

Syllabus for MSMGT 720 Applied Research and the Triple Bottom Line

Course Description

In this course, students will learn how qualitative and quantitative research methods are applied to making decisions involving contemporary sustainability issues. This course provides a hands-on approach to understanding alternative strategies available to collect and analyze data in researching environmental, social, and ethical dimensions of sustainability. The interrelationship between applied research and the triple bottom line is investigated. Students will gain first-hand knowledge about how research techniques can be used to identify, understand, and assist in finding solutions to a range of sustainability concerns and challenges faced by business organizations.

Course Learning Outcomes

The primary goal of the course is to gain comprehension and understanding into how the practical application of business research methods can be beneficial to all stakeholders in making decisions concerning the natural environment, the social and political system and the economy. Throughout the course the role of applied research in the sustainability decision-making process will be explored.

This course examines the process of collecting and analyzing data in support of sustainable decisions, programs, and strategies. Specific learning objectives include:

1. Learn the key terms, definitions, and concepts useful when researching sustainability issues.
2. Investigate the body of scholarly research currently being undertaken in the field of sustainable management.
3. Learn to review sources of secondary data relating to sustainability issues for relevance and accuracy.
4. Gain the ability to identify, understand, and apply business research methods to sustainable decision making.
5. Understand the relationship between applied research and meeting organizational sustainability goals.
6. Understand which applied research techniques will be most useful in meeting organizational goals.
7. Gain skill in communicating and conveying outcomes of sustainability research findings.

Course Materials

Information on course materials can be found in the [textbook section](#) of the SMGT website.

A digital recorder or other such device will be needed for recording a 1 ½ hour interview. If you plan to use a phone, please do an adequate amount of pretesting to ensure it will work.

Supplemental Resources

Most of the lessons include supplemental readings and resources. These include journal articles, position papers, government reports, book sections, web resources, etc. All of these resources are either directly embedded within the course online platform or available through a direct online link.

Course Requirements

Writing Assignments

There are four (4) writing assignments. You will typically be expected to submit a typed and double-spaced response to a question or set of questions related to the unit under study at that time. The formats and approaches vary from assignment to assignment. Rubrics are provided. **Students may not submit writing assignments late without prior permission from the instructor.**

Discussions

There are seven discussion assignments in total. They each have a similar format.

You are expected to use the analytical tools and concepts of the lesson(s) for that week, make your own argument or case regarding a particular issue or question, and, subsequently, after making your post, engage in a discussion by responding to the posts of only two other students. Your posts and response should provide evidence that you have read/viewed and engaged with the required readings and resources for the lesson at hand.

Each discussion assignment you complete requires you to do two things:

- Make your original post in the associated Discussions area.
- Post responses to two other students' posts in the Discussions area after the due date for the original post and before the due date for responses.

The original post should be no less than 50 and no more than 75 words in length. These contributions will be evaluated in terms of critical thinking and mechanics. A related rubric is provided. The responses should be no less than 35 and no more than 50 words

in length. They will be evaluated using the same rubric. The original post will account for 75 percent of each discussion assignment grade and the responses will account for 25 percent of the grade.

Note that your responses to two other students' posts are not due until a few days after your original post. Responses should only be posted after the due date for the original post has passed. I encourage you to take the time to read all of the students' posts before posting your responses. This is not a requirement but is a way to see and appreciate all of the possibilities before you respond.

As time is precious, too long and too many postings are time consuming and inefficient. Be precise and concise in your postings.

Of the seven discussion scores, the six highest scores will be used to determine your overall grade for discussion assignments.

Late discussion assignments – both original posts and responses – will not be accepted.

Group Assignment

The group assignment is an application of research methods and business sustainability concepts learned in this course. For this purpose, in the beginning of the semester, the class will be divided into groups. Each group will choose a triple bottom line related topic on which they want to prepare a presentation. For this purpose, all group members have to learn about the survey tool Qualtrics through free and short online training videos. Each group will have to open a free account in Qualtrics to conduct a survey. Based on the survey findings, each group will prepare a presentation.

The group assignment is worth 10% of your grade. It will be evaluated in terms of critical thinking and mechanics. Each group will need to submit the following items in the relevant dropbox: a group topic worth 2% of your grade and a presentation worth 8% of your grade. **No late submission will be accepted without prior permission by the instructor.**

Research Paper

The paper should be an application of research methods and business sustainability concepts that you will learn in this course. You are free to choose any topic related to triple bottom line for this paper. You are expected to collect data from both primary and secondary sources and utilize both qualitative and quantitative data to perform a proper data analysis.

The research paper is worth 20% of your grade. You will need to submit two items: a proposal worth 5% of your grade and a paper worth 15% of your grade. No late submissions will be accepted without prior permission by the instructor.

Quizzes

There are seven (7) quizzes in total. They all have a similar format, containing a combination of multiple choice questions and true/false statements. Except for Unit 7, every unit contains at least one quiz.

Your grade for this part of the course is determined by your six (6) highest quiz scores. The lowest of the seven quiz grades will be dropped when computing the overall grade for the course. **Late quizzes will not be accepted.**

Exams

There are two (2) exams during the semester. Exam I covers Units 1 through 3. Exam II covers Units 4 through 7. Exams use an essay question format. **You may not take an exam late without prior permission from the instructor.**

Grading Policy

The course grading breakdown is as follows:

6 Discussion Assignments (2 percent each, top six of seven scores)	12
6 Quizzes (2 percent each, top six of seven scores)	12
4 Writing Assignments (4 percent each)	16
2 Exams (15 percent each)	30
Research Paper Assignment	20
Group Assignment	10
Total	100

The corresponding letter grades are as follows:

Course Grade Percentage	Letter Grade
92.5 - 100%	A
90.0 – 92.49%	A-
87.5 – 89.9%	B+
82.5 – 87.49%	B
80 – 82.49%	B-
77.5 – 79.9%	C+
72.5 – 77.49%	C
70.0 – 72.49%	C-
67.5 – 69.9%	D+

62.5 – 67.49%	D
60.0- 62.49%	D-
<60.0%	F

Your final grade for the course will be a weighted average in accordance with the course breakdown shown above.