

SYSTEMS THINKING AND SUSTAINABILITY

Course Syllabus
Spring 2017
2170 Grainger Hall

En Studies 402, Lecture 2

Tom Eggert, Esq.
tleggert@wisc.edu
608 279-8608
212 Bradley Memorial
1225 Linden Drive

Objectives:

This course is for students interested in the relationship between systems thinking and the concept of sustainability. In spite of its name, this is not a course about theory, but will look at ways that systems thinking is critical to understanding sustainability. In short, this is a course about using an understanding about systems to bring about change in the real world.

Systems thinking—seeing the underlying structures that influence our behavior and understanding the importance of interconnections in our world—is a key management skill for the 21st century. Transcending the tension between competing sustainability ideas (for instance, protecting natural resources and economic development) will demand the persistence and creativity of innovative "systems level entrepreneurs" in collaboration with social and business entrepreneurs. Understanding the power of structure can help leaders unlock their organization's potential and avoid unintended consequences. We will spend most of the semester learning how to work within systems to bring about change.

Our social and economic systems continue to grow and evolve. Policy and implementation decisions are often based on poor or outdated understandings of the systems around us. Often, poorly developed policy leads to actions that are ineffective and create unexpected side effects. In addition, we live in a time when everything is happening faster; notice the almost immediate reaction of Toyota's stock price to Trump's tweet regarding imposing a "border tax" on Camry's built in Mexico.

Though this is not solely a class about society's growing interest in business (both from a social and environmental perspective), it is more clear than ever that business plays a central role in our progress (or our lack of progress) toward sustainability. As one of, if not THE, dominant social institutions of our time, corporations have the financial resources, the technology, the know-how, and the global reach to lead an exploration of sustainability. Without the involvement of the business community in reshaping how we think about our individual and collective responsibility to the earth and future generations, our chances of successfully navigating the waters ahead are slim. **The market remains the most effective means we know of to allocate scarce and valuable resources** in ways that maximize social outcomes.

This class brings together students from across campus to dialogue on the relevance of systems to sustainability in a focused and constructive way. It has been organized to give you better insights into how sustainable development can be a part of most decisions that are made, whether at the individual lifestyle level or at the organizational level. The class will consist of lectures, supplemented with student discussions based on readings and case studies, and research and writing about ways that we can change things right now so that as a society we are able to live in a more sustainable manner.

The key learning outcomes of the class include:

- Understand how institutions utilize systems thinking.
- Understand sustainability in terms of design and systems.
- Understand that responsible producing and consuming is a shared responsibility between corporations, consumers, governments and non- governmental organizations.
- Understand the changing role of business in society and how the expectations on businesses are evolving.
- Understand the relative impact of private sector action versus government and citizen led action.
- Understand various organizational options and the difference it makes in operation

WARNING: This class carries a **relatively heavy preparation load** for most of the semester.

You will be required to indicate that you have done the readings (and viewed the videos) each week (see below). You will learn as much from the preparation of the readings as you will from the lectures. It is essential therefore that you **be present and be prepared to discuss** the readings and videos. If you will be absent, **please email Tom and your TA (Brenna George – brgeorge@wisc.edu)** in advance to let them know. Advance notice of a planned absence will not hurt your grade (unless this is a repeated behavior), simply missing class will. Finally, if you will need to miss class for religious reasons, please notify Tom within the first two weeks of class of the specific days or dates which you will be gone.

This is not a course geared toward "passive learning". Your purpose for being in this class should not be to passively receive information from "experts", but rather to actively engage in your own inquiry and restructure your thoughts about, and your relationship with, the concept of sustainability.

As part of class participation, I encourage appropriate **laptop use**. Inappropriate laptop use includes viewing non-relevant sites, instant messaging, e-mailing, gaming and shopping during class. If you would change the window if I was looking over your shoulder, then it is an inappropriate use.

A substantial amount of "out-of-class" time will be required as you work with classmates. Please be thoughtful and considerate of your classmates schedules and place a priority on meeting when needed.

INTEGRITY

This class will formally introduce the concept of personal integrity through your responses to the readings each week. This university does not teach about the importance of integrity in any systematized way; however, I believe that any individual's future success in whatever they choose to do is attributable, to a large degree, to their personal integrity. Personal integrity isn't achieved through inoculation. It's a process. It's rooted in your knowledge of the difference between right and wrong. You shape yourself, decision by decision, across your lifetime. Integrity depends on consistency, continuity, and repetition. So tell the truth, deliver what you promise, let your caring show, and your integrity will shine through for all to see. As Chinua Achebe (Nigerian novelist, poet, professor, and critic) said: *"One of the truest tests of integrity is its blunt refusal to be compromised."*

I will ask that you provide brief comments, reflections or questions from the readings each week to an email distribution list (envirst402-2-s17@lists.wisc.edu). Please don't send a response if you haven't really done all of the preparation for class indicated in the syllabus (both readings and videos)--ala the integrity issue. Even with the best of intentions sometimes preparation just doesn't get done. While there are links supplied with most of the weekly readings, if a reading is not linked, I still expect you to read it. Contact me or Brenna and we will send out a pdf of the unlinked reading via email.

READING RESPONSES

REQUIREMENTS: As described above, each week you will be asked to send to the list serve envirst402-2-s17@lists.wisc.edu an email that contains brief comments, reflections or questions about the week's readings, due by 10:00 p.m. on the Sunday before class. Your responses form the backbone of our discussions each week, so let me know what interests you, what you have questions about or what you disagree with. This is your opportunity to shape the discussion in class to what interested you from the readings. Keep your responses **SHORT**, but view them as your opportunity to signal to Tom what interested you about the readings! I do not expect you to read all of the readings responses that come in each week (but I know some of you will be curious about what others are writing).

One other benefit of writing each week is to practice thinking! What?! The act of writing, the act of assembling words into sentences, integrates the different parts of our thinking such that a new structured thought emerges while writing. Writing is thinking. By placing thoughts in the structure of a sentence, we create a structure that

then may be manipulated on the page or screen. When writing sentences, editing sentences and moving the contained phrases and sentences around in paragraphs, the writer is actively thinking, bringing ideas together in new ways that didn't exist until that moment.

SHORT WRITING ASSIGNMENTS: DUE FEBRUARY 6TH & FEBRUARY 27th

You will also be asked to write two short persuasive papers during the semester. Short and persuasive is hard. However, Steve Jobs wrote: "Simple is harder than complex. You have to work hard to get your thinking clean to make it simple. But, its worth it in the end, because once you get there, you can move mountains."

Past experience indicates that many of you will initially struggle with these assignments. My hope is that by providing comments/feedback, you will find a way to become clearer and more persuasive in your own voice. It is important to note that I will grade you on both content and your writing skills. This means that your factual arguments and logic are given equal weight with word choice, grammar, paper organization, sentence structure, and other writing skills. Being able to say what you need to say clearly and concisely is an important skill to learn. You will have the opportunity to revise each paper (for a higher grade) after having received comments.

For these papers, it may be helpful to recall the structure of the 5 paragraph essay that you learned in middle school. I know that you all know this, but just to review, in the first paragraph, tell the reader what you will be presenting in the balance of the paper and why they are receiving this paper. The second, third and fourth paragraphs should each present a single idea or recommendation along with evidence or examples that help the reader to understand and "buy into" your point. The final paragraph should review what your idea/recommendations were.

The first paper is a response to a column by the President/CEO of WI Manufacturers and Commerce and the second will involve an interview with an elected official.

For the first paper, read the column (which is included in the syllabus under February 6 readings) and prepare a one page response. Your response can either be to affirm the position of the author or to refute it. This is a persuasive writing assignment, so pick out 2 – 4 positions of the author and either provide additional justification for those positions or evidence that the positions are poorly developed. In a persuasive writing assignment, your introduction should identify the positions that you agree with or the positions you disagree with and then each subsequent paragraph should provide justification for your agreement/disagreement with one of those positions.

MODEL 1ST PAPER MEMOS:

<https://uwmadison.box.com/s/6q8e3z5pkkrd5capeo9anhe37x1j5xlg>

In preparing for the second paper (which should take the form of a memo from you to the person you interviewed), you are required to make an appointment with a Congressperson, Senator, state legislator, Governor, Mayor, County Supervisor, County Board representative, city council representative or some other elected (not appointed) official, and discuss with them what their main priorities are for their time in office. Go into this interview with a set of questions that will allow you to understand where their main interests lie. After gathering this background information, your paper is a series of recommendations to the person that you interviewed on how they can incorporate the concepts of sustainability into the issues that are important to them. You are to send them a copy of your paper, with a copy to me.

You'll find as you leave academia that people are most easily convinced with sound logic and numbers that they can understand. Thus, for the second paper, I will expect you to develop the economic case (I refer to this as the business case) for your recommendations. The purpose of the second paper is to provide enough information to the elected official to get them to agree with your recommendation. The paper should demonstrate the costs of your recommendations and the associated benefits.

PAST MEMOS WRITTEN BY STUDENTS:

<https://uwmadison.box.com/s/otpg8jqx70rmh8kvh03u8o3x1328gqdp>

The important point with this assignment is to get started early. It will require making an appointment and talking with one of the above elected officials at least the week before you can write this paper.

REQUIREMENTS: The first paper cannot exceed one page (single-spaced) and the second paper should be no more than 2 single spaced pages with standard margins, and no smaller than a 12 point font. The papers should be emailed to Tom in a Word doc form by no later than 11:59pm on February 6th and February 27th. For the second paper, you are required to also send a copy to your elected official; however you may wait until you have my suggestions before you send the memo to them.

CREATIVE PROJECTS: DUE APRIL 3rd

You will be engaged in a creative project. Why? Napoleon Hill got it right! "First comes thought; then organization of that thought into ideas and plans; then transformation of those plans into reality. The beginning, as you will observe, is in your imagination." We've all heard it before, "If you always do what you've always done, then you'll always get what you always got." In other words, you can't solve a problem with the same thinking that created it. Such is the case with climate change, income inequality, poverty and other pressing world concerns. So, if our traditional thinking and approaches aren't cutting it, then what will?

A change in perspective. Sustainability is that perspective. When we make a shift in our thinking, we generate different results in our outer world. As Norman Vincent Peale said, "Change your thoughts and you change your world." Thus, even though you did not sign up for a humanities class, you will be required to be creative.

I am interested in exploring the role of media in influencing or shaping opinions and behavior, especially amongst millennials. By class on April 3rd, please prepare one of the following creative projects:

- 1) Either script and perform, or identify existing text and perform for a 1-4 minute video that you edit, add credits to, and post on the YouTube site for the class. I encourage you to think in terms of performance art in preparing this video. For one excellent example of what I am looking for, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OadZpUJv8Eg> or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8FJyKYK74DM> or see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cpnfgEtAbNE> for an example from a previous student.
- 2) If you have a personal website, develop a new page as to why sustainability is important to you, complete with resources, links, etc. See the class website for an idea of what I'm looking for: <http://uwsustainability.com/resources/living-sustainably/>
- 3) Write and produce a children's story. Example issues could include: global warming, species extinction, over-population, over-consumption, build-up of toxics in our world, ozone hole, growing dead zones in our oceans, food insecurity, accessibility to clean water, soil loss/erosion, vanishing rainforests, or declining fish stocks. Decide on the point(s) that you want to make and how you can explain this point so that a 3rd grade child can understand it. Your story needs to be "produced" (meaning you must develop graphics, and perhaps audio with it) and must be submitted electronically. Your stories will be presented to third graders for feedback and grading.
- 4) If you have another creative idea, present it to Tom for approval. See this link to a podcast for one creative idea from a student: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MVVUG4uFf9U>

Libraries around campus are good sources for technology that you might need. For open source pictures, see <http://search.creativecommons.org/>. You can also check out these sites for free downloads of pictures: [Microsoft](#), [morgueFile](#) and [Everystockphoto](#). You can also find historical photos [via the Library of Congress](#).

REQUIREMENTS: Requirements are project specific, make sure to clarify with me before completing your project. Projects are due by 11:59am on April 3rd. Evaluation criteria will include:

- Educational Value - Introduces new or unknown information and delivers it in an interesting and compelling way
- Creative/Memorable - Project contains images, music, or elements of the presentation, that are memorable.
- Narrative quality – Project has an understandable and natural flow
- Overall Production Quality - Project looks professional

PAST STUDENT CREATIVE ASSIGNMENTS:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BfFVCXynRal>

<https://uwmadison.box.com/s/wzz724g1p6x7bhscgv2mz8i3l5xgcd2r>

<https://uwmadison.box.com/s/i0vi4t1g30hlrezj75lpkisjzj0210ua>

FINAL PROJECTS: DUE APRIL 24TH

You will work in groups on a project that will not only satisfy a major portion of your grade, but will also satisfy a sustainability need of a local business or non-profit. Each of you will be part of a consulting team that will be providing recommendations to your client by the end of the semester. Possible projects will be distributed during the first class. The first part of your final paper will provide the basic detail about a sustainability topic identified by your client. The second part of your paper provides your recommendations to your client on how to move forward, along with all necessary justification. In general, your final project will be an advocacy piece to convince your client to take an action. You must develop your most convincing argument(s) and be prepared to answer objections (it costs too much, no one would want to do this, etc.). This is NOT your traditional academic paper, and if you insist on writing a traditional research paper, you will have missed the point of this assignment. This consulting work is designed to take place over the balance of the semester, so if you wait until the last week or two to do this project, you most likely will not do well on this assignment. You must talk with your client, and quite probably others in the field, as you undertake your project. I think you will find it useful to distinguish the kind of writing you have learned to do in an academic setting from the kind of writing you will be asked to do in the real world.

During the final weeks of class, you will also be presenting your recommendations to your client. Clients will attend class for 15-minute presentations followed by Q&A. These will be formal presentations and business casual dress is expected.

REQUIREMENTS: Your recommendations are to be contained in your final project write-up that cannot exceed 5 single spaced pages (additional appendixes may be used) with standard margins and no smaller than a 12 point font. These are to be emailed to me by 11:59pm on April 24th as either one PDF or one Word doc. That means to say if you have written your paper in Word and created a graphic as a PDF, please combine them into one document before submission.

PAST STUDENT FINAL PROJECTS:

<http://uwsustainability.com/uw-sustainability-business-courses/systems-thinking/>

PERSONAL DESCRIPTION: DUE MAY 1st

At any time during the course of the semester, you are to write your own six-word personal description that describes you; your values and your dreams. How hard can that be?

Some of the examples from last year include: "A guarded heart has a price", "This girl conquered her greatest fears", "Hardwired drive slumbering, seeking worthy purpose", and "Then, I changed "could" to "can"".

REQUIREMENTS: Six words containing your personal description emailed to Tom before 11:59pm May 1st.

SOCIAL MEDIA (EXTRA CREDIT)

For those of you interested, I would welcome your voices in developing TWEETS that will be distributed through the WI Sustainable Business Council Twitter page (#wisustainablebc). We currently have 618 followers, so you will be reaching a fair number of people. If you post at least one tweet a week for at least 12 weeks, you will earn an extra 5 points toward your final grade. In order to get credit, your tweets must be in your voice – meaning that in 140 characters you must do more than just recite a new fact. All tweets must be relevant to the WI business community. This is an exceptional opportunity to earn extra credit by investing 10 – 15 minutes a week over the course of the semester. Contact Tom for the log-on credentials for wisustainablebc.

GRADING

25% of your final grade will be based upon "Citizenship" - includes attendance, readings responses, teamwork on your project, classmate respect and support, attitude, interest, appreciation, enthusiasm, active and productive participation in class and knowledge of topics. To be clear, you'll lose points if you don't come to class or if you don't submit a reading response. You'll also lose points if you don't carry your weight on your final project.

20% of your final grade will be based upon your papers.

15% of your final grade will be based upon your creative project.

5% of your final grade will be based upon your 6 word description.

30% of your final grade will be based upon your final paper.

5% of your final grade will be based upon your presentation of your final paper.

In fairness to others in the class, late submissions of the written material will be penalized at a rate of 20% of the submission's value per day (e.g., your creative project presented one day late will receive at most a weight of 12 out of the 15 points available).

Finally, I want you to know that I view teaching as a serious business. You are all wonderfully bright and talented students. You have almost unlimited potential. For most of you, this is your one shot at college; you deserve nothing less than an academic experience that challenges you to excel from the first day of this class to your last. As a member of the faculty, I have a responsibility to coax the very best from you because you will become the next generation of leaders. Where you go from here, what you accomplish, how you impact the world, depends in large part on the learning environment we create in the classroom. I want every student to leave my class at the end of the semester saying, "I didn't know that I could work so hard, and I didn't realize that I could learn so much." Anything less is unacceptable.

LIST OF MATERIALS

Books:

One From Many: Visa and the Rise of Chaordic Organizations, by Dee Hock (San Francisco, CA. Berrett Koehler Publishers, 2005) \$18.95

Thinking in Systems: A Primer, by Donella Meadows (Boulder, CO. Chelsea Green Publishing, 2008) \$19.95

The World We Made: Alex McKay's Story from 2050, by Jonathon Porritt (New York, NY Phaidon Press) 2013

REQUIRED READINGS: Reading Packet available. However, if you are comfortable reading articles on-line, we will provide either a web address or an electronic copy of all readings. Please **do not** print these off in order to read them. First, you will spend more than you would have if you would have purchased the reading packet, and second, you will not print them off on as "green" of paper as will be used for the reading packet. If you know you want a hard copy of the reading packet, let Tom know. We will ask on the first day of class how many people want a hard copy of the packet.

January 23) *Introduction*

The first class is designed to accomplish six things. First, the goals, purposes, structure, and format of the class will be made clear through a review of the syllabus and other relevant materials. Second, we will discuss the purpose and structure of the creative exercise that you will be asked to do. Third, we will discuss the final project and go through each of the possible projects. Fourth, students will share information about themselves. Fifth, we will work in teams to solve a problem that requires that we start thinking outside of the box. Finally, we define sustainability and start talking about what we mean when we use this term.

READINGS. Abundance on Trial: The Cultural Significance of “Sustainability”, by Joshua Yates, published in the Hedgehog Review, Summer, 2012, http://www.iasc-culture.org/THR/THR_article_2012_Summer_Yates.php

VIDEOS: BEE Environmental Communication: A Systems Story (4:46)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HMmChiLZZHg>

Sustainability 2.0 – Systems Thinking (3:13), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HtrRj3C1cKY>

January 30) *Laying the Foundation: Sustainability and Systems*

This class will be designed to establish a common grounding for where we will go during the semester. I will talk about sustainability on a conceptual level, and then illustrate how some of these ideas are being implemented in various institutions. We will talk about various frameworks for thinking about sustainability, and I will use The Natural Step as an example of one framework, and how it can be important in guiding people’s understanding, and thinking.

READINGS 5 Ways “Systems Thinking” Can Jumpstart Action, by Network for Business Sustainability, 2013, <http://www.greenbiz.com/blog/2013/12/09/systems-thinking-climate-change-lessons-action>

Bad Systems Make Companies do Bad Things, by Mallen Baker, Oct. 2016,
<http://mallenbaker.net/article/clear-reflection/bad-systems-make-companies-do-bad-things>

Patagonia, by Forest Reinhardt, et al, Harvard Case Study No. 9-711-020, 2010 (pdf to be provided)

Thinking in Systems: Introduction and Part 1 (System Structures and Behaviors)

VIDEOS: TEDxWWF - Mike Barry: A Manifesto for a Sustainable Business Revolution, 2011,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xUDVDh8ktHw>

TEDx Talk: Sustainability -- Are we winning? | Peter Newman | 2015, TEDxPerth,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6RFiyM89rbk>

February 6) Systems Thinking and Sustainability

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

GUEST LECTURER: Tim Allen, Emeritus Professor, Dept of Botany

READINGS: Overview of Systems Thinking by Daniel Aronson, 1998.
http://www.thinking.net/Systems_Thinking/OverviewSTarticle.pdf

The Lazy Eight: Key to Sustainable Development, Sustainable Development Update, Issue 5, p. 2 (only)
2008.

<https://uwmadison.box.com/s/z99ujgicfznsbavzcm5u8nxhn5ngjesf>

Young People Should Fear Debt as Much as Climate Change (If Not More), by Kurt Bauer, published at
http://issuu.com/wmc1/docs/wmc_bv_jan2015-med/4

Thinking in Systems: Parts 2 (Systems and Us)

VIDEOS: Systems Thinking: A Cautionary Tale, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=17BP9n6g1F0>

SHORT WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE

The first paper is a response to a column by the President/CEO of WI Manufacturers and Commerce (the largest business trade association in the state). Read the column (which is included in the syllabus under today's readings) and prepare a one page response. Your response can either be to affirm the position of the author or to refute it. This is a persuasive writing assignment, so pick out 2 – 3 positions of the author and either provide additional evidence for those positions or evidence that the positions are poorly developed. In a persuasive writing assignment, your introduction should identify the positions that you agree with or the positions you disagree with and then each subsequent paragraph should provide justification for your agreement/disagreement with one of those positions.

PAST MEMOS WRITTEN BY STUDENTS:

<https://uwmadison.app.box.com/s/dx51lzjyb7x7ir6rui637qfic1a91mqr/1/16157638100>

February 13) More on Systems – Capitalism as an Example of a System

Tim introduced us to systems last week, and now we'll talk more about the role of systems and the importance of systems. Steve will talk about the macro systems that we live under – democracy and capitalism. They are both systems and react as systems do to threats, pressure, and perturbations. We'll start learning about the importance of understanding the logic behind systems thinking, and the power of working within systems (as well as the difficulty of changing a system). Many accuse our system of Democracy as being dysfunctional. But, the system reflects society and is governed by rules (both written and unwritten) that have developed over time. Those rules, of course, are created by the politicians that complain about them.

GUEST LECTURER: Steve Brick, Senior Fellow, Climate and Energy, The Chicago Council on Global Affairs

READINGS: Is Capitalism in Trouble? By Chrystia Freeland, published in the Atlantic, 2013
<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2013/12/is-capitalism-in-trouble/354683/>

Progress Report: Foster Inclusive Capitalism, published by Reclaim the American Dream, 2016
<http://reclaimtheamericandream.org/progress-inclusive/>

Thinking in Systems: Parts 3 (Creating Change – In systems and Philosophies)

VIDEOS: Business is about purpose: R. Edward Freeman at TEDxCharlottesville 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7dugfwJthBY>

TED Talk: Michael Porter: Why Business Can be Good at Solving Social Problems, (16:28) http://www.ted.com/talks/michael_porter_why_business_can_be_good_at_solving_social_problems

February 20) More on Systems – The Systems We Create

Reynolds Transfer and Storage is a 6th generation family business. One of the secrets of their success lies in becoming a learning organization. As they continue to grow, they have adopted principles of systems thinking to better manage their growth and to be more deliberate and thoughtful about both growth and their relationship with the natural world and society. Reynolds also is a participant in the broader Madison/Wisconsin system from both a work standpoint and a sustainability standpoint, and Ben will talk about their efforts to positively impact both the environmental and social systems within Madison and Wisconsin. He'll also present information about how many of our social challenges are related to systems failings, using the lead poisoning in poor neighborhoods around the country as an example of a systems issue caused by many environmental and social factors.

GUEST LECTURER: Ben Reynolds, Director of Operations, Reynolds Transfer and Storage

READINGS: The Ecosystem of Shared Value, by Mark Kramer and Marc Pfitzer, Harvard Business Review, Oct. 2016, <https://hbr.org/2016/10/the-ecosystem-of-shared-value>

Welcome To The Emerging World Of The Circular Economy, by Marc Gunther, Aug, 2014, <https://ensia.com/features/zero-waste-world/>

One From Many, Intro – ch 5

VIDEOS: TED Talk: How complex systems will save us | Bud Caddell | TEDxIndianapolis, Nov, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mOheTsPx220>

TEDx London Business School: The social responsibility of business | Alex Edmans | 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z5KZhm19E00>

February 27) Organization Matters – Becoming a B Corp

Alana graduated from UW and joined a small startup in Madison. Yumbutter makes "mouth rockin', world-changing" nut butters, and has established a fan base around lifestyle athletes, outdoor enthusiasts, and healthy moms. However, Yumbutter is also a value-driven business – one that works to serve a social mission as well as return a profit. In this case, Yumbutter's mission is to "nourish the world," so they established a Buy One | Feed One program that provides healthcare and nutrition for malnourished children and their mothers in Central America. Yumbutter has become a successful niche player, and continues to make a difference in the lives of the children and mothers that they help. In 2014, they registered as a B Corporation. Alana will talk about why Yumbutter chose to become a B Corporation, the elements of the certification process (and the difference between the certification and the legal entity), and both the value they have incurred and the limitations they have experienced since their decision to become a B Corp.

GUEST LECTURER: Alana McKeever, Marketing and Sustainability Director, YumButter, Madison

READINGS: B-Lab: Can It Scale Business as a Force for Good? by Christopher Marquis, et al, Harvard Business School Case No. 9-415-080, June, 2015.

ETSY IPO Tests Pledge to Balance Social Mission and Profit, by Hiroko Tabuchi, NY Times, April, 2015, <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/17/business/dealbook/etsy-ipo-tests-pledge-to-emphasize-social-mission-over-profit.html? r=0>

VIDEOS: B Corporation Founders Video (4:58) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Oom9ptF8qY> and **LH Forum, B Lab Co-Founder Andrew Kasoy**, (17:15) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hxzmKlhzoaE>.

SHORT WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE

In preparing for the second paper (which should take the form of a memo from you to the person you interviewed), you are required to make an appointment with a Congressperson, Senator, state legislator, Governor, Mayor, County Supervisor, County Board representative, city council representative or some other elected (not appointed) official, and discuss with them what their main priorities are for their time in office. Go into this interview with a set of questions that will allow you to understand where their main interests lie. After gathering this background information, your paper is a series of recommendations to the person that you interviewed on how they can incorporate the concepts of sustainability into the issues that are important to them. You are to send them a copy of your paper, with a copy to me.

Indicate what the key issues of the person you talked to are, and then weave sustainability into your recommendations about these issues. For instance, if a key issue was tax reduction, you could recommend how taxing pollution is far superior to taxing people's labor, or that subsidies are in fact working against sustainability principles.

PAST MEMOS WRITTEN BY STUDENTS:

<https://uwmadison.box.com/s/c57ipyjx5ocezzx67tq5paveespizlv>

March 6) Socially Responsible Investing as a Systems Issue

One of the two most prevalent systems that sustainability exists within is capitalism. As with most systems, capitalism does not easily accommodate the principles or values of sustainability. Yet, within our capitalistic markets, socially responsible investing continues to grow. By some estimates, one out of every 7 dollars is invested with the intention to recognize the values of a company, in addition to providing return on that dollar. Companies that are value based, and that have publicly embraced the tenants of sustainability are competing for dollars that other companies don't have access to. Brian will talk about the rise of 3Aprilinterest in socially responsible investing and the way that it is shaping behavior at some firms.

GUEST LECTURER: Mitch DeWitt, Financial Advisor, Merrill Lynch or Mary Strickland, Vice President, Robert W Baird & Co

READINGS: Joan Bavaria and Multi-Dimensional Capitalism by Geoffrey Jones and Seema Amble, Case No. 9-317-028, Sept. 2016

Socially Responsible Investing is Coming of Age, by Jeff Benjamin, Mar 2016, <http://www.investmentnews.com/article/20160306/FREE/160309960/socially-responsible-investing-is-coming-of-age>

An Interview with Morgan Stanley's Audrey Choi on Investing Sustainably, by Reynard Loki, published by Greenbiz, 2015 <http://www.greenbiz.com/article/interview-morgan-stanleys-audrey-choi-investing-sustainably>

The Millennial Perspective: Understanding Preferences of the New Asset Owners, by Lindsay Norcott and Jed Emerson, published by Impact Assets, 2015
http://www.impactassets.org/files/ImpactAssets_Issue_Brief_13_Millennial_Perspective.pdf

One From Many, ch 6 – 11

VIDEOS: TED Talk: Sustainable Investing: What you didn't know could make you money. | Karina Funk | 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fno1QluA6EQ>

March 13) Organization Matters – Mutual Companies

Mutual companies are a poorly understood organizational option for businesses. Banks and insurance companies are the most frequent sectors that utilize this organizational structure. These businesses exist for the benefit of their shareholders, who are also their customers. This creates a very different dynamic within the firm, as there is much less focus on quarterly earnings. Ron has worked in a Mutual company that converted to a publicly held company, and is now working in a mutual company that has chosen not to convert. He'll share stories about the difference that organizational structure can make.

GUEST LECTURER: Ron Joelson, CIO, Northwestern Mutual, Milwaukee, WI.

READINGS: Systemic Crisis and Systemic Changes in the United States in the 21st Century, by Gar Alperovitz, et al, Sept. 2016, <http://thenextsystem.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/NSPOberlin-final.pdf>

Three Steps To Enabling The Hidden Power Of 'Mutual' In Any Business, by Ralph Louis Viton, 2014, <http://maddockdouglas.com/three-steps-enabling-hidden-power-mutual-business/>

One From Many, ch 12 – 15

VIDEOS: Maddock Douglas, Maria Douglas, Flirting with the Uninterested, <http://maddockdouglas.com/three-steps-enabling-hidden-power-mutual-business/> (see embedded video on page 2)

March 27) Organization Matters – Selling Your Company to Your Employees

Employee Owned companies are more democratic, more sustainable, more efficient. Electronic Theatre Controls (ETC) recently transitioned to an employee owned company. Dick will talk about the decision to sell the company to his employees, the legal realities of creating and running an employee owned company and also the cultural and day-to-day realities.

GUEST LECTURER: Dick Titus, President, Electronic Theatre Controls, Middleton

READINGS: Capitalism for Everyone, by Karla Walter, D Madland and D Corley, published by the Center for American Progress, 2015
<https://cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/CapitalismForEveryone-report.pdf>

Zingerman's Community of Businesses: Broad-Based Ownership, Governance and Sustainability, by V Kilbarda under the direction of Wayne Baker, published by the William Davidson Institute, case 1-429-340

The World We Made, Introduction – p. 73

VIDEOS: Employee-owners do it better: David Erdal at TEDxGlasgow,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yb2hoqPWp2Q>

We The Owners documentary, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zpkUN0rHR1w>

April 3) Organization Matters – Cooperatives

The state is home to a large number of cooperatives. Organic Valley is one of the largest in the country. Jerry will talk about the freedom and challenges the cooperative structure provides in decision making and in relationships with stakeholders.

GUEST LECTURER: Jerry McGeorge, Vice President of Cooperative Affairs. Organic Valley, LaFarge

READING: Combining Purpose with Profits, by Julian Birkinshaw, N Foss and S Lindenberg, published by MIT Sloan Management Review, (2014) <https://uwmadison.box.com/s/aj5ohfo5ys46iv806pn3yufvs55o2uxl>

How To Stop Short-Term Thinking in America's Companies, by Alana Semuels, published in the Atlantic, Dec., 2016, <https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2016/12/short-term-thinking/511874/>

The World We Made, p. 74 - 135

VIDEOS: International Year of Cooperatives Video Clip 2012, (3:00)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ecSMtMurwsl>

Share the Love, by Storybridge Productions, 2014, (3:37) <https://www.heartlandcu.org/Go-Local/Own-It.aspx>

Marjorie Kelly, keynote presentation at BALLE, June 2, 2012,
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rEIV_r2wcBI&feature=youtu.be&noredirect=1

CREATIVE ASSIGNMENT DUE

PAST STUDENT CREATIVE ASSIGNMENTS:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cpnfgEtAbNE>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MVVUG4uFf9U>

April 10) Systems and International Sustainable Development

We've spent the semester studying how a system like organizational design impacts performance of an organization. In this next to last lecture, we'll turn to the role of systems in sustainable international development. Steve recently wrote a book about the system that he has developed to aid people in Haiti that live in extreme poverty. When we think about helping people who have virtually nothing, we think about aid. But, Steve challenged that assumption of how to help the very poor by introducing a system of working with women on developing their own business. His success stands as a shining model for others to learn from.

GUEST LECTURER: Steve Werlin, author, To Fool the Rain: Haiti's Poor and Their Pathway to a Better Life

READING: Poverty: Not Always With Us, published by The Economist, June, 2013,
<http://www.economist.com/news/briefing/21578643-world-has-astonishing-chance-take-billion-people-out-extreme-poverty-2030-not>

Lender 2.0: Kiva's Premal Shah, The LA Times, May 14, 2011,

<http://articles.latimes.com/print/2011/may/14/opinion/la-oe-morrison-premal-shah-043011>

The World We Made, p. 136 – 199

VIDEOS: TEDxEQChCh, Truly sustainable economic development: Ernesto Sirolli,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SpIxzIBpGU0>

TED: Economic growth has stalled. Let's fix it | Dambisa Moyo, 2015,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V1ItvwxBENG>

April 17) *Last Lecture*

I'm intrigued by the rise in interest in Last Lectures. However, I'm not dying, so this is my third delivery of my "last lecture". In any case, I'm hoping to inspire and challenge you. Feedback will be welcomed!

READINGS: How Will You Measure Your Life, by Clayton Christensen, published by the Harvard Business Review, July, 2010, <http://hbswk.hbs.edu/item/clayton-christensens-how-will-you-measure-your-life>

Twenty (Important) Concepts I Wasn't Taught in Business School, by Nate Hagens, 2013, <http://www.themonkeytrap.us/twenty-important-concepts-i-wasnt-taught-in-business-school-part-i>

Part II was not available at the time I created the syllabus

Walking the Walk: Putting Social Responsibility Into Action at the White Dog Cafe, by Diane Phillips and Jason Phillips, Case No. 907M49, published by the Ivey School of Business (2009)

<https://uwmadison.box.com/s/6p16j9po59pcz7kzc0wolszwmu786cjin>

The World We Made, p. 200 – end

VIDEOS: The Last Lecture (1:16:26) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ji5_MqicxSo

April 24) *First presentations of Final Papers to entire class*

ALL FINAL PAPERS DUE –

1/2 of teams will present. Presentations should be between 12 and 18 minutes without questions. Falling outside those time constraints will result in a penalty.

May 1) *Presentation of remainder of Final Papers to entire class.*

1/2 of teams will present. Presentations should be between 12 and 18 minutes without questions. Falling outside those time constraints will result in a penalty.

Summary Schedule:

January 30: Project preferences due.

February 6: Project assignments distributed. First paper due

February 27: 2nd paper due

April 3: Creative project due

April 24: Final papers due. Presentation of first papers (this is a formal presentation).

May 1: Presentation of rest of papers (this is a formal presentation).

Start Close In

Start close in,
Don't take the second step
Or the third,
Start with the first thing
Close in,
The step you don't want to take.

Start with
The ground you know,
The pale ground
Beneath your feet,
Your own
Way of starting
The conversation.

Start with your own
Question,
Give up on other people's questions,

Don't let them smother something
Simple.

Start right now
Take a small step you can call your own
Don't follow someone else's heroics,
be humble and focused.

Start close in,
Don't mistake
That other
For your own.

Start close in,
Don't take the second step
Or the third,
Start with the first thing
Close in,
The step you don't want to take.

David Whyte