SUST 5300-01: Sustainability & Business
Seattle University, Autumn 2016

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CLASS MEETING: M 5:30 - 8:10, Bellevue campus 200G

OFFICE HOURS: before and after class and by appointment


[SoW] Is Sustainability Still Possible? State of the World 2013 by The Worldwatch Institute, Washington, DC: Island Press, 2013. The Chapters we will read are available on the Worldwatch website at:


Note: additional readings will be made available on our Canvas course space, week by week.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Sustainability in business is both an imperative and an opportunity. It is a strategic business issue – arguably, THE strategic issue facing business in the 21st century. On the imperative side, the business environment and competitive landscape has changed, such that every company, if they are to meet the requirements of today’s marketplace and business environment, is well-advised to incorporate Sustainability/Corporate Social Responsibility into business strategies, product and service design, production processes, and stakeholder relationships. Further, at the big picture level, the inherent unsustainability of our current industrial system is creating concerns about climate change, environmental degradation, human health impacts, loss of biodiversity, poverty, global working conditions, and cultural and other impacts from globalization. In response to pressure from all quarters – consumer markets, corporate customers, regulatory agencies, stakeholder activism, and the investment community – the business environment is gradually, but clearly, shifting to favor environmentally and socially responsible products and practices.

On the opportunity side, sustainability is one of the key platforms for value creation in the future business environment. It is a critical source of innovation, new market opportunities, and employee engagement. Those companies, ventures, public agencies, and even nations taking the lead in proactively developing more sustainable strategies, technologies, products, production processes, distribution systems, and relationships are positioning themselves to survive and thrive in the emerging global marketplace. Further, they are stepping up to the leadership challenge of the 21st century, using business to address the world’s most pressing problems.
We will spend roughly the first half of the course conducting a ‘situation analysis’ of the state of business, sustainable business, and ways of thinking about both. The second half of the course will focus on the opportunities that are available to organizations that have made the transition in their strategic thinking about how their business is going to do business.

**COURSE LEARNING GOALS:**
The purpose of this course is to educate students about the benefits and challenges of developing more sustainable business strategies and practices, to explore the changing role of business in society and the environment, and to begin to consider concepts, tools and frameworks commonly used by business in the transition to practices that incorporate social and environmental sustainability into strategy and operations.

The learning goals for this course include:
- you will understand the sustainability-related situation, problems, challenges, and opportunities facing business and the societies of the world
- you will be able to correctly use and explain sustainability-related vocabulary and concepts and to appropriately apply sustainability-related thinking to business situations
- you will be able to communicate persuasively about sustainability and business

As you can see, this course is organized to help deliver the learning goals for the Professional MBA Program, which are:
- Exhibit effective presentational and interpersonal communication skills.
- Exhibit effective critical thinking skills.
- Exhibit the capacity to effectively marshal human resources, both in a leading and in a collegial teaming role.
- Exhibit the ability to identify, measure, interpret, and incorporate relevant information in analyzing problems and making effective business decisions.
- Exhibit the ability to recognize ethical and legal issues and to respond appropriately.

**COURSE OVERVIEW and GRADING:**
The class format will be a combination of lectures, discussions, in-class activities, homework assignments, and projects. Your grade will be calculated as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>personal footprint calculation &amp; reflection</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSR report analysis</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘convince me’ writing and reflection</td>
<td>150</td>
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<tr>
<td>group project – presentation &amp; paper</td>
<td>310</td>
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<tr>
<td>current event (50) + 'deep dive' deliverable(100)</td>
<td>150</td>
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<tr>
<td>course participation/contributions</td>
<td>190</td>
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</table>

1000 pts.
COMPONENTS OF THE COURSEWORK:

Personal footprint calculation & reflection:
This assignment requires you to examine your own environmental impacts more closely. Use at least two of the following personal impact calculators (choose them randomly; they are not in any sort of order and we want them all to be tested by multiple people in class, and feel free to use others you may find):

http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/emissions/ind_calculator.html
http://carbonfootprint.com/calculator.aspx
http://coolclimate.berkeley.edu/carboncalculator
http://www.nature.org
www.myfootprint.org
www.footprintnetwork.org

Also, use at least 2 of these tools to assess your personal 'water footprint' --
www.watercalculator.org

Work through these calculators (and any others, if you find them), estimate your current resource and water footprints (or your total environmental impact), and analyze why the calculators give different results (if they do). Discuss how well the sites you consulted explained and advised you on how you might reduce your footprints, then describe what actions you could take to reduce your footprint, and analyze the business opportunities therein. Summarize your findings in writing (up to 3 pages). Post your work by 4pm on Monday, October 10.

CSR report analysis:
You will study and compare two companies' sustainability reports: a company in the industry that your team has decided to study for this course (make sure each team member analyzes a different competitor!) and a company that you think is particularly admirable in terms of sustainability reporting. (Look for rankings of sustainability reports to find a highly-ranked company that you're interested in.) Use the Boston University resource paper (lengthy, though not difficult, but valuable reading), which is available on our course Canvas space linked to the week this assignment is due (week 5, 10/24/15).

To do:
--Find out how each company reports on their sustainability efforts (in the form of reports, Web sites or other).
--Provide a thoughtful comparison and critique of the two reports in light of the Global Reporting Initiative guidelines and in light of any other frameworks you can find for sustainability reporting. Some questions to consider: Do you find what the companies report insightful? Useful? Is it greenwash? Are the sustainability reports consistent with the financial statements?
---What is the level of commitment of the firm's executive management to their environmental policy (e.g., has the CEO or president signed it)? If on the organization’s website, how many clicks from home page are needed in order to read the information? Does the firm have specific and clear goals and improvement targets? Does the firm report actual performance numbers or just relative numbers? Are the firm’s reported numbers verified by a third party?
--Limit your written analysis to four pages or fewer.

Before class, submit (post to the indicated space on Canvas for the due date, 10/24, no later than 4 pm) a 2 or 3 slide PowerPoint presentation of your most dramatic findings to share during class discussion---identify your name and the companies you assess in the name you give your file, please (for example: Atwood_Monsanto_Unilever).
Some of the more remarkable reports will be discussed in class---be prepared to discuss your assessment of the two organizations you considered and to defend your positions.

**‘Convince me’ paper and reflection:**

- Select a target audience and decide what you want them to know and what you want them to do related to more sustainable practices – it should be a real situation facing you, your workplace, a company you are studying, an organization you are involved with, or this university (encouraging administration to divest of carbon-related investments, for example)
- Write an ‘op-ed’ style piece (750-1000 words)
- Post it to the Canvas space for this assignment by the end of Friday, November 27
- You will be put into groups so that you have the chance to read some of the other ‘convince me’ essays. You will need to read and respond to the posts of the others in your group…..indicate something you liked in their writing, something you might recommend they change in some way, and an overall ‘persuasiveness’ rating [on a 1 = not very persuasive to 5 = I’m convinced! scale] – you will need to respond to your assigned students by the end of Wednesday, November 30.
- You will also write a personal reflection on the experience of writing this---Was it hard to be persuasive? How did you decide on the tone/approach (informational / emotional / rational / moral / other arguments)? What strategy did you end up using to try to persuade your audience? How effective do you think you were in accomplishing your communication goals? Consider others’ reviews of your efforts. You can submit your reflection to the ‘convince me’ reflection space on our course Canvas space by the end of Sunday, 12/4.

**Current event +‘deep dive’ :**

Each week, beginning with week 4, and continuing through until week 10, a few students will be assigned to do a 'deep dive' into a story of current interest in Sustainability and Business.

For your assigned week, you will need to find and describe a current sustainable business event and present it to the class. This may be a news story or a description of a company that has some sustainability-related news or activities. In order to better plan our class sessions, you will sign up for a specific night when you'll share your current event. You should be prepared to spend up to 4 minutes describing the event/activity/company of interest (use visuals as appropriate), then pose at least 2 questions to spark critical thinking and class discussion. Scanning the business news for sustainability-related happenings should be a natural part of your business-related reading, especially this quarter! And to maximize our exposure and learning, we will avoid duplicate 'news' items. If you need help finding something to report on, you might find some interesting organizations to investigate here:


You will also need to dive into the sustainable business topic that is illustrated by your current event (check the chapters in our SMBA book for ideas) and research the topic BEYOND WHAT IS WRITTEN IN OUR TEXTBOOK. You will write a 2-3 page research summary paper (complete with citations and references) on that topic and post it in this discussion space, so it will be available to everyone in the class. You should be guided in this assignment by the questions:

- what is happening, related to sustainable business? What is the observable activity, and what underlying idea or framework or sustainable business concept?
- what would a manager in an organization need to know in order to make appropriate decisions related to this topic?
- where could an interested reader go to find even more details?
So, your ‘deliverables’ for this assignment will be:

1) in-class presentation of your 'current event in sustainable business' – plan on 4 minutes plus discussion time for the 2 questions you pose. Feel free to use props / examples / slides / etc. as appropriate.
2) a summary of your topic, about 2 – 3 written pages long or a detailed infographic or 'mind map' or other visual medium, that provides a current, concise, and comprehensive description of the important issues. It is expected that you will research beyond our assigned readings. Be sure to provide citations of your sources (separate page, not included in the paper’s page count). Post your paper to the Canvas course space by class time on the date assigned for your topic.

**Group project – industry & company assessment and analysis; presentation & paper:**

Each group of three to four members will choose an industry and a firm within that industry to analyze throughout the course. Each group will examine a different organization, within different industries, to help maximize the learning of the whole class. The final report and presentation will summarize the group's findings related to that industry and firm, from the perspectives and frameworks covered in the course. Think of the final report as a comprehensive assessment to the CEO of the firm, advising on what you think the firm’s sustainability strategy should be, along dimensions discussed in class (and more). View your task as one of persuading your target audience to adopt your recommendations.

You will use the B Corp Handbook and their online 'B Impact Assessment’ as a way to consider your target organization.

You are able to access the B Impact Assessment through the link provided [here](#). If you go to the top of the page, you will see a tab that says, “Learn More”. At the bottom of the tab you will see "Preview the Assessment". Here, you will be able to view the assessment as it would be presented according to country, industry and number of employees.

You are free to structure the report in whatever way you think is best, but it should include sections on relevant topics, which will likely include some (not all!) from this list:

- What frameworks are useful for understanding the sustainability implications and impacts for this industry/firm?
- What are the main environmental and social impacts of this industry/firm? Provide qualitative and quantitative assessments.
- Perform a Life-Cycle Analysis of this firm’s offer(s). Consider the life-cycle impacts and opportunities for this firm. [More details about LCA are provided below.]
- What are the main regulatory and economic issues, related to sustainability, that affect the industry/firm (e.g., Clean Air Act, climate change, carbon tax, biodiversity, resource depletion)?
- What are the main opportunities for this industry/firm to reduce its environmental impact and improve its sustainability-related behavior/activity?
- What are the strategic considerations the firm should consider? Is it or should it be a leader or a follower in terms of sustainability? Why? What are others doing?
- Consider the firm’s customers and consumers—how should its sustainability approaches be tailored to these target groups?
- What form of green marketing does the firm do? What should it do? What do others do?
- How does the firm report its sustainability efforts? How does that compare with others in the same industry and in other sectors?
- What financial threats or opportunities exist for the firm and what can it do about those (e.g., exposure to increase in raw material costs, emerging opportunities in carbon markets)?
- What international aspects should the firm keep in mind (e.g., where in the world does it have an environmental and social impact, and what pressures from different parts of the world might it be subject to)? What opportunities exist in other parts of the world?
Each group will examine a different industry, to help maximize the learning for the whole class. The final ‘deliverables’ will be: a paper and a presentation; both will be due at the end of the quarter.

This quarter-long industry/company assessment project is to be completed in teams, and your performance in your team will be assessed via peer evaluations. While we don’t teach specific team-building and team effectiveness strategies in this class, you’ll have a chance to work on honing your teamwork skills, and we will use some tools (e.g., a ‘team charter’) that have proven to be helpful to teams in the past. Effective teamwork in this course will include:

- respect and courtesy for all team members
- attendance, prepared, to all meetings
- clear understanding of individual responsibility
- completion of all assigned responsibilities
- support for other team members that helps them improve their own contributions
- completion of peer evaluation forms
- communication with instructor regarding any team problems that cannot be resolved

LCA (life cycle analysis) -- Life Cycle Impacts & Opportunities

Identify the environmental and social negative impacts and environmental and social positive opportunities at various stages in the life cycle of a product.

Apply “Life Cycle Thinking” to complete the Worksheet (suggested below, should be included in your final report), identifying first ENVIRONMENTAL negative impacts and positive opportunities of your product at various stages of the product life cycle, then SOCIAL negative impacts and positive opportunities at various stages in the life cycle of a product. Use the Worksheet as a guide and customize to fit your product, but do cover all aspects of the product or service life cycle, thinking broadly about all the inputs, process steps and their impacts, transportation, logistics, delivery, product or service in-use or consumption, and end-of-life. This should be a high level summary, so all your work should fit on one to two pages (you may want to turn the chart to landscape and use 9-10 point Arial Narrow font). Do research your topic, looking at relevant companies’ Sustainability Reports, news, industry critics, NGOs, etc. As you work, try to assess which of the impacts and opportunities are most significant. You may decide to delve more deeply into specific areas as you form recommendations for your target company.

Examples of negative environmental impacts might include loss of biodiversity from clear-cutting, pesticides applied to soil, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from diesel fuel burned in hauling, chemicals used in machining, water contamination in manufacturing, packaging sent to landfill, toxic leakage after disposal, etc. Opportunities might be recovery of metals and materials from products after use, product features that clean the environment while used, sale of manufacturing bi-products and heat, backhauls, logistics redesign to reduce miles traveled. Negative social impact examples include worker health dangers from applying pesticides, human rights violations in suppliers, child labor, obesity from high sugar/carb food products, workers not getting living wage, stress, etc. Opportunities to improve social impact and reach include job creation, designing new products with health features, forming industry consortium to paying pages, etc.

A Note on Expectations: Please note that the purpose of this exercise is NOT to DO a complete Life Cycle Assessment of the product you selected, or even to find detailed life cycle assessments that others have done. The goal is to demonstrate that you can apply "life cycle thinking" -- identifying examples of environmental and social impacts of a product in various stages of its lifecycle from raw materials to end of life – and you can think strategically about how the company can address its impacts.

Helpful resources--Below is some information on Life Cycle Thinking (NIST, 2009).
You may also find ideas on the product ranking website http://www.goodguide.com/

Life Cycle Thinking
The life cycle of a product starts with raw material extraction, continues with the fabrication of the relevant semi-finished products, includes finishing and assembling of the final product as well as its use and maintenance, and concludes with the end-of-life operations. This last stage includes recycling of materials and, after adequate treatment, final disposal of waste.

For recyclable products such as aluminum products, a life cycle can be modeled "cradle-to-cracle" by a product system where the recycled material can substitute primary material. Only the material that is lost at the different stages of the life cycle needs to be replaced by primary material as illustrated in the figure below.

Life Cycle Thinking is an approach to address and analyze all these activities in regard to risks, opportunities, and value creation in order to find the best overall solutions. It involves internal decision-makers from R&D, production, marketing, or management, as well as external stakeholders such as suppliers, retailers, customers, consumers, and the general public.

Worksheet/Matrix for LCA: Life Cycle Impacts & Opportunities
clearly identify: company / product(s):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>impacts / opportunities</th>
<th>Resource Extraction</th>
<th>Subassembly/ Product Suppliers</th>
<th>Manufacturing/ Production</th>
<th>Distribution &amp; Delivery</th>
<th>Consumption, In Use</th>
<th>End-of-Life/ Disposal</th>
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<tr>
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(expand cells as needed.....)

================ end of additional info about Life Cycle Analysis =============================
Course participation /contribution/ homework:
You should be prepared to be an active participant in the class: Being physically present is good, but not enough!* Contributing to the class through active listening, posing questions, offering examples, and participating in the in-class exercises will help to maximize your experience in the class. Everyone should be prepared to answer and ask questions about the assigned cases and readings/material. Occasionally, you may be assigned a reading or chapter to prepare (individually or in a small group) and to present to the class and help lead the class discussion on the topic—this will be considered as part of your course contribution as well.

Class members are strongly encouraged to bring to class examples, issues, or questions that are based on your professional life or on your everyday reading or activities, through the 'current event' assignment AND other days, when you find something worth sharing. This is a rapidly-evolving field of study, so your contributions to class are especially valuable, as you’re probably exposed to information and ideas related to sustainability that the rest of us might not see or experience.

I’m looking forward to a fascinating quarter of thinking with you about the most important and pressing influence on business of our day (or any, in the history of business). Here’s to a great quarter!

*if you need to miss a class meeting, please let me know ahead of time; travel for work and illnesses happen....but in a class that meets only 10 times during the quarter, each class session focuses on important information, and I expect that you will work to avoid class absences

COURSE POLICIES:
• Unless otherwise specified, all work to be handed in is to be completed individually and must be spaced at least 1.5, font size at least 11, with at least 1-inch margins on all sides of the page.

• All work should be your best work—assignments will be evaluated for content, of course, but also for clarity, organization and appropriate use of headings, readability, and professionalism (i.e., proper spelling, grammar, layout). Proofread!!

• Assignments are due when requested during the class session at which they are to be submitted and are to be turned in on paper – e-mailed assignments are not accepted. Turning in assignments late is discouraged—late assignments would be marked down automatically.

• Cell phone use, texting, and web surfing are inconsiderate to your classmates and to the instructor and thus have no place in this class – let Prof. Atwood know if you might be expecting an important message or call and we’ll work to accommodate your needs. Computers are to be closed during class unless they are being used in support of the in-class material; cell phones should be silenced and out of sight. Violation of these policies would result in lowering of the class participation portion of your course grade.

• Bring and use your name card each class day.

• The course schedule is attached— you are responsible for it and for any changes to the schedule that may be announced in class.
SEATTLE UNIVERSITY POLICIES:

University Resources and Policies

Academic Resources
- Library and Learning Commons (http://www.seattleu.edu/learningcommons/)
  (This includes: Learning Assistance Programs, Research [Library] Services, Writing Center, Math Lab)

Academic Integrity Tutorial https://www.seattleu.edu/academicintegrity/

Academic Policies on Registrar website (https://www.seattleu.edu/registrar/academics/performance/)
- Academic Integrity Policy
- Academic Grading Grievance Policy
- Professional Conduct Policy (only for those professional programs to which it applies)

Notice for students concerning Disabilities
If you have, or think you may have, a disability (including an 'invisible disability' such as a learning disability, a chronic health problem, or a mental health condition) that interferes with your performance as a student in this class, you are encouraged to arrange support services and/or accommodations through Disabilities Services staff located in Loyola 100, (206) 296-5740. Disability-based adjustments to course expectations can be arranged only through this process.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Topic(s)</th>
<th>Deliverables</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M 9/26</td>
<td><em>introduction &amp; course orientation</em></td>
<td>DUE: please post a video self-introduction to the</td>
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<td><em>project &amp; groups</em></td>
<td>Canvas space before noon on M 9/26*</td>
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<td><em>definitions--discussion</em></td>
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<td>readings: Winston: 10 Sustainable Business Trends</td>
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<td>M 10/3</td>
<td><em>science of sustainability &amp; climate change</em></td>
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<td>readings: TedX video: climate change is simple</td>
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<td><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A7ktYbVwr90">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A7ktYbVwr90</a>,</td>
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<td>SoW—Ch.1 (link on p.1 of syllabus),</td>
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<td><em>what sustainability means for business</em></td>
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<td>readings: SMBA—Ch.1,2 and</td>
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<td>article: 90 companies to blame---</td>
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<td>M 10/10</td>
<td><em>personal impacts and potential for change</em></td>
<td>personal footprint calculation &amp; reflection DUE</td>
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<td>readings: SoW—Ch.4, 23</td>
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<td>Guardian article on stuff and downsizing:</td>
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<td><em>rationale for sustainable business orientation</em></td>
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<td>readings: SMBA—Ch.3,4,5</td>
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<td>B Corp Handbook--Ch.1, 3</td>
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<td>M 10/17</td>
<td><em>making the ‘business case’ for sustainability</em></td>
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<td>Readings/resources: making the 'business case' for sustainability</td>
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<td><em>be prepared to describe, explain, and/or comment on those assigned to you</em></td>
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**last name A - I:**

- McKinsey "how companies can adapt"
- Unilever CEO video https://youtu.be/eDhWE2m3LG0
- Ray Anderson video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iP9QF_IBOyA
Windfall – 2 pg. TIME article and.....

last name J - Z:

- Unilever / Polman articles: McKinsey, European CEO, and WRI
- paper: UNEP BCGE A4
- NYTimes: strategy in a warming world

*Sustainable Business Frameworks*

Readings/resources — be prepared to describe, explain, and comment on those assigned to you

last name A-C:

- Sustainable Value -- Hart
- Shared Value -- Porter & Kramer

last name D - M:

- sustainability advantage (2 links)
- 'roadmap to natural capitalism'

last name N-Z:

- Circles of Sustainability -- UN
- Big Pivot -- Ch.1, 'big pivot' diagram (just before Ch.14), and Ch.14 (book: Big Pivot by Andrew Winston -- available to read online on SU library site)

M 10/24  
*sustainability reporting & materiality; measuring what matters*

readings: SMBA – Ch. 15;
EarthIsland article; skim World Happiness Report;
review GRI website

resource: Boston College "how to read a corporate responsibility report"

CSR report analysis DUE

M 10/31  
*business applications & opportunities: strategy & ethics*

readings: SMBA – Ch. 14, Ch.9
Polman--video
case: Monsanto
M 11/7  business applications & opportunities:  operations & supply chains
readings:  SMBA—Ch. 12
          case: Walmart & critique

M 11/14  business applications & opportunities:  entrepreneurship
readings:  SMBA—Ch.8
          case: New Belgium Brewing

M 11/21  business applications & opportunities:  marketing & design
readings:  SMBA--Ch.11;  SoW—Ch. 10 (skim)
          articles:  Ottman; Seven Sins; communication approaches
          case: Seventh Generation

‘convince me’ writing DUE: post by end of F 11/25, respond to others’ by
W 11/30 (graded discussion), post your reflection by end of Sun 12/4

M 11/28  business applications & opportunities:  finance & accounting
readings:  SMBA—Ch. 6, 10
          articles:  Sierra Club-investment; CA carbon market; IIRC Six Capitals
          case: tba

M 12/5  final project presentations^^

* self-introduction: please answer at least these questions in your video introduction:

1) Who are you and what do you do when we’re not in class together on Monday evenings?
2) What is your professional background (past, present, future plans/hopes) ?
3) and regarding sustainability—What is your background or experience with sustainability, if any? What are your thoughts or feelings or concerns about sustainability? Is there anything in particular that you hope to learn in this course?

^^ your group’s presentation needs to be posted to Canvas no later than 4pm on this presentation day