

**Department of Marketing**  
**BUS 618 – Sustainable Business Management**

Spring 2026

Instructor: Dr. Dana L. Alden, William R. Johnson Jr. Distinguished Professor

Contact information: [dalden@hawaii.edu](mailto:dalden@hawaii.edu) / 808 754-6370

Office location: Shidler College of Business – C304

## **I. Course description**

Sustainable business management is essential to reducing the existential threats posed by excessive global warming and other forms of pollution such as ubiquitous microplastic contamination. Sustainable business management is also critical to increasing stakeholder social equity, climate justice, and organizational inclusiveness. At present, the Shidler College of Business MSMM Program does not offer a course that addresses these issues and provides students with the knowledge and skillset needed to contribute to sustainable business management. Although topics such as sustainable finance will be covered, sustainable marketing, strategic planning, and corporate culture will compose major focal areas in the course. In addition, marketing professionals must work with managers from other functional areas in order to successfully implement sustainable marketing strategies and thus, understanding issues of concern and methods employed in those areas is important to success.

## **II. Course Information, Policies and Resources**

- a. **Attendance policy:** *(Text to Be Used) Students who are enrolled in this course, but never attend will be flagged by the course instructor for non-participation before the last day to add/drop (for 100% tuition refund) deadline. Flagged students will be administratively dropped by the Office of the Registrar. Any changes to a student's enrollment status may affect financial aid eligibility and can result in the return of some of all of federal student financial aid.*  
After one "free" class miss, each unexcused absence will result in a 2-percentage point loss from your 25% participation grade. Excused absences are given for personal illness, family emergencies, NCAA athletic competitions, and official University- or College-related travel. For all of these situations, please submit a handwritten, dated, and personally signed note stating that you missed class because of an illness, family emergency, etc. the next time you attend class. We don't need doctor's notes or notes from family. We will need official memos if your miss is related to NCAA competition or UH/Shidler travel (e.g., student case

competitions). Please do not provide details regarding illness or family emergencies. Your word as reflected in your handwritten, dated, signed note is sufficient. Email notification before class is helpful but not sufficient for an excused absence. Handwritten notes are required.

- b. Use of Internet, mobile devices, and social media is not allowed during class unless such use is related to an in-class activity. However, students are encouraged to bring a laptop to class for note taking and to review materials for the class posted on Lamaku.
- c. **Statement on Disability: KOKUA Program** (*text to be used*) If you have a disability and related access needs, please contact the KOKUA Program (Office for Students with Disabilities) at 956-7511, KOKUA@hawaii.edu, or go to Room 013 in the Queen Lili'uokalani Center for Student Services. Please know that I will work with you and KOKUA to meet your access needs based on disability documentation. Kokuu's services are confidential and offered free of charge.
- d. **Academic Integrity and Ethical Behavior: Office of Student Conduct** (recommended text) Cheating, plagiarism, or other forms of academic dishonesty are not permitted within this course and are prohibited within the System-wide Student Conduct Code (EP 7.208). Examples include: fabrication, falsification, cheating, plagiarism, and use of improper materials. Any incident of suspected academic dishonesty will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct for review and possible adjudication. Additionally, the instructor may take action in regards to the grade for the deliverable or course as they see fit.
- e. **Office of Title IX:** (808) 956-2299  
/ [t9uhm@hawaii.edu](mailto:t9uhm@hawaii.edu) / <https://manoa.hawaii.edu/titleix/>
- f. **Department of Public Safety:** (808)956-6911 (Emergency) / (808)956-8211 (Non-Emergency) <http://manoa.hawaii.edu/dps/>
- g. **UH System Basic Needs** (*text to be used*) include food and housing, childcare, mental health, financial resources and transportation, among others. Student basic needs security is critical for ensuring strong academic performance, persistence and graduation and overall student well being. If you or someone you know are experiencing basic needs insecurity, please see the following resources: [UH System Basic Needs](#)
- h. **Student Success Resources:** The Division of Student Success (DSS) houses student support services to build success inside and outside the classroom. If you want learning assistance, academic advising, career resources and guidance, counseling, family and relationship support, identity-based support, services for underrepresented groups, health and wellness services,

opportunities for leadership growth, and community engagement, you will find this and more in DSS, (808) 956-

3290, <https://manoa.hawaii.edu/studentsuccess/departments/>

See [Selected Campus Resources](#) for additional resources Faculty members can include into their syllabus

### **III. Course Content and Learning Objectives**

#### **1. Course Content**

The world is clearly facing major challenges in terms of effectively reducing global warming and other forms of pollution that are impacting quality of life around the world. In addition, recognition of the importance of social equity across diverse stakeholder groups has grown dramatically. The emphasis placed on addressing environmental degradation and social inequity is reflected in major policy statements such as the United Nation's 17 Sustainable Development Goals and the most recent UN Climate Conference (COP28) held in November 2023 which resulted in "unprecedented recognition and momentum for linking efforts to address the climate and biodiversity crises."

Business, non-profit, and government managers all have major roles to play in ensuring the future generations have the ability to enjoy lifestyles that are similar to or better than those enjoyed today.

However, this won't happen without considerable managerial understanding of the causes and potential solutions to today's environmental and social equity challenges.

Sustainable Business Management will provide you with a solid understanding of those causes and potential solutions. Furthermore, it will increase your ability to effectively communicate with finance, accounting, marketing, and information system specialists who are focused on increasing the sustainability of their organization's operations.

To this end, the course begins with an in-depth review of the science of climate change and other forms of pollution (e.g., microplastic) as well as a review of stakeholder social equity (e.g., fair trade within supply chains, organization impacts on broader community stakeholder groups, and relationships between firms, non-profits, and government).

It then turns to sustainable management within different functional areas in business. These areas include: growing an organizational culture that emphasizes sustainable business values and actions both within the organization and in terms of external stakeholders; developing strategic plans that incorporate sustainable goals and objectives; sustainable accounting applications, for example, in the

assessment of climate risk; financial issues related to investment in sustainable asset development; sustainable marketing issues such as environmentally positive new product development and circular supply chain design and implementation; and optimization of information systems to achieve effective management of sustainable business objectives.

Throughout the course, high level business and other organization cases will be incorporated to ensure application of principles discussed to real world situations. In addition, a semester-long project (e.g., development of a sustainable new product concept) will provide hands-on experience with issues faced by sustainable business managers on a daily basis.

## **2. Institutional Learning Objectives (advanced degree)**

The course is an elective course in the Shidler MBA Programs and in the Shidler Masters of Science in Marketing Management Program.

## **3. Program/Course Learning Objectives**

By the end of the of the course, students will:

- 1) understand the complexity as well as the importance of the science underlying sustainable organization management;
- 2) have a deep appreciation of the roles that the different functional areas play in laying out and achieving sustainable business goals and objectives;
- 3) have the skills needed to work with other managers in the firm to develop and implement initiatives designed to reduce GHG and other forms of pollution;
- 4) have developed an understanding of the difficulties of and opportunities for increasing fair trade practices within supply chains;
- 5) have improved knowledge about the ways that businesses can work with stakeholders such as consumers, governments, and advocacy organizations to increase demand for sustainable goods and services;
- 6) understand how to effectively communicate environmental and social equity goals in ways that diverse stakeholders can understand and trust in order to avoid claims of greenwashing;

7) be able to accurately assess climate and other environmental risks that could adversely affect future organization opportunities and income streams;

8) be familiar with leading approaches to calculating effective future returns on sustainable investments through use of tools such as product lifecycle analysis;

9) have a solid skillset that will facilitate their ability to contribute to the development of sustainable business culture in their future organization;

10) and have a clear understanding of the relationships between private, non-profit, and governmental sectors in terms of advancing sustainable business and consumer practices.

#### **IV. Required Texts and Readings**

Nada R. Sanders and John D. Wood (2024), Foundations of Sustainable Business, 3rd Edition, Wiley / [https://www.wiley.com/en-us/Foundations+ of+Sustainable+ Business%2C+3rd+Edition-p-9781394208982](https://www.wiley.com/en-us/Foundations+of+Sustainable+Business%2C+3rd+Edition-p-9781394208982) / textbook rental (130 days) - \$50.00.  
Gates, Bill (2021), How to Avoid a Climate Disaster, New York: Alfred A. Knopf - \$12.79.

Required Readings and Business Cases: A reading and business case packet from Harvard Business School has been assembled for the class and is available for purchase from Harvard Business School. Estimated cost \$50.00

#### **V. Course Assignments, Evaluation and Grading**

In-Class and Team Participation: 25%

Midterm Case (individual) Write Up: 15%

Team Simulation Performance: (Performance: 20% and Brief Write Up: 5%)

Team Semester Project: 35% (Presentation: 10% and Write Up: 25%)

## A-F Grading Scale

%	Grade	%	Grade
100	A+	73 – 76	C
93 – 99	A	70 – 72	C-
90 – 92	A-	67 – 69	D+
87 – 89	B+	63 – 66	D
83 – 86	B	60 – 62	D-
80 – 82	B-	<59	F
77 – 79	C+		

### **In-Class Participation (includes attendance policy described on p. 1):**

Throughout the semester, readings and/or cases will be assigned to students. Students will be expected to have read and to be prepared to discuss the readings in class. Readings will come from required books or the HBS course packet which is required. Some of the readings will involve cases and students will be expected to have met (online is fine) with their semester project teams prior to class to discuss the case and to develop a team verbal assessment if called on from one or multiple team spokespersons. Written materials will not be required for such readings but in-class participation will be noted and play an important role in determining students' participation credit.

### **Team Project 1: Marketplace Simulation**

During the early part of the semester, randomized teams of 3-5 students will be created and asked to work on two projects. The first project involves participating in a marketplace simulation as described herein. The Green Business Lab (<https://www.gbldsim.com/>) – a sustainable business simulation, over multiple cycles, participants learn how to make successful business decisions while considering economic, environmental, and social (triple bottom line) goals. Managers consider financial reports, environmental reports, and social assessments and prioritize to optimize firm performance in terms of shareholder value, profits, environmental responsibility, and social equity. A 10 minute demonstration video is available: <https://www.gbldsim.com/videos/>. In line with Goal 4 of the College's 2023-2028 Strategic Plan, the sponsoring Department/School will request support from the Dean's office and other sources (e.g., endowed professorships) to pay for an annual simulation license for this course.

Simulation Description: In the Green Business Lab, you and your team will act as an Executive Team of a company. The Executive Team will lead their company through three business cycles and make a presentation to our Board of Directors. It is a significant time to join the Executive Team as your Board has directed your company to track Triple Bottom Line performance metrics. This means measuring and reporting your financial, environmental, and social performance. You will be expected to lead with accountability, transparency, and respect for employees and other stakeholders. Over three business cycles, you will manage the following:

- Product design, operations, technology, and your supply chain.
- Marketing and external disclosure with customers, investors, and stakeholders.

In short, you will integrate sustainability into the firm's business strategy, driving innovation, building relationships, and increasing company value.

In addition to team performance in the simulation, a brief write up in the form of a memo to the instructor will be submitted at the end of simulation summarizing main strategies employed by the team and collective thoughts about the simulation as a learning tool (page limit: 10 pages, double-spaced pages with standard margins max, including single-spaced references and figures/tables, if any).

## **Team Project 2: Sustainability Management Audit**

The second team project will culminate in an oral presentation at the end of the semester along with a written report (25 double-spaced pages with standard margins max, including single-spaced references and exhibits such as tables and figures) due on the last day of finals week by 5:00 PM,

Team project 2 involves identifying an organization (for profit, non-profit, or government) that is interested in learning more about ways their day-to-day operations can become more sustainable. Essentially, this will involve a sustainability audit that will look into the organization's carbon footprint, other forms of environmental waste, CSR reporting and activities, and stakeholder equity, e.g., fair trade practices within stakeholder group the organization's supply chain. Students will be provided with a detailed sustainability audit guide that will help them work with the organization's leadership and other stakeholders in order to carry-out the audit. An audit presentation and written document will be prepared and shared with the organization's leadership as well as the class and instructor.

## **Individual Case Midterm**

In the 8th week of the course, students will be given a sustainable business management case as their midterm exam. The case analysis and write up will be due one week later at the start of class (submitted via email with a time stamp prior to the start of class on that day). The case will focus on issues that have already been discussed in class and will not require excessive amounts of external research in addition to course materials. A case analysis and report preparation guidebook will be provided at the beginning of the course in order to ensure that students understand how to conduct and present the results of their case analysis. Write ups are limited to a maximum of 15 pages (double-spaced with standard margins, 12-point font), not including references (single-spaced) and exhibits (e.g., figures and tables). Prior to distribution of the midterm case, students will work with their teams on other cases and thereby gain experience in terms of course expectations for case analyses and reports. Students are encouraged to meet together to discuss the case but written analyses must be individually produced without review or writing assistance from other students in the course. Questions to be tailored to the course content at this point and the case.)



## VI. Calendar\*

Class Schedule (Subject to Change) 6 PM -8:45 PM	
1) Tues, January 20	<p>The Science and Politics of Climate Pollution <i>Global warming causes, consequences, mitigation, adaptation</i></p> <p>Readings: Gates – Chapters 1-2 2-3 Relevant HBS articles &amp; Other articles Intro to The Green Business Lab Simulation (GBLS in class Dropbox)</p>
2) Tues, January 27	<p>The Science &amp; Politics of Other Sources of Environmental Degradation <i>Plastics, rare earth minerals, post-consumption waste</i></p> <p>Conflicting Perspectives on Mitigation <i>Wizards versus Prophets</i> <i>Electrification</i></p> <p>Readings: Gates - Chapters 3-5 Relevant HBS and other articles GBLS Practice and Discussion</p>
3) Tues, February 3	<p>The Challenges of Social Equity <i>Human population dynamics: negative versus positive growth, immigration</i> <i>Global resource distribution: physical versus human capital</i> <i>Climate justice issues</i></p> <p>Readings: Gates – Chapters 6 - 9 2-3 Relevant HBS and other articles GBLS Simulation Begins Next Day</p>

- 4) Tues, February 10      Introduction to Sustainable Business  
Macro versus micro-level factors  
Systems-level management  
Triple bottom line, CSR, DEI, corporate culture
- Readings:
- Sanders & Wood – Ch.1: Introduction to Sustainable Business*  
Explains what sustainability means and why it is important to business leaders. This chapter provides a factual big-picture overview of the topic, including the evolution of sustainability within the business community, and environmental, social, and economic drivers of that evolution. This chapter motivates the book by ending with a discussion of the business case for sustainability and the role of innovation in addressing the risks and opportunities of sustainability.
- 5) Tues, February 17      Stakeholder Management Overview  
Employees, Shareholders, Buyers, Government, Society
- Readings:
- Sanders & Wood – Ch. 2: Perspectives*  
Explores frameworks for sustainable business, organized under the rubric of environmental, social, and economic perspectives. From biomimicry to stakeholder theory and ecosystem services, this chapter provides key concepts and frameworks that inform subsequent chapters.  
2-3 Relevant HBS and other articles

6) Tues, February 24

## Building a Lasting Sustainable Organizational Culture & Sustainable Strategic Planning

Readings:

*Sanders & Wood – Ch. 3: Leadership, Change Management, and Corporate Governance*

Provides examples of the powerful impact companies can have in society when they pursue corporate sustainability. A commitment to sustainability from leaders, and buy-in from employees, is essential to manage the transition from a traditional to a sustainable enterprise. This chapter illustrates how sustainability leadership is distinct in its style, methods, incentives, and goals from traditional leadership. Mechanisms of corporate governance, from the structure of the Board of Directors to Executive Sustainability Committees and shareholder resolutions, can play a large part in shaping organizational sustainability.

2-3 Relevant HBS and other articles

7) Tues, March 3

## The Legal Environment and Sustainable Management Practice

Readings:

*Sanders & Wood – Ch. 4: Legal Frameworks for Sustainability*

Explains the many ways in which law permeates the business environment, providing outer boundaries for corporate conduct across a wide range of functional areas. From international law to local land use regulations, this chapter provides a comprehensive introduction to the role of law in making the business case for sustainability. Laws provide normative guidance for consumer product design, industrial process design, and supply chain management. Legal frameworks typically aim to reduce risk by instilling accountability

2-3 Relevant HBS and other articles

**Individual Case Midterm Distributed (The case will be related to industry and organizational change issues toward building a sustainable business external environment and internal culture as opposed to more specific technical issues covered hereafter, e.g., “Sustainability at De Beers: Transforming the Diamond Industry,” Ross School of Business, U of Michigan, April 2024. Questions to be tailored to the course content at this point and the case.)**

8) Tues, March 10

Triple Bottom Line Measurement and Reporting

Readings:

*Sanders & Wood – Ch. 5: Finance and Accounting*

Provides methods for measuring the social, economic, and environmental impacts of business, and the reporting standards to promote transparency. This chapter introduces helpful analytical tools (such as life-cycle assessment) to enable objective, comprehensive impact analysis to support sustainability-related business decisions. Emphasis is placed on environmental performance metrics and the use of information to drive strategic decisions. Under certain conditions, reporting sustainable performance is a legal duty .

2-3 Relevant HBS and other articles

Life Cycle Analysis

Carbon Accounting

ESG Measurement

Sustainability (GRI) Reporting

CSR Communications

9) Tues, March 24  
Management

Assessing Risk Associated with Sustainable Business

Readings:

*Sanders & Wood – Ch. 6: Risk Management*

Identifies sources of business risk, with emphasis on water resources and climate change; explains the risk elements of exposure and vulnerability; and introduces strategies for reducing risk through organizational resilience. Using the enterprise risk management continuum aligns risk management practice with a company's over-arching sustainability strategy.

No Extra Readings Assigned

### **Individual Case Midterm Due**

10) Tues, March 31

Marketing Issues Related to Sustainable Business  
Management

Readings:

*Sanders & Wood – Ch. 7: Marketing*

Explains how the marketing function is responsible for driving innovation and capturing the value created by sustainability initiatives. Departures from traditional marketing strategy are explored. The chapter lays out ethical marketing guidelines specifically related to environmental attributes of consumer products. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the role of third-party certification.

2-3 Relevant HBS and other articles

Sustainable Buyer (B2B, B2C, and C2C) Segmentation

Buyer Intention Behavior Gap – Realities, Causes, Solutions

CSR Communications

Greenwashing

11) Tues, April 7	<p>Designing and Implementing Sustainable Supply Chains</p> <p>Readings:</p> <p><i>Sanders &amp; Wood – Ch. 8: Supply Chain Management</i>  Addresses the centrality of the supply chain to the environmental and social impacts of business, from carbon emissions to human trafficking. This chapter explores the many opportunities to promote sustainability within supply chain management, from product sourcing decisions to transportation modality.  2-3 Relevant HBS and other articles</p>
12) Tues, April 14	<p>Sustainable Production Management</p> <p>Readings:</p> <p><i>Sanders &amp; Wood – Ch. 9: Operations Management</i>  Addresses the centrality of the supply chain to the environmental and social impacts of business, from carbon emissions to human trafficking. This chapter explores the many opportunities to promote sustainability within supply chain management, from product sourcing decisions to transportation modality.  2-3 Relevant HBS and other articles</p>
13) Tues, April 21	<p>Catch Up Day <u>and</u> Sustainable Management Team Project  10-15 Team Summary of Draft Presentation Discussion to Obtain Constructive Feedback from Class Members</p>
14) Tues, April 28	<p>Team Presentations</p>
15) Tues, May 5	<p>Team Presentations</p>

\*Course calendar and content may be subject to change.