

Syllabus for SMGT 410 Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability

Course Description

This course seeks to understand the goals and purpose of the for-profit firm. In particular, we will explore how the firm creates value, broadly defined, by investigating the concept of strategic corporate social responsibility (Strategic CSR). Strategic CSR draws on what we know about economic exchange and human psychology to explain how markets work (or don't) and how value is added (or subtracted) across the range of the firm's stakeholders. Understanding these processes allows managers to build a strategic competitive advantage for the firm. Thus, Strategic CSR is at the center of business success in the 21st century.

Course Learning Objectives

The main objective of this course is to introduce and understand the concept of strategic CSR.

Strategic CSR is related to, but is fundamentally different from, concepts such as sustainability and business ethics. While sustainability focuses on resource utilization and ecological preservation, and business ethics seeks to construct normative prescriptions of right and wrong, strategic CSR is a comprehensive, pragmatic philosophy grounded in the day-to-day operations of the firm. As such, strategic CSR is central to the firm's value-creating activities.

That is, in a dynamic environment that is defined by the actions and decisions of the firm's broad set of stakeholders, value is optimized when stakeholders convey and enforce their evolving needs, while the firm responds to those needs. Thus, these economic and social exchanges are essentially interactions formed around the collective set of values prevalent in society at any given point in time. These values determine the decisions we all make and, as a direct result, the success or failure of for-profit firms.

Strategic CSR draws on what we know about economic exchange and human psychology to explain how markets work and how value is created. Understanding these processes allows managers to build a strategic competitive advantage for the firm. In short, understanding, adopting, and implementing strategic CSR is the source of sustainable value creation in today's business environment.

Course Materials

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

Course Requirements

The course includes quizzes, discussions, group assignments, written assignments, case studies, and a term paper, including a video pitch.

Discussions

The **two discussion assignments** follow the same format. A question will be posed by your instructor, typically a question meant to generate varying views and responses. The intention is for you to use the new concepts you are studying this semester and make a case regarding a particular issue or question.

Each discussion assignment requires you to make one initial post and respond to two of your classmates. A rubric will be provided in the course.

Written Assignments

Your written assignments will be evaluated based on critical thinking and mechanics. A rubric will be provided in the course.

Term Paper

You are responsible for a substantive paper of 6 to 7 pages. These pages will be typed and single-spaced, using 12-point Times New Roman or Calibri or a similar font. The paper will demonstrate your ability to apply the ideas and concepts learned throughout in course.

Acting in the role of Sustainability Consultant of a Fortune 500 company of your choosing, you will prepare a report to the Board of Directors that critically evaluates existing CSR practices, points out discrepancies between what the company is saying and what they are actually doing, and your advice or list of recommendation(s) on addressing these discrepancies.

Your paper should clearly demonstrate your firm understanding of each of the drivers of CSR behavior of the company based around its existing strategy and identify which of the drivers are most important for the company. Your analysis should include how the company is addressing its stakeholders and how could they do a better job. Your list of provided recommendations **must be** realistic for the company to pursue so that it can address the discrepancies that you have identified between the company's *stated* and *actual* CSR practices.

An outline is required as the first step in completing the written part of your term paper.

Video Pitch

The Written Term Paper will be tied to a Video Pitch assignment.

In your video pitch, you are expected to talk for about 8-10 minutes about your findings in your written term paper.

As a hired Sustainability Consultant, your video clip should be prepared for a *target audience* of the key stakeholders (including the shareholders) and the Board of Directors of your Fortune 500 company.

You will be graded based on your critique of the company's existing CSR practices, your findings about the discrepancies between what the company is saying and what they actually are doing, and your recommendations on how to address the discrepancies.

Grading Policy

| Assignment | Percentage | Total Points |
|---|-------------|--------------|
| Quizzes (1 percent each, top ten of twelve scores) | 10 | 200 |
| Discussion Assignments 1 and 2 (5 percent each) | 10 | 300 |
| Group Assignment 1 and 2 (7.5 percent each) | 15 | 200 |
| Writing Assignments 1 and 2 (5 percent each) | 10 | 200 |
| Case Study Analysis 1 and 2 (7.5 percent each) | 15 | 200 |
| Term Paper | 30 | 100 |
| Video Pitch for Term Paper | 10 | 50 |
| Total | 100% | 1250 |

Grading Scale

| | |
|---------------|----|
| 92.5 to 100.0 | A |
| 90.0 to 92.49 | A- |

| | |
|---------------|----|
| 87.5 to 89.9 | B+ |
| 82.5 to 87.49 | B |
| 80.0 to 82.49 | B- |
| 77.5 to 79.9 | C+ |
| 72.5 to 77.49 | C |
| 70.0 to 72.49 | C- |
| 67.5 to 69.9 | D+ |
| 62.5 to 67.49 | D |
| 60.0 to 62.49 | D- |
| Below 60.00 | F |