

**ERS 370 – Corporate Sustainability: Issues and Prospects
Preliminary Course Description**

Course instructor:

Ian Rowlands (EV2-2026; ext. 32574; irowlands@uwaterloo.ca).

Office hours: tba

Teaching assistant:

tba

Meetings:

The course will meet in lectures and tutorials.

All students are expected to attend all lectures, on Tuesdays from 12:30pm-2:20am in HH-227.

All students are expected to attend their assigned tutorial, either Thursdays from 2:30pm-3:20pm in PAS-2085 or Thursdays from 3:30pm-4:20pm in PAS-2085. Students are expected to 'stick with' their assigned tutorial and are not allowed to attend 'the other one'.

Course purpose:

The purpose of the course is to examine the ways in which sustainability issues and business operations have interacted, considering progressively 'greener' corporate responses and broader sustainability challenges.

Course structure/approach:

On most weeks (apart from weeks 10 and 11, which will largely be turned over to student presentations), one key topic in corporate sustainability will be investigated. Each week, students will be expected to do required readings in advance and to attend the lecture – where I will usually 'lecture' for about an hour, and we will then have some kind of video/discussion/'hands-on activity' for the second hour. Two days later, in tutorial, we will discuss readings and/or explore further a key concept from the earlier meeting.

Course readings:

All readings are available electronically – either through UW electronic course reserve (CR) or at a particular website (WEB). (Note that you are encouraged to read the articles in the order in which they are listed on this course outline.)

Course assessment:

The course will be assessed by six elements. Full details regarding expectations for each are provided in individual 'rubrics', available on the course website.

[For now, 'estimates' of marks are noted; the final course outline will include specifics.]

- 1) Participation – 10-20%
- 2) Take-home essay answer – 10-15% -- distributed (through the course website) in early- to mid-October and due shortly thereafter (between 3-7 days)
- 3) Final examination – 20-30% -- This will be during the final examination period, between 4 December and 19 December, inclusive, and every student is expected to be available throughout the final examination period. Details of the final examination – including structure and candidate questions – will be provided on the course website at the end of term. The final examination will be approximately two hours in duration, will cover the entire course, and will have extensive choice available.

- 4) Project outline – 5-10% -- due in mid- to late-October.
- 5) Project presentation – 5-10% (on either 11 November or 18 November)
- 6) Project – 20-35% -- due (in the dropbox on the course website) by end of term.

Note on late submissions:

Late submissions will be penalised 5 per cent (of the 100 per cent available for that particular assignment) for each day (or part thereof) late. Assignments will not be accepted after seven days (beyond the due date) have lapsed. Accommodation will be made in exceptional circumstances (usually related to medical emergencies supported by documentation). As soon as students realise that their assignment may be submitted late, they are encouraged to contact the course instructor. Please note that the LEARN system records submission times, and 'late will be late' – so, for the record, if the submission is time-stamped 12:00, and the deadline was 11:59, it will be graded 'late'.

Responsibilities of students regarding academic integrity:

[to be added]

Miscellanea:

Research ethics: Please note that the University of Waterloo requires all research conducted by its students, staff, and faculty which involves humans as participants to undergo prior ethics review and clearance through the Director, Office of Human Research and Animal Care (Office). The ethics review and clearance processes are intended to ensure that projects comply with the Office's Guidelines for Research with Human Participants (Guidelines) as well as those of provincial and federal agencies, and that the safety, rights and welfare of participants are adequately protected. The Guidelines inform researchers about ethical issues and procedures which are of concern when conducting research with humans (e.g. confidentiality, risks and benefits, informed consent process, etc.). If the development of your research proposal consists of research that involves humans as participants, then please contact the course instructor for guidance and see <http://iris.uwaterloo.ca/ethics/>

Note for students with disabilities: The Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD), located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the OPD at the beginning of each academic term.

Religious observances: As applicable, each student needs to inform the instructor at the beginning of term if special accommodation needs to be made for religious observances that are not otherwise accounted for in the scheduling of classes and assignments.

Course topics and associated readings:

Week 1 (9 and 11 September) – introduction, context, definition, evaluation of business impacts on environment/sustainability, history of corporate environmentalism

Required readings:

NOTE: There will usually be two-three readings (of about 15-20 pages each) each week, and students are expected to complete them in advance of the meetings.

Week 2 (16 and 18 September) – scales of corporate greening

Week 3 (23 and 25 September) – drivers and motivators for corporate environmental management, barriers and inhibitors for corporate environmental management; preview course assignment

Week 4 (30 September and 2 October) – case-studies by video; local case-study

Week 5 (7 and 9 October) – standards, ISO, ISO14000, ISO26000, the limits/potential of voluntary action, the role of government

Week 6 (14 and 16 October) – corporate innovations: system approaches, industrial ecology, customer engagement

Week 7 (21 and 23 October) – transnational corporations

Week 8 (28 and 30 October) – entrepreneurship, start-ups, social innovation, hybrid organisations

Week 9 (4 and 6 November) – greening small- and medium-sized enterprises, energy case-study

Week 10 (11 and 13 November)

Student presentations.

Week 11 (18 and 20 November)

Student presentations.

Week 12 (25 and 27 November) – what is sustainable business?, current agenda, prospects and ways ahead, course review, examination preview, course evaluation

Ian Rowlands, 1 August 2014