Objective
The objective of the introduction, beyond providing a basic introduction to sustainable development concepts, is to recognize the challenges of sustainable development; the opportunities and limits of the private sector in meeting these challenges; and prepare students for the application of these concepts in functional business topics.

The introduction is organized around two questions:

What is sustainable development,” where does it come from, and why has it moved from a marginal to central position in today’s world?

What are the roles and techniques used by the private sector (firms) and public sector (governments, international organizations, NGOs, etc.) to further sustainable development efforts in the developed and developing worlds?

Course Outline
The first session introduces the concept of sustainability, the events that have brought about this concept of development and the role of the market. This session introduces the major stakeholders and institutions that drive change toward SD. Students are introduced to current SD jobs to reinforce the notion that SD is a broad concept that must be applied in context to understand the “business case” for sustainability. Students participate in a job fair featuring current positions in SD companies.

The second session focuses on firms’ strategies to implement SD, acknowledging that an individual firm has no power to change macroeconomic conditions (e.g. firms are price takers). Students are introduced to environmental and social standard setting bodies, certification and firm-level tools used to implement SD strategies. Students present case studies of SD firms.

The third session addresses the changing boundaries of stakeholders who, in turn, influence SD policies at the “macro” level. This session points out markets’ important but limited role in SD. To compensate, governments might intervene to correct market failures and place value on certain assets not valued in the marketplace. But governments, too, can seem to move too slowly or not as effectively as some would want. Thus the role of NGOs, through single issue advocacy and/or direct service provision, is discussed. Transparency is also introduced as an important SD driver. Students view a film of a public-private water projects.
Course Materials
The class materials are available in the ESCEM office. For guidance to additional sources, please notice the links to various materials referenced in this syllabus.

Required Readings
The following readings are in your handout and found on the web. They should be read outside of class. They are referred to in class and are on the exam.


Grading
There is a written test during part of the third session. The questions draw from the class lecture slides, required readings and in-class exercises.

Class Sessions

Session 1: Sustainable Development: Concepts and Stakeholders

Learning objectives for Session 1: You should be able to answer the following questions:

What are the basic concepts underlying sustainability?

What are the landmark events that have contributed to today’s notion of sustainability?

Will sustainable development affect your likely career path?

Additional information:
For definitions and criteria http://www.sustainability.com/developing-value/definitions.asp

Read pages 1-13 in Panayotou’s “Globalization and Environment.” On line at http://www.cid.harvard.edu/cidwp/053.htm

Session 2: Sustainable Development and a Business Strategy Perspective

Learning objectives for Session 2: You should be able to answer the following questions:

Why do firms, governments and NGOs adopt sustainable strategies?

What tools do firms use to implement their SD strategies?

How do stakeholders evaluate a firm’s commitment to sustainable strategies?

Additional information:


Note: In-class information on business strategies (e.g. tools and cases) is based on materials from Business and Sustainable Development: A Global Guide, found at: http://wwwbsdglobal.com/tools/bt_dfe.asp; and “The Sustainable Development Journey,” found at: http://wwwbsdglobal.com/sd_journey.asp

Session 3: Stakeholder Boundaries and Sustainable Development

Learning objectives for Session 3: You should be able to answer the following questions:

How do stakeholders cause policies – and boundaries -- to change?

How does transparency change institutions’ behavior?

What techniques are available to further public private partnerships that advance SD goals?

Additional information:

References


International Institute for Sustainable Development. Various articles. Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. At http://www.iisd.org/about/


For full report see,  http://www.wbcsd.org/newscenter/media.htm


Where are the Poor: Experiences with the Development and Use of Poverty Mapping, http://pubs.wri.org/pubs_pdf.cfm?PubID=3758