

**Argosy University**  
**COURSE SYLLABUS**

*B6420*

*Foundations of Sustainable Business*

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**Faculty Information**

**Faculty Name:**

**Campus:**

**Contact Information:**

**Office Hours:**

**Short Faculty Bio:**

**Course description:**

This course provides an overview and comparative understanding of practices along with frameworks of sustainable business practice and economic principles provide the foundations for helping managers achieve competitive advantage. This course also presents current theory and practice of systems thinking to understanding global, environmental, and social change. This holistic and dynamic understanding helps bridge the social sciences with the natural sciences to understand the complexities involved in developing and implementing sustainable business practice. Issues of sustainable business practices are explored in order to provide tools and methods to help students understand, make decisions, implement and evaluate emerging global issues surrounding sustainable business practice.

**Course Pre-requisites:** None

**Required Textbook:**

**IMPORTANT: You are not required to purchase the textbook for this course. Your textbook will be available as an electronic book within your fully online or blended course on the eCollege platform.**

Blackburn, W. (2007). *Sustainability handbook: The complete management guide to achieving social economic and environmental responsibility*. London. GBR: Earthscan Publications.

**Other Required Readings:**

Bartels, W., Iansen-Rogers, J., & Kuszewski, J. (2008). *Count me in*. Global Reporting Initiative. ISBN 9781903168301. Available from [http://www.sustainability.com/downloads\\_public/insight\\_reports/Count\\_Me\\_In.pdf](http://www.sustainability.com/downloads_public/insight_reports/Count_Me_In.pdf)

Gelbspan, R. (2007). One Path to Climate Peace. *DeSmogBlog*.  
<http://www.desmogblog.com/one-path-to-climate-peace-0>

GlobeNET Staff. (2008). CleanTech investing: The green gold rush. *GreenBiz.com*. Retrieved from <http://www.greenbiz.com/feature/2008/01/06/cleantech-investing-the-green-gold-rush>

LaBarre P. (2007) Leap of faith. *Fast Company*, 116, p. 96, June 2007. Retrieved August 6, 2008 from <http://www.fastcompany.com/magazine/116/features-leap-of-faith.html>

Porter, M., & Kramer, M. (2006) Strategy & society: The link between competitive advantage and corporate social responsibility. *Harvard Business Review*, 84:12, 78-92.

### **Suggested Readings:**

Epstein, M. (2008) *Making sustainability work: Best practices in managing and measuring corporate social, environmental and economic impacts*. San Francisco, CA. Berrett-Koehler Publishers. ISBN: 1576754863

**Course length:** 7.5 Weeks

**Contact Hours:** 45 Hours

**Credit Value:** 3.0

### **Program Outcomes:**

#### **1. Communication**

1.1. Oral/Written – Present business information orally and in writing using appropriate technology that is concise, clear, organized, supported, and persuasive in a professional manner appropriate to the business context

#### **2. Critical Thinking/Problem Solving**

- 2.1. Critical Thinking – Incorporate and synthesize information, theory, and practice in order to implement appropriate business actions
- 2.2. Problem Solving/Decision Making – Given a business situation, diagnose the underlying causes of the situation, evaluate possible solutions, and determine and defend appropriate course of action
- 2.3. Information Literacy – Access information from a variety of sources, evaluate the credibility of the sources, and apply that information to solve business problems

#### **3. Team**

- 3.1. Leadership – Describe the requirements of team members and leaders to work effectively and creatively in achieving team goals
- 3.2. Collaboration – Collect, categorize, and consider the views of all stakeholders

#### **4. Ethics**

4.1. Ethics – Identify the ethical principles related to personal and corporate behavior in specific business situations and explains the potential consequences

#### **5. Diversity**

5.1. Diversity – Identify the impact of both cultural and economic factors on the modern enterprise and explain the potential consequences

**6. Analysis/Application**

6.1. Applied Technology – Select and defend business technology solutions to typical business problems

6.2. Integration – Describe the interrelationship of the functional business areas of statistics, accounting, finance, marketing, operations, and strategy within the context of specific organizational goals

**Concentration**

**7. Sustainability Organizational Constructs and Strategy**

7.1. Given a business case related to sustainable business practice, create a strategy (s) to integrate sustainability principles into the operational functions of the organization. Analyze the potential effectiveness of the strategy (s) along with implementation plans, and evaluate opportunities for continued success.

**Course Objectives:**

1. Examine the relationships between the natural environment and the social and economic systems using the current theory and practice of systems thinking. (Program outcomes 1.1, 2.1, 2.3, 3.2, 4.1)
2. Evaluate emerging global issues surrounding sustainable business practice by considering the social and environmental impacts of business activities. (Program outcomes 2.1, 2.3, 4.1, 5.1)
3. Evaluate sustainable and non sustainable business practices. (Program outcomes 1.1, 2.1, 2.3, 4.1, 6.2, 7.1)
4. Analyze the frameworks of sustainable business practice and economic principles that provide the foundations to achieve competitive advantage. (Program outcomes 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 4.1, 5.1, 6.2, 7.1)
5. Integrate environmental and social considerations in business decisions and operations. (Program outcomes 2.1, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 4.1, 6.2, 7.1)
6. Apply sustainability principles to an organizational setting. (Program outcomes 1.1, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.2, 4.1, 5.1, 6.2, 7.1)

**Assignment Table**

Unit	Topics	Reading Assignments	Formative Assignment/Assessment
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is sustainability?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Sustainable Development</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Blackburn <b>Chapter 1:</b> Addressing the Confusion About Sustainability: The Typical Executive View	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Global, regional, and local issues</li> <li>○ Critique of Sustainability</li> <li>● A systemic approach to sustainability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Economic systems</li> <li>○ Social systems</li> <li>○ Ecosystems</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Gelbspan, R. (2007, January 3). One Path to Climate Peace. Message posted to <a href="http://www.desmogblog.com/one-path-to-climate-peace-0">http://www.desmogblog.com/one-path-to-climate-peace-0</a></p>	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Business sustainability</li> <li>● Organizations as open systems</li> <li>● Social and environmental impacts of business</li> </ul>	<p>Blackburn <b>Chapter 2: Determining Scope: An Operational Definition of Sustainability</b></p> <p>LaBarre P. (2007) Leap of faith. <i>Fast Company</i>, 116, p. 96, June 2007. Retrieved August 6, 2008 from <a href="http://www.fastcompany.com/magazine/116/features-leap-of-faith.html">http://www.fastcompany.com/magazine/116/features-leap-of-faith.html</a></p>	
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Life Cycle Assessment of products and services</li> <li>● Creativity and innovation</li> <li>● Green Design</li> <li>● Pollution Prevention</li> <li>● Cleaner Production</li> <li>● Sustainable Energy</li> <li>● Supply Chain Management</li> </ul>	<p>Blackburn <b>Chapter 3: The Value of Sustainability: Why Bother?</b></p>	
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Corporate Social Responsibility - Obligation to opportunity?</li> <li>● Culture and</li> </ul>	<p>Blackburn <b>Chapter 8: Bringing Sustainability to the Front Line: Deployment, Integration, and Alignment</b></p>	

	<p>sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training for sustainability</li> </ul>	<p>Chapter 11: Stakeholder Engagement; The Role of NGOs</p> <p>Porter, M., &amp; Kramer, M. (2006) Strategy &amp; society: The link between competitive advantage and corporate social responsibility. <i>Harvard Business Review</i>, 84:12, 78-92.</p>	
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investors and sustainability</li> <li>• Strategy and performance measurement</li> </ul>	<p>Blackburn  <b>Chapter 6:</b> Strategic Planning for Focused Sustainability Improvement  <b>Chapter 7:</b> Selecting Goals and Indicators</p> <p>GlobeNET Staff. (2008). CleanTech investing: The green gold rush. <i>GreenBiz.com</i>. Retrieved from <a href="http://www.greenbiz.com/feature/2008/01/06/cleantech-investing-the-green-gold-rush">http://www.greenbiz.com/feature/2008/01/06/cleantech-investing-the-green-gold-rush</a></p>	
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public relations</li> <li>• Accountability</li> <li>• Reporting of social and environmental performance</li> </ul>	<p>Blackburn  <b>Chapter 9:</b> Data Systems, Auditing, and Other Monitoring and Accountability Mechanisms  <b>Chapter 10:</b> Transparent Sustainability Reporting</p> <p>Bartels, W., Iansen-Rogers, J., and Kuszewski, J. (2008). Count Me In. Global Reporting Initiative, ISBN 978-1-903168-30-1. Available from <a href="http://www.sustainability.com/downloads_public/insight_reports/Count_Me_In.pdf">http://www.sustainability.com/downloads_public/insight_reports/Count_Me_In.pdf</a></p>	

7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creating management systems to support sustainable businesses</li> </ul>	Blackburn <b>Chapter 4: Building an SOS: The Key Elements and Basic Structure</b>	
7.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applying sustainability practices to contemporary business problems</li> </ul>	<b>Chapter 5: SOS Standards: The Roadmap for Change</b>	

### Grading Criteria

#### *Grading Scale*

<b>A</b>	100 – 93 %
<b>A-</b>	92 – 90 %
<b>B+</b>	89 – 88 %
<b>B</b>	87 – 83 %
<b>B-</b>	82 – 80 %
<b>C+</b>	79 – 78 %
<b>C</b>	77 – 73 %
<b>C-</b>	72 – 70 %
<b>D+</b>	69 – 68 %
<b>D</b>	67 – 63 %
<b>D-</b>	62 – 60 %
<b>F</b>	59 and below

#### *Grading requirements*

<i>Attendance/participation</i>	0%
<i>Weekly Assignments</i>	0%
<i>Final paper</i>	0%
<i>Optional</i>	0%
<i>Optional</i>	0%
	100%

## **Library**

*All resources in Argosy University's online collection are available through the Internet. The campus librarian will provide students with links, user IDs, and passwords.*

All resources in Argosy University's online collection are available through the Internet. Students can access the online collection by logging into the student portal and clicking on the library link. Library Resources: Argosy University's core online collection features over 48, 889 full-text journals and 23,000 electronic books and other content covering all academic subject areas including Business & Economics, Career & General Education, Computers, Engineering & Applied Science, Humanities, Science, Medicine & Allied Health, and Social & Behavior Sciences. Many titles are directly accessible through the Online Public Access Catalog at <http://library.argosy.edu>.

In addition to online resources, Argosy University's onsite collections contain a wealth of subject-specific research materials searchable in the Online Public Access Catalog. Catalog searching is easily limited to individual campus collections. Alternatively, students can search combined collections of all Argosy University Libraries. Students are encouraged to seek research and reference assistance from campus librarian.

## **Academic Policies**

Academic Dishonesty/Plagiarism: In an effort to foster a spirit of honesty and integrity during the learning process, Argosy University requires that the submission of all course assignments represent the original work produced by that student. All sources must be documented through normal scholarly references/citations and all work must be submitted using the current edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. Students are encouraged to purchase this manual and become familiar with its content as well as consult the Argosy University catalog for further information regarding academic dishonesty and plagiarism.

Scholarly writing: The faculty at Argosy University is dedicated to providing a learning environment that supports scholarly and ethical writing, free from academic dishonesty and plagiarism. This includes the proper and appropriate referencing of all sources. You may be asked to submit your course assignments through "Turnitin," ([www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com)), an online resource established to help educators develop writing/research skills and detect potential cases of academic dishonesty. Turnitin compares submitted papers to billions of pages of content and provides a comparison report to your instructor. This comparison detects papers that share common information and duplicative language.

## **Americans with Disabilities Act Policy**

It is the policy of Argosy University to make reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities, in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

If a student with disabilities needs accommodations, the student must notify the Director of Student Services. Procedures for documenting student disability and the development of reasonable accommodations will be provided to the student upon request.

Students will be notified by the Director of Student Services when each request for accommodation is approved or denied in writing via a designated form. To receive accommodation in class, it is the student's responsibility to present the form (at his or her discretion) to the instructor. In an effort to protect student privacy, the Department of Student Services will not discuss the accommodation needs of any student with instructors. Faculty may not make accommodations for individuals who have not been approved in this manner.

### **The Argosy University Statement Regarding Diversity**

Argosy University prepares students to serve populations with diverse social, ethnic, economic, and educational experiences. Both the academic and training curricula are designed to provide an environment in which students can develop the skills and attitudes essential to working with people from a wide range of backgrounds.