

CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

Course code	<i>GRAV034</i>
Compulsory in the programmes	<i>International Marketing and Management</i>
Level of studies	<i>Graduate</i>
Number of credits	<i>36 hours of class work, 124 hours of self-study, 2 hours of consultations (distant or direct form)</i>
Course coordinator (title and name)	<i>Assoc. Prof. Dr. Jonathan Boyd jonathan.boyd@ism.lt</i> <i>Assoc. Prof. Dr. Lineta Ramonienė lineta.ramoniene@ism.lt</i>
Prerequisites	<i>None</i>
Language of instruction	<i>English</i>

AIM OF THE COURSE:

This course aims to equip students with the critical skills necessary to analyse the ethical, environmental, and strategic challenges associated with sustainability. It begins by providing essential context, introducing students to the broad global issues of climate change, biodiversity loss, and resource depletion. This foundational understanding sets the stage for examining how businesses engage with these challenges.

As the course progresses, students will explore how companies navigate market failures and ethical dilemmas, using real-world case studies to illustrate business responses to sustainability challenges. They will also consider how businesses strategically integrate environmental, social, and governance (ESG) principles into their operations, particularly in light of evolving regulatory frameworks like the EU's Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD).

The course covers the economic and strategic aspects of sustainability, focusing on how sustainable practices can drive value creation. Key areas include business strategy, branding, consumer behaviour, pricing, promotion, and the development and distribution of sustainable products. Throughout, students will assess how companies balance profitability with their environmental and social responsibilities.

By the end of the course, students will have developed the analytical skills to critically evaluate corporate sustainability efforts. They will be able to propose informed strategies that align with regulatory requirements, enhance long-term business success, and contribute to a sustainable and ethical business environment.

MAPPING OF COURSE LEVEL LEARNING OUTCOMES (OBJECTIVES) WITH DEGREE LEVEL LEARNING OBJECTIVES), ASSESSMENT AND TEACHING METHODS

Course level learning outcomes (objectives)	Assessment methods	Teaching methods
CLO1. Understand the concept of sustainability and corporate responsibility and how that affects an overall business strategy.	Participation, individual assignment, pitch presentation of the sustainable marketing strategy	Case analysis, discussions, lectures, role-playing methods, reflection on guest speakers' stories.
CLO2. Recognize global challenges for sustainable products and corporate action.	Participation, individual assignment, pitch presentation of the	Case analysis, discussions, lectures, role-playing methods, reflection on guest speakers' stories.

	sustainable marketing strategy	
CLO3. To identify the role that sustainability plays for organizational strategy.	Participation, individual assignment, pitch presentation of the sustainable marketing strategy	Case analysis, discussions, lectures, role-playing methods, reflection on guest speakers' stories.
CLO4. Create and launch a sustainability-communication plan.	Participation, individual assignment, pitch presentation of the sustainable marketing strategy	Case analysis, discussions, lectures, role-playing methods, reflection on guest speakers' stories.
CLO5. Be able to differentiate and position a sustainability-focused brand.	Participation, individual assignment, pitch presentation of the sustainable marketing strategy	Case analysis, discussions, lectures, role-playing methods, reflection on guest speakers' stories.
CLO6. Be able to identify the key impact areas and sustainability of a product in order to create a valid sustainability impact strategy.	Participation, individual assignment, pitch presentation of the sustainable marketing strategy	Case analysis, discussions, lectures, role-playing methods, reflection on guest speakers' stories.

ACADEMIC HONESTY AND INTEGRITY

The ISM University of Management and Economics Code of Ethics, including cheating and plagiarism are fully applicable and will be strictly enforced in the course. Academic dishonesty, and cheating can and will lead to a report to the ISM Committee of Ethics. With regard to remote learning, ISM reminds students that they are expected to adhere and maintain the same academic honesty and integrity that they would in a classroom setting.

COURSE OUTLINE

Class	Topic	In-class hours	Readings
1 November 18	Earth's vital challenges	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UN CC:e-Learn "Climate Change: From Learning to Action" (link) • Planetary Health Check Report (Stockholm Resilience Centre, 2024). Download report here. • The Economics of Biodiversity: The Dasgupta Review (pp. 1-39) (link) • David Attenborough: A Life On Our Planet (Netflix, 2022) • Breaking Boundaries: The Science of Our Planet (Netflix, 2021)
2 November 19	Market failures and business dilemmas	4	<p>Case studies</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Danish Crown: Feeding the Future 2. Nike's Response to China <p>For context: Our World in Data</p> <p>Environmental impacts of food production (link)</p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human Rights (link)
3 November 21	Green economics and corporate sustainability	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> United Nations, Global Sustainability Development Report 2023 (download here) UN Global Compact (website) Bain & Co. (2024) The Visionary CEO's Guide to Sustainability 2024: How leaders can meet the moment with pragmatism (link)
4 November 25	EU sustainable finance and non-financial disclosure instruments	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deloitte (May 2024). Your guide to CSRD and ESRS. (link) BCG (2023). Preparing for the EU Green Claims Directive (link) Deloitte (2024). Understanding and Implementing the upcoming CSDDD (link)
5 November 26	Business Strategy & Sustainability	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rosenberg, M. (2016). Strategy and sustainability: A hardnosed and clear-eyed approach to environmental sustainability for business. Springer. Strategies for Sustainable Business, MIT Management, Ideas Made to Matter, 2022. Rosenberg, M. (A Strategic Approach to Sustainability, IESE Insight, https://dx.doi.org/10.15581/002.ART-2850)
6 November 28	Sustainable Consumption & Sustainable Branding	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Casadesus-Masanell, Crooke, Reinhardt, and Vasishth (2009) "Households' Willingness to Pay for "Green" Goods: Evidence from Patagonia's Introduction of Organic Cotton Sportswear," Journal of Economics & Management Strategy Eccles, Robert, Ioannis Ioannou, and George Serafeim (2014), "The Impact of Corporate Sustainability on Organizational Processes and Performance" Big Brands, Big Impact: A Marketer's Guide to Behavior Change Sustainable Brands Report (provided on e-learning) Sustainable Brand Index Lithuania (provided on e-learning) Casadesus-Masanell, Crooke, Reinhardt, and Vasishth (2009) "Households' Willingness to Pay for "Green" Goods: Evidence from Patagonia's Introduction of Organic Cotton Sportswear," Journal of Economics & Management Strategy

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eccles, Robert, Ioannis Ioannou, and George Serafeim (2014), "The Impact of Corporate Sustainability on Organizational Processes and Performance"
7 December 3	Sustainable Pricing & Promotion for Sustainability	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tully and Winer (2013) "Are People Willing to Pay More for Socially Responsible Products: A Meta-Analysis" NYU Stern Van Doorn and Verhoef (2011) "Willingness to Pay for Organic Products: Differences between Virtue and Vice Foods," International Journal of Research in Marketing Trudel and Cotte (2009) "Does It Pay to Be Good?" MIT Sloan Management Review. Hickle, Garth, Promoting product stewardship with eco-labels, certification programs, and product standards, Environmental Quality Management, Spring 2007. Bickart, Barbara A.; Ruth, Julie A, Green Eco-seals and Advertising Persuasion, Journal of Advertising. Winter 2012.
8 December 5	Sustainable Product & Distribution	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fernandez-Feijoo, Belen; Romero, Silvia; Ruiz, Silvia, Effect of Stakeholders' Pressure on Transparency of Sustainability Reports within the GRI Framework, Journal of Business Ethics. Jun 2014. Ku, Hsuan-Hsuan; Kuo, Chien-Chih; Wu, Ching-Luen; Wu, Chih-Ying, Communicating Green Marketing Appeals Effectively, Journal of Advertising. Winter 2012. White, Katherine; Simpson, Bonnie, When do (and don't) Normative Appeals Influence Sustainable Consumer Behaviour? Journal of Marketing. Mar 2013.
9 December 10	Presentations of the Impact Strategy (the final assignment session)	4	NA
		Total: 36 hours	
	CONSULTATIONS	2	

FINAL GRADE COMPOSITION

Type of assignment	%
Case Study Participation	10
UNCC eLearn courses	20
Company Impact Strategy	20
Corporate Sustainability Report Analysis	50
Total:	100

DESCRIPTION AND GRADING CRITERIA OF EACH ASSIGNMENT

Assessment 1: Case study participation (10%)

Participation in the two business case studies will be evaluated based on both the quality and depth of students' contributions during discussions, demonstrating critical thinking and contextualisation within relevant sustainability challenges. Additionally, students will be assessed on their ability to engage collaboratively, providing constructive feedback and actively participating in group problem-solving efforts.

Assessment 2: UNCC eLearn courses (20)%

By the final day of the course, five UN online modules must be completed. Note that the "Climate Change: From Learning to Action" is mandatory; the other four you may choose from freely from the full offering on the UNCC eLearn website:
<https://unccelearn.org/>

Upon successful completion of each module users are issued a certificate, which you will upload to e-Learning in a single .pdf. Each completed certificate is worth 4% of your final grade.

Assessment 3: Company Impact Strategy (20%)

Students will have to identify the key impact area of the chosen company, pre-agreed sustainability criteria and the main communication messages to communicate the impact of the company. More details on the assignment will be presented in class.

Assessment 4: Corporate Sustainability Report Analysis (50%)

Students, working in small groups of 2 or 3, will select a Lithuanian corporate sustainability report prepared according to GRI Standards, ISSB/IFRS, or CSRD/ESRS. The report will be analysed based on at least one of the following criteria:

1. A gap analysis, assessing the extent to which the report complies with the EU's ESRS framework.
2. An evaluation of how well the company's sustainability strategy and ESG metrics align with its broader business strategy and financial risks/opportunities, including an analysis of EU Taxonomy eligibility/alignment if disclosed.

3. An assessment of the report's accessibility and relevance to the various stakeholders identified by the company, as well as an evaluation of the quality of the company's stakeholder engagement.
4. An analysis of whether, and to what extent, the report's environmental claims align with the EU's Green Claims Directive, focusing on transparency, substantiation, and the potential for misleading or exaggerated claims that could lead to accusations of greenwashing.

Each group will present their findings in a 15-minute presentation accompanied by a professional-looking PowerPoint slide deck, followed by a Q&A session led by the instructors.

RETAKES POLICY

If the final grade is negative (less than 5), a student has the right to complete an individual Corporate Report Analysis. The Retake is 50% of the grade. Other assignments cannot be retaken.

REQUIRED READINGS

1. Bain & Co. (2024). *The Visionary CEO's Guide to Sustainability 2024: How Leaders Can Meet the Moment with Pragmatism*.
2. BCG. (2023). *Preparing for the EU Green Claims Directive*.
3. *Big Brands, Big Impact: A Marketer's Guide to Behaviour Change*.
4. Breaking Boundaries: The Science of Our Planet. (2021). [Film]. Netflix.
5. Deloitte. (2024). *Understanding and Implementing the Upcoming CSDDD*.
6. Deloitte. (2024, May). *Your Guide to CSRD and ESRS*.
7. Dasgupta, P. (2021). *The Economics of Biodiversity: The Dasgupta Review* (pp. 1-39).
8. Gallagher, M. (2021). *The Climate Race: Sustainability Lessons from Formula One*. In *The Business of Winning* (2nd ed.). Kogan Page.
9. Ku, H.-H., Kuo, C.-C., Wu, C.-L., & Wu, C.-Y. (2012). *Communicating Green Marketing Appeals Effectively*. *Journal of Advertising*, Winter 2012.
10. Our World in Data. (n.d.). *Environmental Impacts of Food Production*.
11. Our World in Data. (n.d.). *Human Rights*.
12. *Sustainable Brand Index Lithuania* (provided on e-learning).
13. Sinek, S. (2009). *How Great Leaders Inspire Action* [TEDx talk]. Retrieved from <https://youtu.be/qp0HIF3Sfl4>.
14. Stockholm Resilience Centre. (2024). *Planetary Health Check Report*.
15. Techstars. (2021). *Techstars Chicago Demo Day 2021*. Retrieved from <https://youtu.be/ytSZ8Ph-CpA>.
16. Tully, S., & Winer, R. (2013). *Are People Willing to Pay More for Socially Responsible Products? A Meta-Analysis*. NYU Stern.
17. United Nations. (2023). *Global Sustainability Development Report 2023*.
18. UN Global Compact. (n.d.).
19. White, K., Hardisty, D. J., & Habib, R. (2019). *The Elusive Green Consumer*. *Harvard Business Review*.
20. Whelan, T., & Fink, C. (2016). *The Comprehensive Case for Sustainability*. *Harvard Business Review*.

OPTIONAL READINGS

1. Lodde, M., Hufenreuter, R.L., Braungart, M., den Held, D., Regenerative Sustainable Development: Towards a Triple Top Line approach and Increasing Positive Externalities, 2014.
2. European Parliament, Briefing: Understanding the Sustainable Development Goals, 2019, Retrieved from [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2019/644217/EPRS_BRI\(2019\)644217_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2019/644217/EPRS_BRI(2019)644217_EN.pdf)