experience – Academic Office. Instructors cannot allow students to unofficially write make-up exams/tests.

The MSAF cannot be used during any final examination period.

If a mid-term exam is missed without a valid reason, students will receive a grade of zero (0) for that component.

POLICY FOR APPROVED MISSED ACADEMIC WORK

Students who cannot write a test, and have advanced knowledge and permission as described above, will be given the opportunity to write an alternate version of the test and an alternate time.

Students who did not write a test, and subsequently provide an MSAF submission, or documentation for which they have been approved by the Student Experience – Academic Office, will have the weight of the missed work reallocated across other course components. The student must follow up with the instructor to understand this process and decision.

Students who submit an MSAF, or have been approved by the Student Experience – Academic Office, for an assignment deadline, will be given an extension of 3 days for the assignment. Please note, the student will ultimately be required to submit the assignment.

STUDENT ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES

Student Accessibility Services (SAS) offers various support services for students with disabilities. Students are required to inform SAS of accommodation needs for course work at the outset of term. Students who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. Academic accommodations must be arranged for each term of study. Student Accessibility Services can be contacted by phone 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or e-mail sas@mcmaster.ca

For further information, consult McMaster University's Policy for Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities;

<http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicAccommodation-StudentsWithDisabilities.pdf>

POTENTIAL MODIFICATIONS TO THE COURSE

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment

on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check their McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

COURSE SCHEDULE

**Commerce 4SG3
Corporations and Society
Fall 2018 Course Schedule**

	Topic	Details
Week 1 Sept 10 th	The Tragedy of the Commons	Introduction to the course <i>Simulation: Fishbanks</i> <u>Course Overview</u>
Week 2 Sept 17 th	Confronting the Social Responsibility of the Firm	<i>Case: PepsiCo's Turning Point: Establishing a role in a sustainable society</i> <i>Readings: The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase its Profits by Friedman - Courseware</i> <i>Readings: Creating shared value by Porter and Kramer - Courseware</i> <i>Guest: Wade Hemsworth, Manager Media Relations McMaster</i> <u>Group Project: Identify Company preferences September 17th by 11:59pm</u>
Week 3 Sept 24 th	Resilient Organizations and Resilient Societies	<i>Case: YU Ranch: Strategy and Sustainability in Cattle Ranching (A)</i> <i>Readings: Resilience by Zolli - Courseware</i> <i>Guest: Bryan Gilvesy, YU Ranch Owner</i> <u>Sign up on doodle poll for meeting week of October 29th</u>
Week 4 Oct 1 st	Certification Systems and Sustainability Reporting	<i>Case: SC Johnson and the Greenlist Backlash</i> <i>Readings: Sustainability Reporting to Improve Organizational Performance - link in Avenue</i> <i>Guest: Dr. Velma Grover, Sustainability Reporting with GRI</i> <u>Editorial: First Draft Due Sunday October 7th 11:59pm</u> <u>Group Project: Scope Statement due October 5th by 11:59pm</u>
Oct 8 th		<u>Midterm recess</u>
Week 5 Oct 15 th	Stakeholder Engagement and Social License to Operate	<i>Case: IKEA's Global Sourcing Challenge: Indian Rugs and Child Labor)</i> <i>Readings: Managing Sustainable Global Supply Chains: Framework and Best Practices - link in Avenue</i> <u>Reflection #1 Due October 14th at 11:59pm</u>
Week 6 Oct 22 nd	Sustainable Business Models	<i>Case: Interface's Net-Works Program: A New Approach to Creating Social Value through Sustainable Sourcing</i> <i>Reading: "Driving Social Change: Best Practices for Business Leaders and Social Entrepreneurs" – link in Avenue</i> <i>Guest Panel:</i> Jeremy Freiburger , Chief Connector and Cultural Strategist at Cobalt Connects (https://cobaltconnects.ca/) Katherine Kalinowski , Chief Operating Officer Good Shepherd

		Centres Hamilton (https://www.goodshepherdcentres.ca/) TBD Group Project: Key Learning Deliverable due Sunday October 28th by 11:59pm
Week 7 Oct 29 th	Innovation	<i>Case: <u>Building a Scalable Business with Small-Holder Farmers in Kenya: Honey Care's Beekeeping Model</u></i> <i>Debate: Be it resolved that technology will solve our environmental and social problems.</i> <u>Group Project: Meeting with Professor and answering 5 questions ; complete interim peer evaluation</u>
Week 8 Nov 5 th	Business Strategies for Climate Change	<i>Case: Corporate Renewable Energy at Rocky Mountain Institute (available on Avenue)</i> <i>Guest: Mark Porter, Rocky Mountain Institute (Skype)</i> <i>Reading: Business Adaptation to Climate Change: A Systematic Review of the Literature - link in Avenue</i> <i>Guest: Market Opportunities for Carbon: Shawn Gagne, Founder and President of Urban Offsets</i> Revised Editorial: due November 11th 11:59pm on Avenue. Students are encouraged to post on Medium.com and send their link to the professor
Week 9 Nov 12 th	Investing for Impact	<i>Case: Acumen Fund: How to make the greatest impact</i>
Week 10 Nov 19 th	Building the Business Case	<i>Case: <u>The International Meeting Center</u> (Available on Avenue)</i> Group Project: Class time for Group Projects ; Professor in Residence Second reflection: due, November 18th 11:59pm on Avenue
Week 11 Nov 26 th	Giving Voice to Your Values	<i>Case: Giving Voice to Values - Distributed in class</i>
Week 12 Dec 3 rd	Final Project Showcase	Group Project: Final Paper due Friday November 30th Group Project: Final presentations on Monday December 3rd

LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Class 1 – Introduction and the Tragedy of the Commons

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Understand the causes of the tragedy of the commons and its relationship to resource exploitation
2. Be able to articulate the role that firms play in such tragedies
3. Understand the pros and cons of different antidotes to the tragedy
4. Understand why solutions to the tragedy can be so challenging

RESOURCES

- The Problem with Open Access
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WYA1y405JW0>
- What is the tragedy of the commons
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CxC161GvMPc>
- Elinor Ostrom on the Tragedy of the Common
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ybdvjvIH-1U>
- Governing the Commons - https://wtf.tw/ref/ostrom_1990.pdf (this is very long but pointing it out as a resource – Ostrom one the Nobel Prize for her work on the commons)
- Garrett Hardin popularized the concept of the Tragedy of the Commons in 1968
<http://science.sciencemag.org/content/162/3859/1243>

Class 2 – Confronting the Social Responsibility of the Firm

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Critically evaluate the social responsibility of the firm in terms of economic, social and ecological value created and harmed
2. Understand the shared value framework and what it means to create shared value
3. Distinguish and evaluate instrumental from normative sustainability approaches

RESOURCES

- Shared Value Initiative <https://www.sharedvalue.org/about-shared-value>
- A brief history of doing well by doing good <https://hbr.org/2012/06/a-brief-history-of-doing-well>

Class 3 – Resilient Organizations and Societies

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Understand sustainability from the perspective of resilience
2. Be able to identify factors that improve or deteriorate systemic resilience
3. Situate organizations within such a system

RESOURCES

- Great resources on resilience research and thinking <https://www.resalliance.org/>

- Andrew Zolli on resilience https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DvuXKNz7_KA
- 100 Resilient Cities initiative <https://www.100resilientcities.org/>

Class 4 – Certification systems and Sustainability Reporting

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Evaluate a company's sustainability reporting
2. Understand the concept of greenwashing
3. Recommend appropriate course of action for a firm considering adopting a certification system
4. Understand and be able to apply the concept of materiality

RESOURCES

- Some background on certification systems in the context of sustainability https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sustainability_standards_and_certification
- Are sustainability certifications fitting their purpose? <http://www.ethicalcorp.com/are-sustainability-certification-schemes-fit-purpose>
- Does Responsible consumption benefit companies more than consumers? <https://www.fastcompany.com/3035024/does-responsible-consumption-benefit-companies-more-than-consumers>
- From the author of Beyond Certification – looking at blockchain for example as a next step https://www.huffingtonpost.com/scott-poynton/blockchain-revolution-and_b_10371016.html

Class 5 – Stakeholder Engagement and Social License to Operate

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Understand the concepts of a stakeholder and social license to operate
2. Apply a prioritization tool to understand how corporations may/should attend to different stakeholders
3. Compare approaches to dealing with stakeholders of different types
4. Create a plan to engage stakeholders in action using gamification approaches

RESOURCES

- What is stakeholder theory <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bIRUaLcvPe8>
- Social License to Operate <http://learningforsustainability.net/social-license/>

Class 6 – Sustainable Business Models

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Appreciate how organizations of different types (non-profit, social businesses and social entrepreneurs, for-profit firms) can address social and environmental issues
2. Gain familiarity with different archetypes of business models

RESOURCES

- The Business Model Canvas - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QoAOzMTLP5s>
- 5 principles of a sustainable business model <https://nbs.net/p/five-principles-of-a-sustainable-business-model-e4d05473-39e3-4e02-b7d7-436f97bc9314>
- Business models for sustainable development <https://www.iied.org/business-models-for-sustainable-development>
- Social Business - Muhammad Yunus <https://www.muhammadyunus.org/index.php/social-business/social-business>

Class 7 – Innovation

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Critically evaluate the role of business in addressing issues of poverty at the base of the pyramid
2. Identify the challenges associated with scaling and replicating solutions to social or environmental issues
3. Argue the merits of technology as a solution and/or cause of our environmental and social problems

RESOURCES

- UN Sustainable Development Goals https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Factsheet_Summit.pdf and <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300>
- Base of the Pyramid <https://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/prahalad-base-bottom-pyramid-profit-poor>
- Technology as our planet's last best hope <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2013/jul/15/technology-planet-ecological-modernism-environmental>
- Jevon's paradox <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2010/12/20/the-efficiency-dilemma>

Class 8 – Business Strategies for Climate Change

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Understand the distinction between scope 1 through 3 emissions
2. Understand the drivers pushing firms to make voluntary statements related to climate (ie 100% renewables)
3. Understand carbon markets, carbon offsets and distinguish from carbon tax
4. Prepare an approach to procuring 100% renewable energy
5. Recognize the potential market based solutions to climate change
6. Critically evaluate alternative approaches for firms to engage in climate change mitigation

RESOURCES

- Corporate strategies that address climate change
<https://www.c2es.org/document/getting-ahead-of-the-curve-corporate-strategies-that-address-climate-change/>
- Carbon Markets
<http://www.undp.org/content/sdfinance/en/home/solutions/carbon-markets.html>
- Carbon Offsets <https://davidsuzuki.org/what-you-can-do/carbon-offsets/>
- Carbon offsets can do more environmental harm than good
<https://theconversation.com/carbon-offsets-can-do-more-environmental-harm-than-good-26593> (a critical take)

Class 9 – Investing for Impact

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Understand the seven finance-based solutions for aligning social and environmental issues with investments
2. Compare and contrast conventional investing with impact investing

RESOURCES

- Responsible Investor opinion survey <https://www.riacanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/2017-RIA-Investor-Opinion-Survey-WEB.pdf>
- Some research of mine <https://impactinvesting.mcmaster.ca/>
- State of the nation Impact Investing in Canada <https://www.marsdd.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Impact-Investing-in-Canada-State-of-the-Nation-2014-EN.pdf>
- Database of impact performance measures <https://iris.thegiin.org/>

Class 10 – Building the Business Case

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Understand the drivers that can be leveraged to build the business case for sustainability
2. Formulate an approach for a manager seeking to improve their sustainability performance

RESOURCES

- Articles from MIT Sloan on the sustainability business case
<https://sloanreview.mit.edu/tag/sustainability-business-case/>
- Valuing Business Sustainability <https://nbs.net/p/executive-report-valuing-business-sustainability-8c9acdab-afa6-4eea-a640-9e0ede7f6e47>

Class 11 – Giving voice to values

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Articulate a self-awareness of your own values and sense of purpose
2. Understand and be able to recognize value conflicts
3. Understand and be able to recognize reasons and rationalizations that others (or ourselves use) to justify unethical behavior
4. Formulate an approach for a manager seeking to improve their sustainability performance
5. Practice voicing your values in a roleplay

RESOURCES

- Giving voice to values <https://www.darden.virginia.edu/ibis/initiatives/giving-voice-to-values/>

Peer Evaluation

Company Name: _____

Group Member	% of work done	Signature
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

You will complete this peer evaluation both in the interim during the 30 minute professor meeting during the week of October 29th and as a separate file in the final report submission to Avenue.