UMBRA INSTITUTE
PERUGIA, ITALY

BUS/SUST/ENV 340: Global Sustainable Business
Course Syllabus
Spring 2024

Instructor: Francesca Hansstein
Credits: 3
Contact Hours: 45
Prerequisites: None

Office Hours: Monday after class by appointment (FSE Office, First Floor)
Email: francesca.hansstein@gmail.com
Course Type: Standard Course
Course Fee: USD$ 25

Course Description

The role of sustainability in business has evolved over the past few decades from a fringe issue to one of central concern. This course has a twofold objective: first, to delve into the multifaceted challenges and opportunities that sustainability presents in the realm of business, and second, to equip students with the practical skills to apply their knowledge to real-world business scenarios. The course has a global dimension as students examine complex environmental, social, and economic factors that affect sustainability in business, reflecting also on the profound differences that exist between different social and economic contexts. Through case studies and analysis of sustainability strategies, students will acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to assist companies in adopting more eco-friendly practices. In addition to researching business management tools and best practices, students will also learn to apply evaluation tools for assessing a company's sustainability performance and identifying areas for improvement.

Learning Outcomes and Assessment Measures

Below are the course's learning outcomes, followed by the methods that will be used to assess students' achievement for each learning outcome.
By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- *Explain* how the business focus on sustainability has evolved and describe current challenges and opportunities faced by businesses committed to supporting sustainability efforts both locally and globally;
- *Articulate* the principles and values that support global sustainable business;
- *Describe* specific strategies and practices that businesses can employ to promote sustainability;
- *Examine* the advantages of utilizing specific sustainable KPIs and certification programs for assessing environmental performance in businesses, considering both local and global contexts;

- *Formulate* an action plan to improve the sustainability standards for an active business, aligning the goals with its location, sector, and market potential;
- *Compare* the efficacy and reliability of the different marketing strategies that businesses use to communicate with their stakeholders.

Course Materials

Readings (mandatory)

A course reader, including all the indicated readings, will be available. The course's Moodle site is the primary location for readings and assignments.

Textbook (optional)

The course's textbook is *Sustainable Business Key Issues* by Helen Kopnina, Rory Padfield and Josephine Mylan, edited by Routledge (2023, third edition).

Assessment

Attendance	10%
Weekly Moodle Quizzes	25%
Course Journal	20%
Field assignment	10%
Service-Learning Project	28%
End of Semester Community Engagement Presentation	5%
Office hours	2%

Grading

Students are reminded that it is their responsibility to note the dates of exams and other assignments. No alternative exam dates will be offered and professors are not required to give partial credit for any late work (they do so at their discretion: the Institute's default policy is no extensions and a zero for any work turned in late). Students who book travel when they have an exam or other assessment will have to change their plans or accept a zero. Letter grades for student work are based on the following percentage scale:

Letter Grade Range	Numerical Score Equivalent	Student Performance
A	93% - 100%	Exceptional
A-	90% - 92%	Excellent
B+	87% -89%	
B	83% - 86%	Superior
B-	80% - 82%	
C+	77% - 79%	
C	73% - 76%	Satisfactory
C-	70% - 72%	
D+	67% - 69%	
D	63% - 66%	Low Pass
D-	60% - 62%	
F	59% or less	Fail (no credit)

Please note: decimal numerals between 1-4 are rounded down while 5-9 are rounded up: e.g., expect 89.4 to be 89.0 while 89.5 to round up to 90.

Course Requirements
Grades are based on the following criteria.

Attendance (10%)
Attendance is an essential part of this course. You are allowed 2 unexcused absences per course without penalty, per Institute policy. If you attend all the other meetings, you will receive 10% for this part of your grade. There are no make-ups offered for attendance.

Weekly Moodle Quizzes (25%)
Students will be assigned a quiz every week, which will be due before class time and will not be reopened. The quiz will be on Moodle and it is not timed. Students can take the quiz as many times as they like, with the recorded grade being the highest grade they receive. There will be a combination of technical, methodological, and content questions. The content questions will help students zoom in on the most important ideas of the readings. The technical questions will help students learn the class' policies and administrative procedures. The methodological questions will test on skills that will pop up every week, like finding an author's argument and assessing sources.

Course Journal (20%)
Students will be provided with a notebook at the start of the semester, which they will use as a personal space through which to reflect on course material and ideas. In-class assignments (e.g. summaries of assigned readings, analyses of primary sources, mental maps, reflections, predictive exercises) will be regularly scheduled and graded twice throughout the semester, i.e. before the mid-semester break (in Week 6) and at the end of the course (Week 12). Each of these checks is worth 10% of your grade, for a total of 10%. See the full prompt on Moodle for more information.

Field assignment (10%)
Students will submit a one-page document evaluating the sustainability of a product they recently purchased at a local supermarket, preferably from an Italian brand. They can select from various categories such as food, FMCGs, or clothing. The student's task is to identify indicators of its environmental friendliness through cues on packaging, labels, and other readily identifiable information. A prompt for this assignment will be made accessible on Moodle. The field paper assignment is due by the end of Week 5.

Service-Learning Project (28%)
For the final projects, under the instructor's supervision and guidance, students will conduct a SWOT analysis of a local business to evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in terms of sustainability. On the basis of the SWOT analysis, students will write a report describing the results and suggesting strategies to improve the current practices. The report will follow the GRI standards' framework. Students will present their work in class. A prompt for this assignment will be accessible on Moodle. The overall assessment grade is made of three components: class presentation 5%; project report 23%.

Office Hours (2%)
Getting to know your professor makes you more comfortable with that person and therefore more likely to ask for help. It also might help you to ask questions about the various assignments or discuss a paper idea. In this course, you get 2% of your grade for coming one time before Week 9 to office hours.

End of Semester Community Engagement Presentations (5%)
During Special Academic Events Week, the class will present a 15-minute summary of the project experience to the Umbra community. Students will receive the guidelines and presentation order after the mid-semester break. Participation in this event is MANDATORY and an integral part of the community engagement grade.

Extension & Submitting Late Work

Work submitted after the deadline will receive a grade of zero, not partial credit. Each student is allowed one extension of 24 hours over the entire semester. This can be used for any assignment but the final project. Students need to email the instructor before the deadline and inform the instructor of their use of the extension. Any work submitted after the 24-hour extension will be marked zero.

As for all policies, exceptions can be made by the Director for students with special accommodations or in case of medical emergencies, etc.

Attendance Policy

Attendance is expected and mandatory for classroom times and co-curricular activities. All students are allowed 2 unexcused absences, which do not need to be justified. It is the student's responsibility to keep them in case of real necessity. i.e., sickness or any other unforeseen inconvenience that may prevent students from being in class. More than 2 absences will affect your final grade by 2% per absence up to a maximum of 10%. Excessive unexcused absences (8 or more) may result in a failing grade or disciplinary action. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of the number of absences or late arrivals for each course, and to ask the instructor when in doubt.

If students miss class, they are responsible for obtaining class notes from other students and/or for meeting the professor during office hours. Any work missed in class because of an excused absence may be made up within one week of the return to the class. Any work missed that was a quiz or other test must be made up outside of class time and will, in the interest of intellectual honesty, be a slightly different test than the one given in class.

Presence during mandatory field trips is especially important. Missing a mandatory field trip for a course, unless for a very serious reason that is communicated to Umbra staff in a timely manner, will lower the students' grade by half a letter grade (i.e., a final grade of a B+ would be lowered to a B).

Legitimate reasons for an excused absence or tardiness includes: death in immediate family, religious observances, illness or injury, local inclement weather, medical appointments that cannot be rescheduled Absences relating to illness may be excused by the Director but only if a medical certification is provided. Students who request an approved absence to observe a religious holiday must submit a formal request to the Institute's Director within one week after the add/drop period when course schedules, including any field trips, are finalized. No exceptions will be made after this deadline.

Except in the case of medical emergencies, absences are not accepted when tests are scheduled; tests cannot be made up. Furthermore, scheduled times and dates indicated for exams, quizzes, oral presentations, and any other graded assignments cannot be changed for any reason. Even if more sections of the same class are activated, students may only take exams during the scheduled times and dates for the section they are enrolled in.

Tardiness Policy

Students are expected to attend all classes punctually. Any student arriving up to 15 minutes late or leaving up to 15 minutes earlier than the scheduled class end time will be marked as tardy. Each incident of tardiness (late arrivals to or early departures from class) is 0.5% off the final grade. However, should a student arrive more than 15 minutes late or depart more than 15 minutes before the conclusion of the class, it will be recorded as an absence.

Students are also expected to remain in class during the time of instruction except for a reasonable amount of time to use the restroom. Students who leave class and do not return during the class session will receive an unexcused absence or late penalty.

Academic Integrity

All forms of cheating (i.e., copying during exam either from a fellow student or making unauthorized use of notes) and plagiarism (i.e., presenting the ideas or words of another person, or an AI generator, for academic evaluation without acknowledging the source) will be handled according to the Institute Academic Policy, which can be found in the Umbra Institute Academic Policies and Conduct Guidelines.

Laptop & Classroom Policy
Students are expected to follow the policy of the Institute and demonstrate the appropriate respect for the historical premises that the school occupies. Please note that cell phones must be set to silent mode before the beginning of each class. Computers and other electronic devices cannot be used during class lectures and discussions unless there has been a specific academic accommodation.

    As an instructor and as a person, I am dependent on both my computer and my telephone. That said: An ever-increasing body or research shows that open laptops and telephones in the classroom create distraction (both visual and auditory) for those using them and those around them. You can type faster than you can write, and as a result, you end up processing less when you're simply typing notes. For this reason, I have a physical notebook policy: I ask you to leave your computers in your bags and phones in your pockets and use a regular notebook. There are four exceptions: 1) if you have an accommodation; 2) if you're using a tablet to take notes, 3) if you make an office hours appointment with me to discuss the use of a computer; or 4) if we have an in-class tutorial about online research tools.

Schedule of Topics, Readings, and Assignments

WEEK **1**

Introduction to Global Sustainable Business

Meeting 1 *In the first class, the instructor will explain the structure of the course and introduce the topic of Global Sustainable Business presenting the definition(s), the evolution of the concept, and current main applications, with a special focus on the Italian market. Introduction of the community engagement project&partner by Umbra staff*

Meeting 2: *Presentation of two case studies. (1) Patagonia's brand case study "Don't buy this jacket" and (2) The VIVA program in Italy.*

Readings for the week:
- Section I, Chapter 1ˢᵗ, Introduction – key concepts in sustainability issues. Helen Kopnina, Rory Padfield, and Josephine Mylan. *Sustainable Business: Key Issues*. 3rd ed. New York: Taylor and Francis, 2023, *3-23*.
- Schaltegger, S., & Burritt, R. (2018). Business cases and corporate engagement with sustainability: Differentiating ethical motivations. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 147, 241-259.
- Neren Uri (2012). Patagonia's Provocative Black Friday Campaign. *Harvard Business Review*, 1-5.
- Sgroi, F., Maenza, L., & Modica, F. (2023). Exploring consumer behavior and willingness to pay regarding sustainable wine certification. *Journal of Agriculture and Food Research*, 100681, 1-7.

WEEK **2**

Business Ethics

Meeting 1 *The concept of business ethics will be introduced and explained in all its phases, from production to consumption.*

Meeting 2: *Discussion of the Volkswagen case study. How did the company face the scandal? What are its current sustainability practices?*

Readings for the week:
- Kopnina et al., Sustainable Business, "Business Ethics" pages 28-51.
- Fetting, C. (2020). The European Green Deal. ESDN report, 53.
- Wolff, S., Brönner, M., Held, M., & Lienkamp, M. (2020). Transforming automotive companies into sustainability leaders: A concept for managing current challenges. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 276, 124179, 1-18.
- Can we make businesses more ethical? Elena Lopez, *TEDxWarwickSalon*, video available [here](#).

WEEK **3**

Key Challenges for Global Sustainable Business: Environmental Challenges

Meeting 1 *The Anthropocene era and the impact on the environment. Discussion of the environmental issues and current strategies for its management.*

Meeting 2: *Adapting to climate change: the case of Southern Italy agricultural production; calculate your own footprint and group discussion.*

Readings for the week:
- Lovejoy, T. (2008). Climate change and biodiversity. *Revue scientifique et technique*, 12 (2), 1-8.
- United Nations Environment Programme and United Nations Institute for Training and Research (2023). 2050 Electronic and Electrical Waste Outlook in West Asia, Nairobi and Bonn, Kenya and Germany, *Technical Report*, 1-33.
- Alessandro Gandolfi (2023). Agriculture turned upside down. Parallelo Zero, *Photo Report*, Milan, 1-29.
- Kopnina et al., Sustainable Business, "Environmental Challenges" pages 55-79. *(optional)*

WEEK 4

Key Challenges for Global Sustainable Business: Social and Economic Challenges
Meeting 1 *Improving people's quality of life and economic conditions through business sustainability practices.*
Meeting 2: *Discussion of two case studies: the fast fashion company Zara and the steel plant in ILVA.*

Readings for the week:
- Niinimäki, K., Peters, G., Dahlbo, H., Perry, P., Rissanen, T., & Gwilt, A. (2020). The environmental price of fast fashion. *Nature Reviews Earth & Environment*, 1(4), 189-200.
- Lucifora, A., Bianco F., and Viagliasindi, MG (2915). Environmental crime and corporate miscompliance: case study on the ILVA steel plant in Italy. Efface – European Action to Fight Environmental Crime, *Case Study*, 1-27.
- Kopnina et al., Sustainable Business, "Social and Economic Challenges" pages 80-102. *(optional)*

WEEK 5

Globalization in business
Meeting 1 *Globalization, Business, and Sustainability: risks and opportunities. Getting ready for the fieldtrip: conduct some preliminary research on Museum Atelier Brozzetti and think about questions for the partner.*
Meeting 2: *Guest Lecture on fashion and sustainability. Invited speakers: Monia Romanelli (Local artist using sustainability method) and Graziana Maellaro (Communication expert in Fashion and Founder of Le Palette Milano Shanghai). .*
Friday, February 23rd: *On-site visit of Brozzetti Workshop - Community partner of this course. (A detailed itinerary will be sent early this week).*
Readings for the week:
- Armanda, D. T., Guinée, J. B., & Tukker, A. (2019). The second green revolution: Innovative urban agriculture's contribution to food security and sustainability–A review. *Global Food Security*, 22, 13-24.
- Reuters in partnership with Siemens (2023). Enabling Global Decarbonization through Digital Industry Technologies. Reuters and Siemens, *White Paper*, 1-13..

- Szabo, S., & Webster, J. (2021). Perceived greenwashing: the effects of green marketing on environmental and product perceptions. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 171, 719-739.
- Kopnina et al., Sustainable Business, "Globalization and Business" pages 125-147. *(optional)*

Assignments:

Field assignment. Upload your paperwork on Moodle.

WEEK 6

New Strategic Thinking: The Sharing Economy
Meeting 1 *The sharing economy: from producers to consumers.*
Meeting 2: *Preparation for the Service-Learning Project: SWOT analysis and groupwork.*

Readings for the week:
- Forno, F., & Garibaldi, R. (2015). Sharing economy in travel and tourism: The case of home-swapping in Italy. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism*, 16(2), 202-220.
- Gazzola, P., Vătămănescu, E. M., Andrei, A. G., & Marrapodi, C. (2019). Users' motivations to participate in the sharing economy: Moving from profits toward sustainable development. *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management*, 26(4), 741-751.
- Benzaghta, M. A., Elwalda, A., Mousa, M. M., Erkan, I., & Rahman, M. (2021). SWOT analysis applications: An integrative literature review. *Journal of Global Business Insights*, 6(1), 55-73.
- Kopnina et al., Sustainable Business, "New Strategic Thinking" pages 214-229. *(optional)*

Assignments:

Upload course journal activities up to W6 (included). Choose the format you prefer: ppt, word, or pdf.

Semester Break

WEEK 7

New Strategic Thinking: Sustainable Communication
Meeting 1 *What is the role of communication in sustainability? Discussion*
Meeting 2: *Visit / Meeting with the local business for the Service Community Project*

Readings for the week:
- Kopnina et al., Sustainable Business, "New Strategic Thinking" pages 209-214.
- Golob, U., Podnar, K., & Zabkar, V. (2023). Sustainability communication. *International Journal of Advertising*, 42(1), 42-51.

- Emy Emmert (2021). The rise of the eco-friendly consumer, Strategy + Business, *PwC web publication*, is available <u>here</u>.

WEEK 8

Creating sustainable business practices

<u>Meeting 1</u> *Voluntary and non-voluntary reporting in sustainability*: *The role of government regulation, the GRI standards and B Corps: a focus on the Italian experience.*
<u>Meeting 2</u>: *Groupwork on SWOT analysis (a prompt to guide the task will be uploaded on Moodle).*

<u>Readings for the week:</u>
- Kopnina et al., Sustainable Business, "Creating a Sustainable Business Practice" pages 189-208.
- Doni, F., Bianchi Martini, S., Corvino, A., & Mazzoni, M. (2020). Voluntary versus mandatory non-financial disclosure: EU Directive 95/2014 and sustainability reporting practices based on empirical evidence from Italy. *Meditari Accountancy Research*, 28(5), 781-802.
- McKinsey (2021), How companies capture the value of sustainability: Survey findings. *Report* 1-9.
- The GSSB Work Program 2023-2025, *Work Program* 1-13, available <u>here</u>
- Everything you need to know about B Lab and the B Corp Movement, read the <u>FAQ</u>.

WEEK 9

Cradle-to-Cradle and Circular Economy
<u>Meeting 1</u>
- *Evaluating the opportunities of the cradle-to-cradle business strategy*
- *Use, reuse, and recycle: reflecting on the applications of the circular economy. How is Italy doing? Stories from local businesses.*

<u>Meeting 2</u>: *Introducing the key elements of reporting in sustainability. Groupwork.*

<u>Readings for the week:</u>
- Cradle-to-cradle Products Innovation Institute (2019). Cradle to Cradle Certified™ and UN Sustainable Development Goals a Transformative Pathway for Product Manufacturers to Achieve the SDGs. *Guidelines*, 1-31.
- Barilla (2022). The Joy of Food a Better Life. Sustainability Report 2022, *Report,* 1-151 *(selected parts).*
- Ferrari (2002). *Sustainability Report* 1-180 *(selected parts).*
- Kopnina et al., Sustainable Business, "Cradle-to-cradle" pages 230-241. *(optional)*

WEEK 10

Groupwork preparation
<u>Meeting 1</u> *No class - Easter Holiday*

<u>Meeting 2:</u> *Groupwork: report writing (a prompt will be uploaded on Moodle to prepare the work).*

<u>Readings for the week:</u>
- European Commission, Consumers, Health, Agriculture and Food Executive Agency, Cerulli-Harms, A., Porsch, L., Suter, J. et al. (2019), Behavioural study on consumers' engagement in the circular economy – *Executive summary*, 1-6.
- Synthesis Report on Circular Economy in Italy (2022, 4th edition), *Report*, 1-10.
- Circular economy country profile – Italy (2022), European Topic Centre on Circular economy and resource use, *Report*, 1-21.
- 1oo Italian Circular Economy Stories (2022), European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform, 1-220 *(optional).*

WEEK 11

Reflecting on the consumer perspective
<u>Meeting 1</u>: Can our choices affect sustainable business practices? If so, how? Discussion and examples.
<u>Meeting 2:</u> *Groupwork: working on the final presentation with partner (a prompt will be uploaded on Moodle).*

<u>Readings for the week:</u>
- Kopnina et al., Sustainable Business, "Final Glossary" pages 267-273.
- Mintel (2024), Global Consumer Trends 2024, *Report*, 1-31.
- Predieri, S., Cianciabella, M., Daniele, G. M., Gatti, E., Lippi, N., Magli, M., ... & Chieco, C. (2023). Italian Consumers' Awareness of Climate Change and Willingness to Pay for Climate-Smart Food Products. *Sustainability,* 15(5), 4507, 1-14.

WEEK 12

Final Exam
<u>Meeting 1:</u> *Groupwork: prepare the presentation for the special final event of W13*
<u>Meeting 2:</u> *Group presentations in class with partner; discussion and feedback.*

WEEK 13

Final Exams and Special Academic Events Week

End of Semester Community Engagement Presentations
<u>Assignment</u>
- Submission of the Final Presentation on Moodle.
- Upload course journal activities from W7 to W12 (included). Choose the format you prefer: ppt, word, or pdf.

Giuditta Brozzetti
LABOR EMVS ❖ JVCVNDE

BUS/SUST/ENV 340: Global Sustainable Business
Service Learning Project
Syllabus Appendix

Spring 2024

What is service learning?
Service learning is an important type of experiential education integrated into a course in which:
- Students engage in an organized activity or project aimed to address a community need that is identified in collaboration with the community partner;
- Students critically reflect on the link between the experience in the community, course content, and the learning goals; and
- There is reciprocal learning both by the students and by the community partners.

Students will need a certain degree of flexibility, creativity, and self-initiative to realize a service learning project. Organization and open communication in-class with the instructor and team members will be key to student success.

Service Learning Project Overview

Community Partner
The "Giuditta Brozzetti" Workshop is one of the last remaining hand-weaving textile studios. Using thousand-year-old techniques, ancient production methods and ancient (18th and 19th centuries) pedal or Jaquard looms, here the craftswomen create handmade textile products in linen, cotton, silk, cashmere blend, gold or silver laminate.
The founder, Giuditta Brozzetti, was a prominent figure in female entrepreneurship in Perugia at the beginning of the 20th century. In 1921 she established the artisanal workshop/school for the production of high-quality artistic textiles for home decoration.
In the 1950s, Giuditta's daughter Eleonora took over the workshop and expanded the business. For many years she had been assisted by her daughter Clara whose passion was history and iconography that she applied to the reproduction of the *"Perugian Tablecloths"*. In 1995 the fourth generation of the family joined the hand-weaving Workshop "Giuditta Brozzetti" with Clara's daughter Marta, an interior designer, who expresses her creativity through the design and creation of fabrics.

Website: https://www.brozzetti.com/en/history/

Project Description and Goals

Students will participate in a service learning project with "Giuditta Brozzeti" Museum-Atelier where they will be asked to research and develop a Sustainability report, based on the information recollected both in class and during the visit.

Through interviews with the company's manager, on-site observations, company material, and online research, students will, firstly, realize a SWOT analysis and, after that, deliver a presentation and report for aspects of the company's sustainability based on indicators. Students will also create a formal PowerPoint presentation in class for company representatives. More details about the presentation and report are found below.

Organization, Expectations, and Roles
Student teams will be chosen by the instructor. Teams will be responsible for deciding how to divide the various tasks to ensure members contribute equally throughout the course of the project. An important amount of time will be dedicated to the service learning project's progress in class. If necessary, teams will also be required to meet outside of class each week for approximately 1-2 hours.

In-Class Presentation for Community Partner
Each team will create and present a final detailed presentation based on its findings and recommendations to a company's representative, accompanied by a PowerPoint presentation. Audience members will be expected to ask questions to the other teams presenting to promote a community of learning and support.

Guidelines:
- PowerPoint or Google Slides (spell-check!).
- 10-15 minutes.
- Each team member contributes to the preparation and delivery of the presentation.
- Rehearse presentation as a group for content, length, and transitions.

Final Report
Students are to assume the role of a sustainability manager/consultant to "Giuditta Brozzeti" Museum-Atelier. Students have been asked by the management to complete a sustainability report and to prepare a strategy to become more sustainable in the future. Students will apply analytical methods and concepts developed in class to provide an original report and set of recommendations.

Community Engagement Final Presentation
During Special Academic Events Week, the class will present a 15-minute summary of the project experience to the Umbra community during the Community Engagement Presentations on **Wednesday, April 24**. Students will receive the guidelines and presentation order after the mid-semester break. Participation in this event is MANDATORY and an integral part of the community engagement grade.

Grading Rubric
The service learning project is worth a total of 33% of the final course grade, which will be divided into three categories:
1. Sustainability report (23% of the final course grade)

2. In-class presentation for partner (5% of the final course grade)
3. End of Semester Community Engagement Presentations (5% of the final course grade)