

Sustainability in Management Research

Coordinators: Arno Kourula & Vittoria G. Scalera

Contact hours: 18 hours

Total student workload (contact plus out of class): 18 hrs class time + 94hrs additional student workload= 112 hours

Rounded ECTS: 4 ECTS

Dates and times:

- Monday, April 15 2024
09:30-12:30 - REC M0.02
14:00 – 17:00 - REC M0.02
- Wednesday, April 17 2024
09:30-12:30 - REC MS.01
14:00 – 17:00 - REC L0.10
- Friday, April 19 2024
09:30 – 12:30 - REC C3.01
14:00 - 17:00 - REC B3.09

Learning goals: By the end of this course students should be able to:

- Understand the rationale, opportunities, and challenges for sustainability research in the management field
- Describe appropriate theoretical approaches and research design to study sustainability-related research questions in the management field
- Recognize the appropriateness of different methods and their tradeoffs in addressing sustainability-related research questions in management research
- Gain insight into doing sustainability research, including data collection, analysis, and reporting of such research
- Describe the challenges associated with publishing sustainability strategy research and how to overcome those challenges

Teaching method and contact hours: Paper discussion, lectures, and invited discussants

Assessment: Research proposal inspired by at least one of the session topics (80%) + in-class participation in discussions (20%)

Facilities needed: Flex Classroom with projector and hybrid learning setting

Course summary: This course is intended to provide graduate students with an understanding of the key topics related to sustainability research covered in the field of management. The key objective of the course is to uncover the opportunities and challenges of sustainability research in management by evaluating the classic key pillars and looking at current and future research avenues. Students will be

provided with an overview of core thematic issues, theoretical approaches, and most appropriate methodologies to address the social and environmental grand challenges and integrate sustainability into organizational strategy formulation and implementation. At the end of the course the students will be able to identify a roadmap for future work in sustainability research by gaining an understanding of assumptions, theories, and methods underlying sustainability research in the management field.

Course material: The course material will mainly consist of journal articles covering both the classic and most recent sustainability research in the management field. The course material will also feature presentations from external speakers. The analysis of this material will enable the students to appreciate the theoretical and empirical work in the field as well as understand what it takes to publish sustainability research and where the field is going.

Class format: The course will be taught using a seminar style. The format for the class will usually entail some introductory remarks by the main lecturer(s), followed by a group discussion of the analysis of the papers. The second part of each class will feature a speech from a guest lecturer and sufficient time for questions and reflections.

Students share responsibility with the instructor for discussing the readings and identifying key points for discussion. Students are expected to complete all required readings for the session (2 per session) and come prepared to discuss them in each class. The analysis of the papers will be focused on the research question(s), conceptual framework and hypotheses, methods, sample and measures, strengths and weaknesses, main conclusions, contributions to the literature, and relationship to other topics and disciplines. For each reading, one small group of participants will be the discussion leader and will provide a summary and developmental review of the paper, as appropriate. This review, as well as the class discussion that follows, should go beyond offering a summary of the paper to relate it to other research, underscore implications for the field, critique it, and identify questions that may follow. The last session will be in the form of a workshop where speakers will present a research agenda of current and future topics in sustainability research.

Overview of Sessions

Session 1 – Corporate environmental strategies (session leader: Vittoria Scalera)

Topics: Environmental strategy and performance, circular business models, green innovation

Confirmed external speaker:

Professor Thomas P. Lyon, Dow Chair of Sustainable Science, Technology and Commerce, Ross School of Business and School of Environment and Sustainability (SEAS), University of Michigan

In-class readings:

- Christmann, P. (2000). Effects of “best practices” of environmental management on cost advantage: The role of complementary assets. *Academy of Management journal*, 43(4), 663-680.
- Lyon, T. P., & Montgomery, A. W. (2015). The means and end of greenwash. *Organization & Environment*, 28(2), 223-249.

Optional readings:

- Berrone, P., Fosfuri, A., Gelabert, L., & Gomez-Mejia, L. R. (2013). Necessity as the mother of 'green' inventions: Institutional pressures and environmental innovations. *Strategic Management Journal*, 34(8), 891-909.
- Maxwell, J. W., Lyon, T. P., & Hackett, S. C. (2000). Self-regulation and social welfare: The political economy of corporate environmentalism. *The Journal of Law and Economics*, 43(2), 583-618.
- Whiteman, G., Walker, B., & Perego, P. (2013). Planetary boundaries: Ecological foundations for corporate sustainability. *Journal of Management Studies*, 50(2), 307-336.

Session 2 – Institutions, policies, and organizations in sustainability (Session leader: Arno Kourula)

Topics: Institutional theory, sustainability policy, sociological perspectives

Confirmed external speaker:

Professor Jeremy Moon, Copenhagen Business School

In-class readings:

- Matten, D., & Moon, J. 2020. Reflections on the 2018 Decade Award: The meaning and dynamics of Corporate Social Responsibility. *Academy of Management Review*, 45, 1.
- Ozkazanc-Pan, B. 2019. CSR as gendered neocoloniality in the Global South. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 160.

Optional readings:

- Rasche, A., Morsing, M., Moon, J., & Kourula, A. 2023. Corporate sustainability – What it is and why it matters. In Rasche et al. *Corporate Sustainability*. Cambridge University Press.
- Knudsen, J.S., & Moon, J. 2022. Corporate Social Responsibility and government: The role of discretion for engagement with public policy. *Business Ethics Quarterly*, 32(2).
- Boghossian, J., & Marques, J.C. 2019. Saving the Canadian fur industry's hide: Government's strategic use of private authority to constrain radical activism. *Organization Studies*, 40(8).
- Ergene, S., Banerjee, S.B., Hoffman, A.J. 2021. (Un)Sustainability and organization studies: Towards a radical engagement. *Organization Studies*, 42(8).

Session 3 – The microfoundations of sustainability: from organizations to individuals (session leader: Vittoria Scalera)

Topics: Micro-CSR, Sustainability professionals, AI and sustainability

Confirmed external speaker

dr. Christine Moser, School of Business and Economics, VU Amsterdam

In-class readings:

- Gond, J. P., & Moser, C. (2021). Critical essay: The reconciliation of fraternal twins: Integrating the psychological and sociological approaches to 'micro'corporate social responsibility. *Human Relations*, 74(1), 5-40.
- Hafenbrädl, S., & Waeger, D. (2017). Ideology and the micro-foundations of CSR: Why executives believe in the business case for CSR and how this affects their CSR engagements. *Academy of Management Journal*, 60(4), 1582-1606.

Optional readings:

- Aguinis, H., Rupp, D. E., & Glavas, A. (2024). Corporate social responsibility and individual behaviour. *Nature Human Behaviour*, 1-9.
- Kim, A., Kim, Y., Han, K., Jackson, S. E., & Ployhart, R. E. (2017). Multilevel influences on voluntary workplace green behavior: Individual differences, leader behavior, and coworker advocacy. *Journal of Management*, 43(5), 1335-1358.
- Walls, J. L., Berrone, P., & Phan, P. H. (2012). Corporate governance and environmental performance: Is there really a link?. *Strategic Management Journal*, 33(8), 885-913.

Session 4 – Sustainability and international business (session leader: Vittoria Scalera)

Topics: Ethics and human rights across countries, Corporate Social Responsibility-Corporate Political Activity, arbitrage

Confirmed speaker:

Professor Ans Kolk, Amsterdam Business School, University of Amsterdam

In-class readings:

- Montiel, I., Cuervo-Cazurra, A., Park, J., Antolín-López, R., & Husted, B. W. (2021). Implementing the United Nations' sustainable development goals in international business. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 52(5), 999-1030.
- Wiessner, Y. T., Giuliani, E., Wijen, F., & Doh, J. (2023). Towards a more comprehensive assessment of FDI's societal impact. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 1-21.

Optional readings:

- Doh, J. P., Eden, L., Tsui, A. S., & Zaheer, S. (2023). Developing international business scholarship for global societal impact. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 54(5), 757-767.
- Kolk, A. (2016). The social responsibility of international business: From ethics and the environment to CSR and sustainable development. *Journal of World Business*, 51(1), 23-34.
- Spencer, J. W. (2008). The impact of multinational enterprise strategy on indigenous enterprises: Horizontal spillovers and crowding out in developing countries. *Academy of Management Review*, 33(2), 341-361.

Session 5– Strategic perspectives on corporate sustainability (Session leader: Arno Kourula)

Topics: Stakeholder theory, natural resource-based view, non-market strategies

Confirmed external speaker

Professor Flore Bridoux, Rotterdam School of Management (RSM), Erasmus University Rotterdam

In-class readings:

- Bridoux, F., & Stoelhorst, J.W. 2014. Microfoundations for stakeholder theory: Managing stakeholders with heterogeneous motives. *Strategic Management Journal*, 35 (1).
- Dorobantu, S., Henisz, W.J., & Narley, L. 2017. Not all sparks light a fire: Stakeholder and shareholder reactions to critical events in contested markets. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 62, 3.

Optional readings:

- Bridoux, F., & Stoelhorst, J.W. Stakeholder theory, strategy, and organization: Past, present, and future. *Strategic Organization*, 20 (4).
- George, G., Howard-Grenville, J. Joshi, A., & Tihanyi, L. 2016. Understanding and tackling societal grand challenges through management research. *Academy of Management Journal*, 59(6).
- Grewatsch, S., Kennedy, S., & Bansal, P. 2023. Tackling wicked problems in strategic management with systems thinking. *Strategic Organization*, 2023, 21(3).
- Joyce, A., & Paquin, R.L. 2016. The triple layered business model canvas: A tool to design more sustainable business models. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 135.

Session 6 – Workshop on current and future sustainability research (session leader: Vittoria Scalera)

Three one-hour sessions featuring two presentations on current research projects and thematic roundtables led by each speaker.

Confirmed speaker:

- Ana Aranda Gutierrez, Amsterdam Business School, University of Amsterdam
- Panikos Georgallis, Amsterdam Business School, University of Amsterdam
- Susanne Preuss, Amsterdam Business School, University of Amsterdam
- Almasa Sarabi, Amsterdam Business School, University of Amsterdam
- Carina Thürriidl, Amsterdam Business School, University of Amsterdam