

# Syllabus for MSMGT 770 Leading Sustainable Organizations

## Course Description

This course adopts a macro-level perspective on leading sustainable organizations. Topics addressed include: organizational change and transformation processes, strategic and creative thinking, organizational structures and their impacts, conflict management and negotiation, stakeholder management and situational leadership styles and behaviors. The course focuses on how organizational leaders develop and enable sustainable organizations, especially in times of environmental change.

Fundamentally, we're talking about making decisions that balance the triple bottom line (people, planet, and prosperity). Sustainability focuses on respect for people and other living things, and the ethical use and management of economic and environmental resources such that both current and future generations are able to meet their needs. Sustainable organizations understand, value, and develop their people. Sustainable organizations understand and make energy, product, and process decisions that value the planet and its resources. Sustainable organizations understand and manage their stakeholders to ensure sufficient profits. Without profits, organizations cannot avoid entropy. In this class, we'll focus on what leaders (like you) can and must do to balance the three Ps and lead sustainable organizations.

## Course Learning Outcomes

- Recall and understand the fundamental philosophies, theories, concepts, techniques, and terminology associated with leading sustainable organizations.
- Communicate sustainability concepts effectively.
- Apply what you have learned about leading sustainable organizations to novel and concrete situations, as appropriate.
- Synthesize your observations with relevant prior and personal knowledge, and with knowledge from other, appropriate sources.
- Evaluate consequences and implications of proposed solutions.

## Course Materials

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

**Articles:** In addition to the readings in our main text, the course includes research articles for further exploration. These articles are not required.

## Course Approach and Expectations

Because this is a graduate class, you will bear significant responsibility for the teaching and learning that occurs. The primary means of learning in this class, in addition to your reading of the text and completion of the written exam and assignments, will be through discussions.

The readings will serve as resource materials to enhance our discussions and class activities. However, there won't be any "lecturing from" any of the readings. You will take the role of providing personal and organizational examples that illustrate the text's concepts, question the text's concepts, extend the text's concepts, consider the limits of the text's concepts, and think about how you might apply the text's concepts in organizations, and so on. Here are some guidelines on how to manage your time and complete the work in this course:

1. **Be prepared and do all of the required reading, on time, meaning no later than Monday evening of each week.** Otherwise, you will not be prepared to discuss the week's reading when you need to do so. Think carefully about your reading. Take notes on your reading.
2. **Review the presentations.** They include the publisher's summary of each chapter. They are not narrated by the instructor, but you can use PowerPoint's narration feature if you so choose. They serve as a way for you to frame and organize the chapter material. I never lecture in graduate-level classes, and narrating a presentation is inconsistent with my graduate-level teaching philosophy, which is predicated on the belief that you learn best at the graduate level when you and your classmates are the main teachers. You must discover the value and meaning of the information yourselves to be able to effectively put it into practice. This requires your reflection and dialogue with classmates throughout this course. Peer-teaching is crucial in graduate classes and an important means to share and acquire knowledge.
3. **Watch the "Points to Ponder" video(s)** associated with each text chapter. They are available in the appropriate section/chapter area.
4. I recognize that we all have a life outside this class, complete with responsibilities and demands. That being said, you have chosen to take this class. If you are unable to complete any of the class requirements, you must accept the associated consequences. Do not try to avoid these consequences, or negotiate reduced or different consequences. It's my experience that graduate students who are also working struggle to succeed when they take more than two classes in a semester. For some people, even one class stretches their limits. My advice: Know your limits.
5. If this were a face-to-face class, you would spend 5 or more hours each week on this course. As this is a graduate-level class, it is reasonable to assume that you will allocate **no less than two hours per week to online discussion** plus the rest of the time you'll need to read, prep assignments, and take the midterm exam. Treat the discussion forums as you would a face-to-face discussion. Be prepared to ask purposeful and creative questions, to provide thoughtful and evidence-based

answers, to share your personal and organizational experiences, etc. That said, your responses shouldn't read like essays complete with loads of references. Instead, they should read like careful responses you'd give in a face-to-face class, with perhaps occasional references.

6. Relative to our discussions, you are required to make an initial post (1–2 questions per chapter) **no later than Wednesday at 11:59 p.m. of each week** that the discussion is scheduled. In addition to these initial responses, I expect you to post several thoughtful responses to your colleagues' comments. **On average, you should comment about 4–6 times per week, in total.** Quantity as well as quality will be considered when grading your discussion participation. The individuals leading each week's discussion (i.e., you and your fellow students, each of whom will be assigned a week's discussion to lead or co-lead) will evaluate their classmates' participation. The aggregation of these evaluations will constitute your Discussion Participation grade. "Thoughtful responses" are more than a simple sentence; they are typically several sentences. They build upon what the original writer has said, add substance, reference the text etc. They draw upon your personal experiences. All discussions will **conclude by 11:59 p.m. each Friday**, leaving Saturday and Sunday for reading of the text, preparation of written assignments and exams, relaxing, spending time with family and friends, etc.
7. Similarly, you are required to **read all of the posts every week**, just as you would listen to the entire discussion in a face-to-face class. This is common courtesy. It will also help to ensure that you don't needlessly repeat what others have already said.
8. In general, **I will not chime in much** to your discussions. While I will be involved, your discussions are directed at and with your fellow students. Therefore, posing queries to me in a discussion is not a desirable direction. As would be the case in a face-to-face graduate class, my role during each week's discussion is minimal. With the exception of one discussion (Meet & Greet), all discussions will be led by students. It would not be right for me to "steal" your role as discussion leader, so I won't. Still, **I will be reading every single comment** made, just as I would listen to every comment made in a face-to-face class.
9. Do not post exam-related or course-related questions in the topic discussions. There is a specific discussion forum for questions for the instructor. Sort of like an FAQs area. I am very happy to answer questions; you may also email me. I will answer any question that you ask, but will neither provide you with a study guide nor lead you in an exam review session. **If you have questions, please ask them!**
10. Please check your e-mail and the course site every couple of days, as that will be the primary means of communication. You are responsible for following through on any communication sent by me, so please read and respond accordingly. All correspondence sent through Canvas should "push" the mail to your email accounts but it is your responsibility to ensure that you check and respond to emails. While all important announcements will be posted to the Canvas course interface, any personal correspondence to you and/or other announcements may be sent via email. I will respond to emails within 24-48 hours and will monitor it more frequently during exam times/when assignments are due. Please make sure to use

the following format when you send emails: put [your **first name and last name**]-**class info** in the subject line, for example, Carol Danvers -770.

11. **Regarding Grades:** While this is a tough course in terms of the number of requirements, assignments, discussions, readings etc., I do understand this and am always a fair grader. It is commonly understood that graduate students need to maintain a cumulative B average in order to stay enrolled in a graduate program. So please give it your best and try to maintain the grades you desire. There are no extra credit assignments or curves usually, so essentially your score on assignments/discussions etc. is the only way to earn points. So give it your very best and you will do well.
12. You will receive your grades on each written assignment and exam **within two weeks of submission**. Do not wait to receive a grade on one assignment before beginning your next assignment. If you are concerned that you are not sure how to do an assignment, please email me your questions.

### Course Activities and Assignments

Course activities and assignments include readings, presentations, videos, and discussions, as well as a midterm exam, written assignments, and a career applications presentation.

Be sure to identify exactly what you need to do and by when. All of the assignments require time, research, and reflection. You will not want to try and complete them on their due dates and/or without sufficient lead time. Let me suggest that you add the various deadlines and due dates for our course to your personal calendar.

#### Readings

Our textbook lays out some of the basic issues and concepts in leading sustainable organizations. In addition to the assigned text chapters, you are expected to locate, read, and **incorporate additional peer-reviewed journal articles** and Internet materials (e.g., from SEC filings) to support your written assignments and exams. I have also provided many optional articles to read which could aid you. Additionally, use your library's electronic resources to find appropriate peer-reviewed journal articles instead of using paid services which Google Scholar often links to. As a student, you have access to the resources available through your home campus library. If you have questions about accessing information at your campus library, don't hesitate to reach out directly to a librarian at your campus. These folks are familiar with all of the resources available through their libraries and can provide some friendly tips to help get you started.

#### Chapter Presentations

For each chapter in the text, there is a presentation that highlights some of the most significant topics raised in the chapter. They're a complement to the reading, not a substitute. **Please review these**. They are not narrated. It might be most effective to review them before **and** after reading the chapters. That said, the presentations do not

and cannot address all of the salient points in the text. But they do aid with the learning process.

### Points to Ponder Videos

The Points to Ponder videos describe and **critique** interesting points in the book chapters. Please watch these videos. As with the presentations, the videos will be a complement to the reading, not a substitute as they often discuss a topic from the text to add to your knowledge of that topic.

### Discussions

Each of you will be responsible for preparing and leading (or co-leading) a discussion.

Discussion forum leaders will be asked to comment on the participation of their classmates. These comments will be considered seriously by the instructor when assigning discussion grades.

In addition to leading a discussion, you will be expected to participate in the discussions throughout the sessions with **4 to 6 postings on average per week**.

**Both leaders and participants** are responsible for ensuring that the discussions are intellectually challenging and valuable.

### Written Assignments

You will also complete **four short written assignments**, each about two *pages in length, single-spaced, with 1-inch margins and in 12-point Times New Roman font*. Each written assignment will give you the opportunity to apply lessons from the text to novel and concrete situations. The written assignments will also give you the opportunity to synthesize what you are reading with relevant prior and personal knowledge, and with knowledge from other, appropriate sources. Finally, the assignments will ask you to evaluate consequences and implications of proposed solutions. Each of the assignments has its submission deadline and be sure to submit it online by then.

The text is organized into six parts (A–F). You will complete one written assignment from parts B–E (i.e., not from Parts A or F). **You will have two options in each case**. The specific options available to you for each of Parts B–E are described on the respective assignment pages. Be sure to review your options carefully before choosing the one you want to complete. Note: I do not drop any assignments; all of them must be completed. Your assignments will be graded based on two primary factors:

- Did you do a quality, substantive, evidence-based, logical investigation of the topic? (50%)
- Did you communicate in a compelling and professional fashion? (50%)

## Midterm Exam

The midterm exam will consist of **three** essay questions. Just as with written assignments, none of the questions will have a particular answer. You should not look in your texts or elsewhere for the so-called “correct” answers. Instead, you should think critically and deeply, and respond accordingly. While undergraduate exams may be written with particular answers in mind, that is not the case for the exam in this graduate class. **I want to see how well you think**, and how well you can articulate a meaningful response to the questions.

## Career Applications Presentation

Your presentation will address how you can be more effective as a professional as a result of the concepts you are learning in this class. It should include two slides per textbook chapter. I encourage you to draft or complete your two slides per chapter immediately after you finish reading each chapter as the chapter material will be fresh for you then. **Do not wait to start working on this assignment!** Continue adding to your presentation throughout the semester, revising as the course progresses as needed.

## Grading Policy

Course grades will be based on:

Activity	Points
Discussion forum leadership	100
Discussion forum participation	100
Midterm examination	100
Written assignments (25 points each)	100
Career applications presentation	100
Total	500

The final course grade reflects the scores received on each of the assignments, based on the following scheme:

Letter Grade	Percentage Range
A	93% and above
A-	90% - 92%
B+	88% - 89%
B	83% - 87%
B-	80% - 82%
C+	78% - 79%
C	73% - 77%
C-	70% - 72%
D+	68% - 69%
D	60% - 67%
F	59% and below