

Course Outline

Course Code	RSM 410 H1 F
Course Name	Sustainability Strategy
Term, Year	Fall, 2023
Course Meets	Thursdays, 9:00-11:00. RT

Instructor Details

Name	Email	Office Hours	Virtual Office Link
K. Corts	kenneth.corts@rotman.utoronto.ca	Thursdays after class, 11:00-12:00	Zoom link for office hours (unless otherwise indicated, I will be in my office, Rotman 311, for office hours as well)

Course Scope, Mission and Learning Outcomes

The environmental and social impact and context of business matter like never before. Diverse stakeholders—from shareholders and lenders to workers and consumers to governments and activists—are raising their voices to ensure that these considerations are given their due in business decision-making and that firms are being transparent and accountable for performance in diverse dimensions well beyond short-term financial performance. This course takes an economics and strategy lens to consider how business leaders can and should respond to the rise of these concerns in pursuing long-run sustainable growth and prosperity. The focus is on how these so-called ESG (environmental, social, and governance) issues affect every company in every sector, rather than on social enterprise or on firms whose primary mission is to directly address social and environmental concerns.

A student who successfully completes this course will be able to:

- determine which ESG and sustainability considerations are material to a firm
- employ scenario analysis to understand the risks and opportunities associated with these factors
- develop strategies to improve environmental and social performance
- think creatively about how to address these issues through partnerships within the value chain and with other players in the broader business ecosystem
- assess the policy environment to identify important roadblocks and opportunities
- critically read diverse forms of ESG and sustainability reporting and disclosure

Course Prerequisites

Pre-/co-requisite: RSM392. If you drop course RSM392 during the academic term, you must also drop this course. Contact Rotman Commerce Academic Services for academic advising if needed.

Course Materials

An electronic [coursepack is available directly from HBS Publishing](#) at a price of \$29.75 USD. This contains all the case studies for the course. All other readings will be made available through the course page.

Evaluation and Grades

Grades are a measure of the knowledge and skills developed by a student within individual courses. Each student will receive a grade on the basis of how well they have command of the course materials, skills and learning objectives of the course.

Work	Percentage of grade	Due Date
Class Participation	20%	Ongoing
Individual paper #1	25%	September 28
Individual paper #2	25%	October 26
Group Project w/ Presentation	30%	November 30

Course Format and Expectations

Writing Assignments and Presentations

The assignments are intended to help you develop your communication skills. How well you communicate your ideas, in writing or orally, will be considered in the evaluation of the assignment. In your written assignments, you should aim for clarity, strong organization, concision, professionalism, and correct grammar. Your presentations should reflect strong planning and organization, clarity of speech, and an engaging demeanour. Sources, whether in written or presentation assignments, should always be correctly attributed.

Support is available through the RC Centre for Professional Skills (CPS) for students who would like help or feedback on their writing or speaking (presentations). CPS offers both individual and group appointments with trained writing instructors and presentation coaches who are familiar with the RC program and common types of business assignments. You can also access your college Writing Centres for help with written assignments.

You can book an appointment with a writing or presentation coach through the RC Centre for Professional Skills Writing Centre. For more information about writing centres, student supports, and study resources, see the [Writing and Presentation Coaching academic support page](#).

Team or Group Assignments

The group project requires students to work in teams of four. Learning to work together in teams is a crucial transferrable skill you will use not only in your coursework, but also in your future careers. Support is available if you encounter common teamwork challenges such as:

- Team members feeling left out of the team.
- Team members not responding in a timely manner to communication.
- Division or quality of work among team members being unequal or unfair.

Consult the [Centre for Professional Skills Teamwork Resources page](#) for tips, strategies, and best practices. You can also [book an appointment with a teamwork mentor](#) through the RC Centre for Professional Skills Writing Centre. Teamwork mentors can help you resolve or mitigate conflict, strategize on planning, or improve team communication.

If you are a student registered with Accessibility Services, and extensions are one of your academic accommodations, consult with your Accessibility Advisor about the teamwork in this course.

Class Participation

Students are expected to prepare thoroughly and make every effort to attend every class. As class participation is a graded component of the course, students will be evaluated on the following:

- Thoughtful responses
- Understanding and analysis of topic
- Idea generation
- Promoting further discussion
- Respectful active listening
- Attentiveness

While attendance is necessary for students to participate in class discussions, attendance on its own will not result in a high participation grade. Students must actively contribute and participate by exhibiting the components listed above.

Missed Tests and Assignments

Students who miss an assignment due date for reasons entirely beyond their control (e.g. illness) may request special consideration **within 2 business days** of the missed midterm/test/assignment due date.

In such cases, students must:

1. Complete the Request for Special Consideration form: <https://uoft.me/RSMConsideration>
2. Provide documentation to support the request, eg. Absence Declaration from [ACORN](#), medical note etc.

Please note: As of September 2023, students may use the Absence Declaration on ACORN ***one time per term*** to report an absence and request consideration. **Any subsequent absence will require a [Verification of Illness form](#) or other similar relevant documentation.**

Students who do not submit their requests and documentation within 2 days may receive a grade of 0 (zero) on the missed course deliverable.

Late Assignments

All assignments are due by the beginning of class on the date specified in Quercus. Late submissions will normally be penalized by two letter grade steps (for example, A would be marked down to B+) if the assignment is not received on the specified date, at the specified time. A further penalty of one letter grade step will be applied for each subsequent day.

Statement on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

The University of Toronto is committed to equity, human rights and respect for diversity. All members of the learning environment in this course should strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect where all members of our community can express themselves, engage with each other, and respect one another's differences. U of T does not condone discrimination or harassment against any persons or communities.

Commitment to Accessibility

The University is committed to inclusivity and accessibility, and strives to provide support for, and facilitate the accommodation of, individuals with disabilities so that all may share the same level of access to opportunities and activities offered at the University.

If you require accommodations for a temporary or ongoing disability or health concern, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials, please [email Accessibility Services](#) or visit the [Accessibility Services website](#) for more information as soon as possible. Obtaining your accommodation letter may take up to several weeks, so get in touch with them as soon as possible. If you have general questions or concerns about the accessibility of this course, you are encouraged to reach out to your instructor, course coordinator, or Accessibility Services.

Generative AI / ChatGPT

You are welcome to use AI tools to empower your learning in this course. For purposes of academic integrity in this course, you should think of an AI chat tool as if it were an older sibling with some expertise in this subject area. That is, you are welcome to talk about your assignments with it and to ask it for insights on the subject, but you cannot get it to write your assignments for you and you cannot quote it without attribution. As with an older sibling, the chat tool does not count as a citable source, so you may not cite it even with attribution. All work submitted must be your own work in your own words. As with an older sibling, AI chat tools are not always reliable or correct on factual matters, and it is your responsibility to verify any information they provide.

Academic Integrity

Academic Integrity is a fundamental value essential to the pursuit of learning and scholarship at the University of Toronto. Participating honestly, respectfully, responsibly, and fairly in this academic community ensures that the U of T degree that you earn will continue to be valued and respected as a true signifier of a student's individual work and academic achievement. As a result, the University treats cases of academic misconduct very seriously.

[The University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters](#) outlines the behaviours that constitute academic misconduct, the process for addressing academic offences and the penalties that may be imposed. You are expected to be familiar with the contents of this document. Potential offences include, but are not limited to:

In papers and assignments

- Using someone else's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement.
- Submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor.
- Making up sources or facts.
- Obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment (this includes collaborating with others on assignments that are supposed to be completed individually).

On test and exams

- Using or possessing any unauthorized aid, including a cell phone.
- Looking at someone else's answers.
- Misrepresenting your identity.
- Submitting an altered test for re-grading.

Misrepresentation

- Falsifying institutional documents or grades.
- Falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University, including (but not limited to) medical notes.

All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated by the procedures outlined in the [Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters](#). If you have any questions about what is or is not permitted in the course, please do not hesitate to contact the course instructor. If you have any questions about appropriate research and citation methods, you are expected to seek out additional information from the instructor or other U of T or RC resources such as the RC Centre for Professional Skills, the College Writing Centres or the Academic Success Centre.

Email

At times, the course instructor may decide to communicate important course information by email. As such, all U of T students are required to have a valid UTmail+ email address. You are responsible for ensuring that your UTmail+ email address is set up and properly entered on ACORN. For more information visit the [Information Commons Help Desk](#).

Forwarding your utoronto.ca email to a Gmail or other type of email account is not advisable. In some cases, messages from utoronto.ca addresses sent to Gmail accounts are filtered as junk mail, which means that important messages from your course instructor may end up in your spam or junk mail folder.

Recording Lectures

Lectures and course materials prepared by the instructor are considered by the University to be an instructor's intellectual property covered by the Canadian Copyright Act. Students wishing to record a lecture or other course material in any way are required to ask the instructor's explicit permission and may not do so unless permission is granted. Students who have been previously granted permission to record lectures as an accommodation for a disability are excepted. This includes tape recording, filming, photographing PowerPoint slides, Quercus materials, etc.

If permission for recording is granted by the instructor (or via Accessibility Services), it is intended for the individual student's own study purposes and does not include permission to "publish" or share them in any way. It is forbidden for a student to publish an instructor's notes to a website or sell them in any other form without written permission.

Weekly Schedule

Session	Date	Topic	Case (* = from HBS course pack)
1	Sept 7	The Sustainability Imperative	--
2	Sept 14	A Sustainability Strategy Framework	Nike*
3	Sept 21	Reporting, Accountability, Governance	--
4	Sept 28	Sustainability in the Value Chain Paper #1 DUE by 9:00 am	IKEA*
5	Oct 5	Selling Sustainability	Unilever*
6	Oct 12	Climate Change and Net Zero	--
7	Oct 19	Climate Change and Net Zero	Patagonia*
8	Oct 26	Indigenous Relationships Paper #2 DUE by 9:00 am	Six Nations of the Grand River (SNGRDC)
9	Nov 2	Innovation and the Policy Environment	NIO*
10	Nov 16	Open Innovation	Carlsberg*
11	Nov 23	Innovation and the Circular Economy	Novetex*
12	Nov 30	GROUP PRESENTATIONS Group Projects DUE by 9:00 am	--

Please note that the last day you can drop this course without academic penalty is November 6, 2023.



Other Useful Links

- [Become a volunteer note taker](#)
- [Accessibility Services Note Taking Support](#)
- [Credit / No-Credit in RSM courses](#)
- [Rotman Commerce Academic Support](#)

URL links for print

- ACORN: <http://www.acorn.utoronto.ca/>
- Email Accessibility Services: accessibility.services@utoronto.ca
- Accessibility Services website: <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/as>
- University's Plagiarism Detection Tool FAQ: <https://uoft.me/pdt-faq>
- The University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters: <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>
- Information Commons Help Desk: <http://help.ic.utoronto.ca/category/3/utmail.html>
- Become a volunteer note taker: <https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/program/volunteer-note-taking/>
- Accessibility Services Note Taking Support: <https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/service/note-taking-support/>
- Credit / No-Credit in RSM courses: <https://rotmancommerce.utoronto.ca/current-students/degree-requirements/credit-no-credit-option/>
- Rotman Commerce Academic Support: <https://rotmancommerce.utoronto.ca/current-students/academic-support/>
- Book an appointment with a writing or presentation coach: <http://uoft.me/writingcentres>
- Writing and Presentation Coaching academic support page: <https://rotmancommerce.utoronto.ca/current-students/academic-support/writing-and-presentation-coaching/>
- Centre for Professional Skills Teamwork Resources page: <https://rotmancommerce.utoronto.ca/teamwork-resources>
- Book an appointment with a Teamwork Mentor: <http://uoft.me/writingcentres>