



University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Gies College of Business
WU Vienna University of Economics and Business

Managing for Tomorrow: Solving the Sustainability Puzzle
Vienna, May 14 – 24, 2024

Quick Facts

"Managing for Tomorrow: Solving the Sustainability Puzzle" is a short term study program which is jointly organized by the **University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, the Gies College of Business, and the WU Vienna University of Economics and Business.**

On the basis of insights into current and future challenges affecting businesses around the globe (including climate change, social exclusion, urbanization, technological revolution and geopolitical dynamics, etc.), students will analyze implications for business strategy, management and leadership. They will develop a sense of dealing with trade-offs in global business and learn to understand drivers for innovation and a sustainable transformation.

The program will take place at WU Vienna from **May 14-24, 2024** for **bachelor students** from Gies College of Business, from WU Vienna and from selected international partner universities of the organizing institutions. The program is designed to be highly interactive and a priority is placed on group discussion and international teamwork.

Credits

Credits: 6 ECTS credits

Participants will receive a certificate upon successful completion of the program.

Dates

Application Deadline: December 10, 2023

Program Dates: May 14 to May 24, 2024

Recommended Arrival Date in Vienna: Monday, May 13 or Tuesday, May 14 morning

Recommended Departure Date: Saturday, May 25, 2024

Mandatory Online Pre-Departure Sessions: January 15 & May 2, 2024

Application Requirements

Application requirements are **current enrollment in a bachelor's program**, preferably in Business Administration, **excellent English language skills**, and **high motivation and interest** in academic work on the topic of sustainability.

Application Process

To apply please send the following documents by e-mail to alexandra.rosa.pfefferle@wu.ac.at:

- **Transcript of records**
- **Motivation letter**, explaining your motivation and interest in the sustainability program.

Additional Information

Participation in the academic program does not involve any fees.

Travel to Vienna, accommodation as well as daily subsistence (meals etc.) has to be arranged individually by each participant.

Social Activities: all participants are invited to a welcome dinner and a farewell dinner, hosted by the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Gies College of Business.

Program Details

For detailed program information please see the course outline and the program schedule on the following pages.

Contact Information

alexandra.pfefferle@wu.ac.at

Draft Syllabus: Managing for Tomorrow: Solving the Sustainability Puzzle

WU Course Number: 5909 / Credits: 3 (6 ECTS)

Spring Semester 2024

Instructors: Alice Schmidt, Claudia Winkler
E-mail: claudia.winkler@good.de

Class Day/Time: varies – please see schedule below
Classroom: varies – see WU Learn.

About the Course:

Managing for tomorrow requires future-proof solutions that are based on system-thinking. Businesses play a central role in determining whether our civilization – and by extension businesses themselves - will survive, or not. In the face of climate change, biodiversity loss and global social injustice, sustainability is not a secondary consideration but central to long-term business success. By harming the planet we harm our opportunities for business growth and success, as well as our health, happiness and wellbeing.

On the basis of insights into current and future challenges affecting businesses around the globe (including climate change, social exclusion, urbanization, technological revolution and geopolitical dynamics, etc.), students will analyze implications for business strategy, management and leadership. They will develop a sense of dealing with trade-offs in global business and learn to understand drivers for innovation and a sustainable transformation.

Learning Outcomes:

Students will learn to:

- Assess, structure and analyze complex global sustainability challenges and trade-offs in both the social and environmental domain that affect businesses in an interconnected world, including in emerging markets of low- and middle-income countries;
- Understand key challenges and opportunities in regard to climate action, a circular economy, social innovation, responsible consumption and technology, as well as core business functions, including stakeholder engagement, strategy development and supply chain management;
- Evaluate and apply key sustainability concepts to different industries and value chains, and evaluate how different companies are tackling sustainability challenges, including through partnerships with NGOs, governments, consumers and other stakeholders;
- Develop and train more broadly applicable skills, such as critical thinking; identification of research methods to address specific questions; gathering and filtering information; organising teamwork efficiently and effectively; structuring material in a coherent line of arguments; defending arguments orally and in writing; presenting in a focused and compelling way; and developing creative ideas to get the message across.

Teaching Methods:

A variety of didactic elements will be utilised to facilitate the successful completion of learning outcomes. This includes, but may not be limited, to the following:

- Lectures on theoretical concepts and practical examples
- Interactive discussions
- Student group work and presentations
- Case study analysis (individually and in groups)
- Simulation game (En-ROADS)
- Audio-visual input analysis
- Other (e.g. recall exercises, stakeholder walk, learning diaries, mobile quiz, carbon footprint calculation, mini design sprint, elevator pitch, etc.)

While the format has a focus on participation and discussion, there is ample guidance and input by the lecturers in order to maximize learning outcomes for students.

Assessment:

Your progress in the class will be assessed across the following categories:

- Pre-course assignment: 25%
- Class participation and individual work packages: 35%
- Oral presentation of group project: 30%
- Written summary of group project: 10%
- Learning diary: 0%

Pre-course assignment (25%)

A written assignment will have to be submitted by end April 2024 to both lecturers via Canvas. It consists of two parts:

PART A: Read the book “The Sustainability Puzzle” and answer the following questions:

1. What are the three main insights you got from reading the book?
2. What surprised you? Did your perspective on one (or several) of the businesses mentioned in the book change? If so, how? If not, why not?
3. Why does sustainable transformation require systems thinking?
4. What else would you like to share or ask about sustainability?

PART A is expected to be **2-3 pages** long. Your answers will be marked on clarity and consistency of argument, suitability of the answer to the question, breadth and depth of analysis, clarity in terms of structure and format and in how you balance comprehensiveness with a focused and concise approach to answering the questions.

PART B: Select five papers from the core reading list and summarise them in one paragraph each; in a second paragraph add your key learnings from the paper in question, incl. any finding that surprised you.

Participation (35%)

Full attendance and active participation in class are necessary and expected components of your learning experience. You are allowed to miss class only in exceptional circumstances (e.g. in the case of illness). As attendance is mandatory, it does not count towards the participation grade. The latter is dependent on attentive listening, active engagement in class discussion, recall of relevant literature and topics discussed in class and additional, voluntary assignments (e.g. “elevator pitch”), that may be requested.

Oral Presentation (30%)

At the beginning of the course, students will be divided into diverse (in regard to gender and origin) working groups of approximately five individuals each. Each group will choose one company and investigate its strategy and approaches to sustainability, with a focus on the six puzzle pieces (climate action, circular economy, social justice, responsible consumption, sustainable business and technology). These case study companies may include companies that will be visited. Through coordination with the lecturers, each group will choose a different company. During the final session, groups will present their case study analysis and moderate a discussion in class. At the end, a winning presentation will be chosen by students and receive a small prize.

Written summary (10%)

Each group will summarize its case study analysis and findings in a short paper of about two pages.

Learning Diary (0%)

While this will not be part of the assessment, in order to complete the course and thus get a grade, students are required to keep a **learning diary** and email it to the lecturers on the day following the last day of the course. Key learnings should be summarized in bullet points with full sentences (0.5 – 1 pages max).

All files submitted electronically to Canvas must include the full name of the student and, where applicable, the number or name of the group.

Grading Scale:

The following grading scale will be used to determine your final course grade:

Grade	Points	Description
1/A	90 +	Exceptional, outstanding and excellent performance. Normally achieved by a minority of students who are highly engaged in the subject matter. These grades apply to a student who is self-initiating, exceeds expectations and has an insightful grasp of the subject matter.
2/B	80-89	Very good, good and solid performance. These grades indicate good engagement with and a good grasp of the subject matter or excellent grasp in one or more areas balanced with a satisfactory grasp in other areas.
3/C	70-79	Satisfactory. These grades indicate a satisfactory level of engagement, performance and knowledge of the subject matter.
4/D	60-69	Marginal Performance. A student receiving this grade demonstrated a superficial grasp of the subject matter.
5/Failed	59 and below	Unsatisfactory performance

Participation grade criteria:

The following criteria are used to determine your participation grade:

- 1** always well-prepared; always attentive and volunteers often; always makes the most of each activity; shows creativity and imagination; responds to and engages with classmates; remains critical; demonstrates good insight into core readings.
- 2** usually well-prepared; is attentive and regularly volunteers; makes the most of activities; completes exercises with imagination and resourcefulness.
- 3** prepared and attentive, but rarely volunteers and appears to lack concentration or effort; responds and completes exercises with basic imagination.
- 4** minimal active contributions in class; appears unprepared; when called upon by the teacher, makes some contribution but responds with minimum imagination or insight; does not engage beyond the minimum requirements for an assignment.
- 5** makes no contribution to class and often does not appear attentive; lacks concentration and effort in class; hardly ever tries to

engage in class activity; but when called upon response shows no imagination or insight.

Writing task grade criteria:

1 The structure of the work is clear, logical and consistent; the arguments are clearly outlined; topic, goal or question of the text are clearly presented, justified and contextualized; the argumentation is conclusive, original and easy to understand design guidelines are followed; citation is consistent and corresponds to the citation rules; no major grammatical or spelling mistakes.

2 The structure of the work is reasonably clear, logical and consistently maintained; the arguments are clearly stated; the topic, goal and question of the text are clearly presented, justified and contextualized; there are some redundancies; the argumentation is conclusive and comprehensible; design guidelines are followed; citation is consistent and corresponds to citation rules; hardly any grammatical and spelling mistakes.

3 The structure of the work is mainly clear and understandable; the argument is clearly recognizable; there are redundancies and some argumentation gaps; design guidelines are largely complied with; the citation is inconsistent, sometimes incomplete; some grammatical and spelling mistakes that do not aggravate the general understanding, the topic, goal or question of the text are sufficiently justified and contextualised; the argumentation is mostly conclusive and understandable.

4 The essential parts of the task are available and completed; a consistent argumentation is recognizable; design guidelines are not adhered to in some parts; citation is incomplete and inconsistent; a larger number of Grammar or spelling mistakes make understanding difficult; the topic, goal or question of the text are only partially justified and contextualised; the argument is often not conclusive and understandable.

5 Essential parts of the work are missing or inconclusive; an argument is missing or is not explained in a comprehensible manner; the topic, goal or question of the text is not sufficiently justified and contextualized; the argument is in essential parts incomprehensible; design guidelines are not complied with; there is little or no citation; a larger number of Grammar and spelling mistakes make understanding difficult.

Work Ethics & Academic Integrity:

In order to facilitate lively discussions during class and respect for everyone’s time and commitment, note-taking by hand is recommended and use of laptops and mobile phones will be limited to group and individual work assignments as instructed by the lecturers.

Schedule

The course includes both online and offline sessions, as well as a number of excursions which, too, contain presentations or other typically in-class elements. Please note that the daily syllabus may be subject to change. Pay attention to in-class as well as e-mail announcements.

Date	Mode	Contents
2.5.	Online	Business & society in a global context 1. Introduction to and overview of the course 2. Zooming out: global sustainability challenges and opportunities 3. Key facts and figures 4. Concepts and definitions, incl. SDGs , ESG, etc.

		Link: TBD
15.5. AM	Live	Climate action: joining the race towards 1.5 degrees C <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Climate and system dynamics: En-Roads world climate simulation 2. Greenwashing 3. Ørsted and Microsoft case studies 4. Systems thinking for sustainable development
15.5. PM	Live	Excursion: Social Innovation <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction to social innovation 2. Visit to Caritas innovation hub 3. Visit Magda's Social Business Hotel
16.5 PM	Live	Sustainable business and responsible consumption <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The business case for sustainability 2. Regulation and certification 3. Sustainable consumption 4. The power of civil action
16.5 PM	Live	Excursion: Sustainable business in action <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Visit to Blün and Seestadt Aspern 2. Climate action, circularity and urban planning for sustainability
17.5. AM	Live	Playing fair in global value chains <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sustainability issues in global value chains across industries 2. Circular economy, sharing economy & business as a service 3. Ethical trading and supply chain management 4. Ferrero, Rio Tinto, Unilever/Project Shakti case studies
22.5. AM	Live	Solving the puzzle through technology <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Technology & sustainability overview 2. Ethical technology (AI bias, etc.) 3. Mini design sprint climate tech
22.5 PM	Online	Project clinic <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Test & refine your presentations with the lecturers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
23.5 PM	Live	Key Findings: Fast Forward into a sustainable transformation <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reflection on key learnings 2. Systems change: the missing piece 3. A look into the future
24.5 PM	Live	Solving the sustainability puzzle: group presentations <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Project presentation

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Discussion moderated by groups 3. Voting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
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Required Materials:

The following reading materials will be provided and students are required to have read them before the first session.

- Bloomberg Brief (2015). The Sharing Economy. June 15, 2015. Available [online](#).
- Davis, N.(2021),‘Yeah,we’re spooked’: AI starting to have a big real world impact. Interview with Prof. Stuart Russell. Available [online](#).
- Elkington, J. (2018). 25 Years Ago I Coined the Phrase “Triple Bottom Line.” Here’s Why It’s Time to Rethink It. [online](#).
- Greenpeace (2016). Timeout for fast fashion. Greenpeace Germany (Hamburg). Available [online](#).
- Jeffery, N. (2009). Stakeholder Engagement: A Road Map to Meaningful Engagement. Doughty Centre, Cranfield School of Management. Available [online](#).
- Jones, N. (2018). The Information Factories. Nature, Vol 561. Available [online](#).
- Mbe, V.S. (2021). A Conversation with Kate Raworth on Doughnut Economics and Redesigning our Economy. Available [online](#).
- Neath, G. and Sharma, V. (2008). The Shakti Revolution – How the world’s largest home-to-home operation is changing lives and stimulating economic activity in rural India. Development Outreach, June 2008. World Bank Institute. Available [online](#).
- Prahalad, D. (2019). The new fortune at the bottom of the pyramid. Available [online](#).
- Quelch, John A., and Margaret L. Rodriguez. Rana Plaza: Workplace Safety In Bangladesh (A) and (B). Harvard Business School Teaching Note 514-062, January 2014.
- Rio Tinto QIT Madagascar Minerals (2012). Sustainable Development Report 2012. Available [online](#).
- Schmidt, A. and Winkler, C. (2021). The Sustainability Puzzle: How Systems Thinking, Circularity, Climate Action and Social Transformation can Improve Health, Wealth and Wellbeing for All. <http://www.sustainability-puzzle.org>
- Science-Based Targets Case Study: Ørsted. Available [online](#).
- Thaller, A., Fleiß, E., Brudermann, T. (2020). No glory without sacrifice—drivers of climate (in) action in the general population. Available [online](#).
- Specter, Michael (2015). Extreme City – The severe inequality of the Angolan oil boom. The New Yorker, June 2015. Available [online](#).
- World Business Council for Sustainable Development (2016). Delivering on the Sustainable Development Goals: The inclusive business approach. WBCSD. Available [online](#).

Draft: Managing for Tomorrow: Solving the Sustainability Puzzle

May 14 – May 25, 2024 in Vienna

	MORNING	LUNCH	AFTERNOON	EVENING
Monday, January 15	17-18h (Vienna time): Mandatory online welcome session <u>for Engage students</u>			
Thursday, March 14	18h-19h (Vienna time): Mandatory welcome session <u>for WU students on WU campus</u>			
Wednesday, April 17	09-10.30h (Vienna time: 17-18.30h) iVP Online welcome pre-departure session <u>for Illinois students only</u>			
Thursday, May 2	08-11h (Vienna time: 15-18h) Online Session: “Business & Society in a global context” <u>for ALL</u>			

Readings & Online team work

Tuesday, May 14	8.20am OS 66 Arrival Vienna & Hotel Check-In for Illinois students 12h Orientation and Welcome meeting at WU for ALL	13h Working lunch (WU Cafeteria)	14.30h WU Campus tour 16h Inner city tour 17.30h Group photo at <u>Erzherzog-Carl-Denkmal, Heldenplatz</u>	18h Welcome dinner at <u>Melker Stiftskeller</u>
Wednesday, May 15	9-12h Sustainable business & responsible consumption	12h Working lunch (WU Cafeteria)	Social innovation: Excursion Social Businesses <u>Caritas, Vollpension, Magdas Hotel</u>	
Thursday, May 16	9-12h Climate Change: join the race to 1.5 degrees C	12h Working lunch (WU Cafeteria)	14h Carbon-friendly & circular food production: Excursion to <u>Blün</u> (“blue & green”) and <u>Seestadt Aspern</u>	
Friday, May 17	9-12h Playing fair in global value chains	12h Working lunch (WU Cafeteria)	15-17h Palace Tour: <u>Schloß Belvedere</u>	
Saturday, May 18	Day trip to <u>Smart City Graz</u> (Departure: 7.30am, Return: ~9pm) Visit the local start-up <u>So-strom</u> , enjoy a Styrian lunch, explore the historic city center on a walking tour, learn about local sustainable initiatives, and slide down the Schlossberg!			
Sunday, May 19	<u>Rax Alpe Hike</u> (Departure: 7.30 am, Return: ~6pm) -- Lunch at Mountain restaurant: CASH ONLY!			

Monday, May 20	National Holiday! 9-12h Homework: Readings and assignments		Individual Project Work in Teams	
Tuesday, May 21	9-12h Thinkubator Workshop “Circular Economy Applied”	12h Working lunch (<u>WU Cafeteria</u>)	15-18h Sustainable Packaging: Excursion <u>Mondi Group (liVP)</u>	
Wednesday, May 22	9-12h Solving the sustainability puzzle through technology?	12h Working lunch (<u>WU Cafeteria</u>)	Afternoon: “Project clinic”	
Thursday, May 23	9-12h Key Findings: Fast Forward into a sustainable transformation	12h Working lunch (<u>WU Cafeteria</u>)	Individual presentation preparation	
Friday, May 24	9-12h Project presentations & discussion	12h Group photo + lunch (<u>WU Cafeteria</u>)	14.30h Vineyard Hike on <u>Kahlenberg</u>	18h Farewell Dinner at <u>Heurigen Mayer am Pfarrplatz</u>
Saturday, May 25	Hotel Check-Out: 7am Bus departure (Flight to Chicago ORD: 10.30am OS065) Illinois students			