



the **CalgaryCompact**

CSR 101

Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability in Business

Spring 2010 Syllabus

Instructor: Leo Wong, Ph.D., leo@calgarycompact.ca
Dates: Every Thursday (April 29th – June 24th, excluding June 10th)
Time: 6:00pm – 8:15pm
Location: University of Calgary, Scurfield Hall (Room 268) **this course is not related to the University of Calgary*
Cost: Free - but students agree to volunteer at least 10 hours during and/or after the course for the Calgary Compact
Textbook: None. Online readings will be provided instead.

Registration: Please email the instructor your name, contact email, resumé, and a brief paragraph explaining why you would like to take the course. There are no prerequisites for this course and anyone is welcome to attend, but it will be filled on a first-come-first-serve basis. There is a maximum size of 40 students.

Class audits: Students can audit specific classes as long as the maximum enrollment is not reached. Auditing will be done on a first-come-first-serve basis, upon consent by the instructor via email.

Completion: To successfully complete this course, students must attend 6 out of 8 classes and complete the group project. Class participation and active group involvement will be considered as part of course completion requirements.

COURSE OVERVIEW

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) and sustainability issues have become mainstream business issues where the private, public and non-profit sectors converge. The purpose of this course is to inform you about how business engages in various activities related to CSR and sustainability, and to begin to develop the capacity to be a positive social change agent.

Specific course objectives include:

1. To develop an enhanced ability to recognize concepts, frameworks and ideas regarding the social, environmental, ethical and organizational dimensions of business activity.
2. To be able to explain the impact of consumer forces on business decision-making, and the impact of business on society.
3. Foster thinking and discussion about CSR and sustainability issues and how you might be able to contribute as a participant and a leader in this field.

Over this 8-week course, students will learn about CSR and sustainability including topics such as ethical decision-making, socially-responsible consumerism, workplace practices, environmental stewardship, community involvement, governance and reporting, organizational learning and leadership.

The course will be a combination of in-class instruction/discussion, as well as guest speakers. Classes will provide background information on specific issues, focus on relevant problems and challenges and offer solutions for going forward. The course is designed to be interactive and engaging, offering students the



opportunity to learn about CSR and sustainability concepts, trends and cases. It will also focus on developing practical skills such as analytical thinking, communication, and leadership to apply these concepts in the business community. Students will be asked to complete one group project and present it to the rest of the class at the end of the course.

As part of the course, students will be asked to volunteer ten (10) hours towards the Calgary Compact (see www.calgarycompact.ca for volunteer information). These ten hours may be completed during or after the course schedule is complete. Graduates will become valuable resources in their community as they promote awareness of the impact corporate social responsibility and sustainability can have on society.

Ideal students include individuals studying business management, working in business or a non-profit organization that is looking to engage with business, and individuals who want to take a leadership role in promoting CSR and sustainability in Calgary.

ABOUT THE INSTRUCTOR

Leo Wong recently graduated from the University of Alberta with a Ph.D. in marketing, focusing on corporate social responsibility and prosocial consumer behaviour. His primary motivation for pursuing his doctorate was to integrate CSR and sustainability issues into business education. This course is designed to be an inclusive, barrier-reduced approach to business education regarding these issues.

In addition to his studies, he has been involved in synthesizing research related to sustainability issues for the Network for Business Sustainability and has helped review the world's top MBA programs in terms of their social impact content for the Aspen Institute. Leo is a founding member of the Calgary Compact, an organization that brings together socially-responsible individuals, organizations and businesses from a diverse interest-base in order to foster dialogue, increase understanding and generate cooperation towards a more sustainable livelihood.



CLASS SCHEDULE

Date	Class	Guest Speakers*
April 29 th	1. Intro and Ethical Decision-Making	None scheduled
May 6 th	2. CSR, Sustainability and Ethics	Sheila Carruthers (CSR Strategies)
May 13 th	3. How Organizations Learn/Embed CSR	Dani Deboice (First Calgary Savings) Bob Mitchell (ConocoPhillips)
May 20 th	4. Community Need and Local NGOs	Janet Lavoie (Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations) Gena Rotstein (Dexterity Consulting) Tamara McCarron (Make It Good)
May 27 th	5. Workplace and Community Efforts	Bruce Martin (Community Natural Foods) Julia Watson (Simpact Strategies)
June 3 rd	6. Environment, Governance/Reporting	Mark Brownlie (Responsibility Matters Inc.)
June 10 th	NO CLASS	
June 17 th	7. Conscious Consumerism	Jocelyne Daw (Author/Consultant on Cause Marketing for Non-Profits) Brad Clute (Mountain Equipment Co-op)
June 24 th	8. Future of CSR and Sustainability Group Presentations	None scheduled

* Guest speakers will provide a short 10-15 minute introduction and students will be given 20-30 minutes for a question and answer period.

April 29th

1. Intro and Ethical Decision-Making - *It starts with you!*

This class will motivate the direction this course will take, by asking each of the students to take an inward look at how they make decisions. Aside from the general housekeeping information about the course, this class will spend the majority of its time conducting a modified version of the Prisoner's Dilemma. Come prepared to participate, and reflect on your decision-making processes.

Learning how to apply CSR, sustainability and other related issues that will be covered in this course depends upon an individual's ability to decide the right/best/optimal course of action. Often that entails a judgment that involves an ethical component. This class will give participants a first-hand experience in dealing with ethical dilemmas, and serve as an experiential foundation for the remainder of the course.

May 6th

2. CSR, Sustainability and Ethics

A summary and background context to the concepts CSR and sustainability will be discussed, as well as the business case for CSR. Frameworks for choosing the type of CSR program to implement will be explored and a closer look at ethical decision-making will be examined. Speakers will offer students some insight on the issues and challenges sustainability consultants face in determining what are their client's capacity, motivation and interest in pursuing a CSR or sustainability strategy.



May 13th

3. How Organizations Learn/Embed CSR

How do people learn about sustainability, and how is learning facilitated in a work environment? This session will discuss learning models to better understand how we can communicate information for different people to be receptive about sustainability-related information, including consumer behaviour concepts regarding information processing models. This session will also explore the role of human resources, communications and leadership when you are trying to integrate CSR outputs. What are the best approaches to getting employees engaged, processes set up and targets met? What type of leadership style works for your business and organization? We will discuss how others have managed the CSR learning curve. Speakers will share their experiences on diffusing CSR and sustainability initiatives.

May 20th

4. Community Need and Local NGO's

This class will provide an overview of how issues affecting the local community are addressed by NGO's/charities and what gaps may exist in terms of implementing real solutions. We will also explore how individuals and organizations are positioned to achieve success in the CSR and sustainability field. Speakers will share different perspectives on how social and environmental issues are addressed by the non-profit sector and how organizations can improve their ability to affect change.

May 27th

5. CSR and the Workplace and Community Efforts

Companies are moving beyond a one-dimensional philanthropic model and are seeing the benefits of an engaged workforce as part of their CSR strategy. We will explore how both workplace practices and community involvement and investment efforts are applied and draw from the experience of our speakers to showcase successful examples.

June 3rd

6. CSR and the Environment and Governance/Reporting

The 'green' movement is considered to be one of the largest business opportunities since the dot-com revolution and can also be one of the main reasons why companies are reporting on their environmental activities. We will examine the best practices of environmental sustainability efforts and consider how companies are responding through their governance structures and reporting mechanisms. Speakers will share their own experiences in these areas of work, highlighting recent trends and opportunities.

June 17th

7. Conscious Consumerism

Consumption is both an opportunity and a threat to the sustainability movement. We will discuss consumer behaviour that is related to CSR and sustainability products and services. A review of campaigns and other initiatives (i.e., online directories, labels and accreditations) will be conducted, as well as an examination of trends and findings from research on conscious consumerism. Speakers will share their applied experiences and how consumers respond to various campaigns.

June 24th



8. The Future of CSR and Sustainability, and Group Presentations

The course culminates with this final class where we attempt to forecast the future of CSR/S and how ethical leadership will change the business world. Group presentations will highlight a number of interesting issues that have emerged during the course, and the course will conclude with a group discussion of what the next 5-10 years will look like for companies large and small, how non-profit organizations will fit in and what each student will take away from the course.

GROUP PROJECT

Students are encouraged to learn from each other and share knowledge and experiences. This class will have a diverse student base, so the group project should be a very enlightening experience. Groups will consist of 3 to 4 students, and groups can choose any of the following topics to prepare a 10 minute presentation and a write-up (no more than 10 pages long). Write-ups and presentations will be archived for public access after the course is completed.

1. **CSR/Sustainability Innovations** - Explain how one innovation in CSR/Sustainability has changed the way business is being done today. Innovations can include any of the ideas learned from this course. Support your reasoning with real-world evidence and examples that indicate core business practices have been significantly influenced by this innovation. Consider conducting interviews with local industry experts or looking up trade publications and/or research papers that support your claim.
2. **Local Champions** - With the emergence of many new businesses making the claim that they are 'green' or socially-responsible, it is hard to tell which ones will succeed and which ones will not. Identify one local company that you believe will be successful in the long-run and present your reasons why, in light of increasing competition and consumer demand for greater social responsibility at affordable prices.
3. **I Have a Dream** – There is so much opportunity to develop new business formats and strategies that take advantage of this emerging demand for social responsibility and sustainability, along with the emergence of new technologies, ideas and regulations. If you developed a new business to compete in the real-world, what would it be and how would you position it to stay competitive in the long-run?

AFTER THE COURSE

As this course is considered an introduction to corporate social responsibility and sustainability in business, these are some objectives you can look for in future courses to advance your knowledge and capacity in this field:

1. To recognize political, regulatory, technological and competitive dimensions of business activity as it relates to social responsibility.
2. To be able to develop a management perspective in order to formulate, analyze, and defend decisions in ethical and sustainable terms.
 - 3. To be able to apply several different frameworks of sustainability and moral reasoning to complex business issues and build plans to integrate sustainability in an organization.