



**BUSI 3119
BUSINESS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY
FALL 2026**

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Office Hours: By appointment through email
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Course Time: Friday 11:35-2:25pm
Course Design: In person

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Examining concepts of environmental sustainability within the business context. Exploring the complex interdependency between organizations, society and the natural environment.

Prerequisites: Third year standing. **The Sprott School of Business enforces all prerequisites.**

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course covers the basic principles of environmental sustainability in a dynamic and competitive business environment. It examines the effects of both the internal and external environment on managerial choices for the structuring of organizations. The course aims to:

- Study sustainability of the natural environment from the organizational and stakeholder perspectives
- Learn about a range of environmental topics to facilitate discussion about issues related to business and environmental sustainability
- Gain a greater awareness of stakeholder influences on businesses related to environmental sustainability
- Develop critical thinking skills to solve real life business problems related to business and environmental sustainability
- Develop an understanding of environmentally sustainable business practices through business examples

TEXTS

Students in groups will be assigned to present the content of one chapter of the Enck book.

Book: Enck, J., & Mahoney, A. (2025). [**The Problem with Plastic: How We Can Save Ourselves and Our Planet Before It's Too Late.**](#) In *The Problem with Plastic*. The New Press. ISBN 1620979457. Cost \$38.34 hard copy and \$29.22 Kindle

Student Grade Evaluation

1	Group company annual report and webpage presentation and slides	20%
2	Group book presentation and slides	20%
3	Individual quizzes (4)	20%
4	Individual final exam	30%
5	In-class participation through class activities	10%
	Total	100%

***Late assignments will be penalized as follows: Within the first 24 hours 10% penalty, first 48 hours 20%, after which the assignment will not be graded. In-class assignments will not be accepted late.**

NOTE: You are responsible for maintaining copies of all your assignments until you have received your final grade. You may be required to resubmit your assignment in the event of a grade dispute or grade re-evaluation.

Group Company Annual Report and Webpage Presentation and Slides

In the industry you have been assigned, find a Canadian company to evaluate with a sustainability plan. Examine the company's sustainability plan and undertaking. Let the professor know through Brightspace the company name (so two groups don't cover the same company). Your group will be responsible for examining the annual report and company webpage and summarizing the sustainability initiatives of the company as outlined in the documents. Look to answer questions such as (but not exclusively) the following:

1. What are the goals and objectives of the sustainability plan?
2. Net zero objectives – what are they and how realistic are they?
3. Which emissions are actually disclosed? Scope 1, 2 and 3. If Scope 3 is reported, which categories are included, which are left out, and is Scope 3 inside the target or just reported alongside it?
4. Does the report address climate change risks? Both physical (flood, wildfire, heat, supply disruption) and transition (carbon pricing, regulation, changing demand), and what does the company say it is doing about them.
5. What third party markers is the company using? i.e. CDP score, Science Based Targets initiative validation, ESG ratings, external assurance of the emissions numbers. Are the actual scores published, or just the logos?
6. Is there any evidence of greenwashing, the overreporting or promotion of sustainability outcomes, that are not validated?
7. Will the company's efforts make a difference in reducing its environmental footprint?
8. What sustainability initiatives are particular to the industry the company is in?
9. How do the efforts of the company align with the SDGs of the United Nations
<https://sdgs.un.org/goals?>
10. How would you rank the company effort out of 10? Explain.
11. What else could the company do to improve their sustainability efforts?
12. What do you think is innovative in what the company is doing?
13. What else could the company do to improve their sustainability?



For your assignment you are responsible for submitting your slides with your presentation notes. ***The presentation for your group should be no more than 20 minutes.*** All group members need to participate in the presentation. You are encouraged to make your presentation interactive with the class.

Group Book Presentation and Slides

Each group will be assigned one chapter of the book *The problem with Plastic* by Judith Enck. The goal of the presentations is to spread the reading and presenting of the book content across the class. Along with your group presentation you will be required to submit your slides and presentation notes.

Maximum presentation time 15 minutes. All group members need to participate in the presentation. You are encouraged to make your presentation interactive with the class.

Quizzes

You will have four quizzes during the semester. The objective of the quizzes is to ask you questions about the assigned readings. If you do poorly in a quiz or miss a quiz, there will be a makeup quiz on the last day of classes.

Final Exam

The final exam will be held during the exam schedule. You will be allowed **one double-sided** cheat sheet into the exam.

Grading

Your submissions will be graded on criteria such as understanding of sustainability concepts, depth of research, depth of analysis, evidence of research related to subject, referencing and grammar, application of course and book material, paper flow, clear writing and comprehension of the assignment.

Peer Evaluation

In an effort to promote fairness and discourage free riders (a person who benefits from something without expending effort for it) you are **required** to submit a peer evaluation in which you evaluate the contributions to group work made by each of the members of your group. Group members who receive unsatisfactory peer evaluations from others in their group may have their grades on the group work lowered accordingly. To complete the peer evaluation, give a score to each group member (including yourself) out of 100. For example, if you think everyone provided equal effort put 100 beside each student's name in your group. If you think one person did more than everyone else, then perhaps you give everyone 90 except the person who did more work to whom you give 100. If you think one person did very little and everyone else worked hard then maybe you give the one person who did little less than 100 and everyone else 100. You can also give everyone 100 and one group member 110 if you think they excelled in their contribution.

Grading Concerns During the Course

If a student has a concern about a grade given to a paper or assignment of theirs (e.g. addition or a grade given relative to the material, they have written in the paper) and they would like the submission reviewed by the instructor they are required to follow this procedure:

1. Write an email explaining your concern. Be sure to provide adequate support for your concern.
2. The paper or assignment will either be addressed by the professor (or sent to the TA for consideration) and a comment will be given back explaining the outcome.
3. The professor will return the paper or assignment to the student by email.

It is possible a project will be fully regraded if a grading concern is submitted to the instructor particularly if the concern(s) raised is/are frivolous, unsubstantiated or excessive. If the concern is more general (e.g. how can I improve my paper grade in the future?) then an appointment should be made with the professor to discuss this issue further. If you have concerns/questions about course

content, the syllabus, an assignment or material taught in the class these concerns are best handled through discussion with the professor to avoid misunderstandings.

Final Grade Inquiries and Appeals: All final grades are calculated according to the rubric and weights outlined in this syllabus. If you believe a mathematical error was made in your final grade or your grade is incorrect based on the work you completed, you must submit a formal inquiry to the instructor via email within 7 business days of the grade being officially posted ([Appeal of Grade - Registrar](#)). Your email must explicitly detail your concern. Inquiries received after this deadline or requests for unearned "grade bumps," extra credit, or rounding will not receive a response. A Formal Appeal of Grade through the Registrar's Office can be done within 20 working days of the grading being officially posted.

Participation

This course will require students to participate individually and in groups. Students are expected to be respectful and helpful to the instructor and other students within the class. Disrespectful behaviour (e.g. acting rude, being impolite, and/or offensive) will result in lost marks in your assignment/participation grade, even resulting in a negative assignment/participation grade.

Satisfactory In-term Performance

1. Unless otherwise stated below in item #2, the requirement for Satisfactory In-term Performance is set at 50% of all, not each, pre-final term work (i.e. assignments/participation marks etc.).
2. The criterion/criteria and the standard(s) for Satisfactory In-term Performance are as follow(s):
 - a. Respectful behaviour in the classroom
 - b. Submitting all assignments and projects and making the required presentation
 - c. Being a responsible group member in all group work doing your share of the group work, staying in regular and timely communication with your group and attending class for work related to group activities
 - d. Acting responsibly in class
 - e. Obtaining at least 50% in all your submissions and class work
 - f. Participating in class discussions/work
3. Unsatisfactory in-term performance in this course will lead to failure in this course (regardless of the performance on the two projects) and FND grade in this course (in case of missed project).

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Tentative Class Schedule for Lecture Content and Assignments

Classes	Topics	Date	Readings/Presentations
Class 1	- Introduction and course overview - What is sustainable: Business and sustainability overview and challenges confronting business - Form groups	Sept 11	Forming groups
Class 2	- Business and the sustainability challenge - The human impact and sphere	Sept 18	Presentation: Philip Mansfield - Carleton University's sustainability plan - Reading: Harvard Business Review: AI's growing waste problem - Reading: Harvard Business Review: Making cryptocurrency more environmentally sustainable
Class 3	- A Brief Historical...Pre- and Post-Agricultural Revolution - Wicked problem framework	Sept 25	Presentation: The Problem with Plastics (TPWP) Chapter 1 - Reading: Rachel Carson Silent Spring Chapters 1-3 Quiz 1
Class 4	- Systems thinking - Confessions of a Radical Industrialist: How Interface Proved That You Can Build a Successful Business Without Destroying the Planet	Oct 2	Presentation: TPWP Chapter 2 - Reading: Harvard Business Review: Why you need systems thinking now
Class 5	- What Are We Trying to Achieve? - Products and the Impact on the Environment	Oct 9	Presentation 1: Natural Resources Presentation: TPWP Chapter 3 - Reading: Harvard Business Review: Are companies actually scaling back their climate commitments? - Reading: The Carbon Wave Intro and Chapter 1 Quiz 2
Class 6	Climate & Energy	Oct 16	Presentation 2: Energy Presentation: TPWP Chapter 4 - Reading: The American EV has been Crushed – The New York Times (CU Library) - Reading: Bill McKibbin, Here Comes the Sun: A Last Chance for the Climate and a Fresh Chance for Civilization – Intro and Chapter 9
Class 7	- Environmental Economics - Politics and Governance - The Value of Everything by Mariana Muzzacato	Oct 23	Presentation 3: Housing Presentation: TPWP Chapter 5 - Reading: The Green Entrepreneurial State, Mariana Muzzacato (CULibrary) Quiz 3
Fall Break Oct 26-30			
Class 8	Food and Water	Nov 6	Presentation 4: Agriculture - Reading: UN: Water – at the center of the climate crisis

Classes	Topics	Date	Readings/Presentations
			https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/science/climate-issues/water
Class 9	- Cost Benefit Analysis - Health	Nov 13	Presentation 5: Health Presentation: TPWP Chapter 6
Class 10	- Waste <u>This Changes Everything</u> by Naomi Klein	Nov 20	Presentation 6: Waste Presentation: TPWP Chapter 7 - Reading: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VthS0PDbiP8&t=57s Quiz 4
Class 11	- Risk Analysis and the Precautionary Principle - Transportation	Nov 27	Presentation 7: Transportation Presentation: TPWP Chapter 9 - Reading: https://hbr.org/podcast/2026/09/best-of-cold-call-the-bumpy-road-to-expanding-a-fleet-of-electric-school-buses
Class 12	Strategic Change	Dec 4	Presentation 8: Retail Makeup quiz
Final Exam – Date to be determined in the scheduled exam time			

Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence

As our understanding of the uses of GenAI and its relationship to student work and academic integrity continue to evolve, students are required to discuss their use of GenAI in any circumstance not described here with the course instructor to ensure it supports the learning goals for the course.

AI use in this course varies by assignment. Some activities may explicitly invite you to use AI tools; others will require work completed independently. Please read each assignment's instructions carefully for permitted and prohibited uses. When AI is used, be transparent about how you used it and apply critical judgment to verify its accuracy and relevance. While you are welcome to use AI tools to explore ideas, study, or clarify concepts, all submitted work must represent your independent thinking and original effort. Use AI tools responsibly. That is, verify outputs, apply your own judgment, and cite AI use when relevant. You can access resources related to citing Generative AI on the [MacOdrum Library website](#). Additional resources are also available on Carleton's [Artificial Intelligence Hub](#).

Contribution to Learning Goals of the Program ([BCom](#), [BIB](#)):

Program Learning Goal	Competencies Not Covered	Competencies Introduced (only)	Competencies Taught But Not Assessed	Competencies Taught and Assessed
CHECK (X) ONE PER ROW				
BC1 Knowledge				x

<i>Graduates will be skilled in applying foundational business knowledge to appropriate business contexts.</i>				
BC2 Collaboration <i>Graduates will be collaborative and effective contributors in team environments that respect the experience, expertise and interest of all members.</i>				X
BC3 Critical Thinking <i>Graduates will be discerning critical thinkers, able to discuss different viewpoints, challenge biases and assumptions, and draw conclusions based on analysis and evaluation.</i>				X
BC4 Communication <i>Graduates will be effective and persuasive in their communications.</i>				X
BI5 Global Awareness (BIB ONLY) <i>Graduates will be globally-minded.</i>			X	

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Course Sharing Websites

Materials created for this course (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments, and exams) remain the intellectual property of the author(s). They are intended for personal use and may not be reproduced or redistributed without prior written consent of the author(s).

Recommended Calculator for Examinations

If you are purchasing a calculator, we recommend anyone of the following options: Texas Instruments BA II Plus (including Pro Model), Hewlett Packard HP 12C (including Platinum model), Staples Financial Calculator, Sharp EL-738C & Hewlett Packard HP 10bII

Group work

The Sprott School of Business encourages group assignments in the school for several reasons. They provide you with opportunities to develop and enhance interpersonal, communication, leadership, followership, and other group skills. Group assignments are also good for learning integrative skills for putting together a complex task. Your professor may assign one or more group tasks/assignments/projects in this course. Before embarking on a specific problem as a group, it is your responsibility to ensure that the problem is meant to be a group assignment and not an individual one.

Grading

In accordance with the Carleton University Undergraduate Calendar (p 34), the letter grades assigned in this course will have the following percentage equivalents:

A+ = 90-100	B+ = 77-79	C+ = 67-69	D+ = 57-59
A = 85-89	B = 73-76	C = 63-66	D = 53-56
A - = 80-84	B - = 70-72	C - = 60-62	D - = 50-52
F = Below 50			

Grades entered by Registrar:

WDN = Withdrawn from the course

DEF = Deferred

Academic Regulations

University rules regarding registration, withdrawal, appealing marks, and most anything else you might need to know can be found on the university's website, here:

<http://calendar.carleton.ca/undergrad/regulations/academicregulationsoftheuniversity/>

Requests for Academic Accommodation

Carleton is committed to providing academic accessibility for all individuals. You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. The accommodation request processes, including information about the *Academic Consideration Policy for Students in Medical and Other Extenuating Circumstances*, are outlined on the Academic Accommodations website (students.carleton.ca/course-outline).

Pregnancy Accommodation

Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, please review the [pregnancy academic accommodation process](#).

Religious obligation

Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, please review the [religious academic accommodation process](#).

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you have a documented disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation or contact your PMC coordinator to send your instructor your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term. You must also contact the PMC no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with your instructor as soon as possible to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. For more details, visit the [Paul Menton Centre website](#).

Survivors of Sexual Violence

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and where survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit the [Equity and Inclusive Communities website](#).

Accommodation for Student Activities

Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, see the [Senate Policy on Accommodation for Student Activities \(PDF, 25 KB\)](#).

Academic Consideration for Medical and Other Extenuating Circumstances

Due to medical and other extenuating circumstances, students may occasionally be unable to fulfil the academic requirements of their course(s) in a timely manner. The university supports the academic development of students and aims to provide a fair environment for students to succeed academically. Medical and/or other extenuating circumstances are circumstances that are beyond a student's control, have a significant impact on the student's capacity to meet their academic obligations, and could not have reasonably been prevented. Students may request Academic Consideration for Coursework or Other Academic Deliverable. For further information please review the [Procedure for Academic Consideration](#) and the [FAQ page](#).

Scheduling and Examination Support

Scheduling and Examination Services provides various supports for both in-term and end-of-term tests and exams. Details can be found on the [Exam Support website](#).

Academic Integrity

Violations of academic integrity are a serious academic offence. Violations of academic integrity – presenting another’s ideas, arguments, words or images as your own, using unauthorized material, misrepresentation, fabricating or misrepresenting research data, unauthorized co-operation or collaboration or completing work for another student – weaken the quality of the degree and will not be tolerated.

Process: If an alleged violation occurs, all relevant documentation will be forwarded to the Dean. If the allegation proves true, the penalties may include; a grade of Failure on the submitted work and/or course; academic probation; a refusal of permission to continue or to register in a specific degree program; suspension from full-time studies; suspension from all studies at Carleton; expulsion from Carleton, amongst others. **For a first offence, at a minimum, the penalty assigned will normally be a zero on the submitted work and at least a minimum full grade reduction of the final course grade. For a second offence, at a minimum, the penalty assigned will normally lead to a suspension from studies.**

Students are expected to familiarize themselves with and follow the Carleton University Student Academic Integrity Policy which is available, along with resources for compliance at: <https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/>.

Sprott Student Services

The Sprott Undergraduate Student Services Office offers program advising and overall student success support. Our team is available to discuss your academic goals and your program progression plans. We can also work with you to develop strategies for success, including study skills for Business. If you experience any difficulty this term or if you would like to access support, please contact our team at academicadvising@sprott.carleton.ca.

Centre for Student Academic Support

The Centre for Student Academic Support (CSAS) is a centralized collection of learning support services designed to help students achieve their goals and improve their learning both inside and outside the classroom. CSAS offers academic assistance with course content, academic writing and skills development. Visit CSAS on the 4th floor of MacOdrum Library or online at: carleton.ca/csas.

Important Information:

- Students must always retain a copy of all work that is submitted.
- All final grades are subject to the Dean’s approval.
- For us to respond to your emails, we need to see your full name, CU ID, and the email must be written from your valid CARLETON address. Therefore, in order to respond to your inquiries,

please send all email from your Carleton CMail account. If you do not have or have yet to activate this account, you may wish to do so by visiting <https://carleton.ca/its/get-started/new-students-2/>
