

**City University of Hong Kong  
Course Syllabus**

**offered by Department of Public Policy  
with effect from Semester A 2017/2018**

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**Part I Course Overview**

**Course Title:** Sustainability and Business

**Course Code:** POL6503

**Course Duration:** One semester

**Credit Units:** 3

**Level:** P6

**Medium of Instruction:** English

**Medium of Assessment:** English

**Prerequisites:**  
*(Course Code and Title)* Nil

**Precursors:**  
*(Course Code and Title)* Nil

**Equivalent Courses:**  
*(Course Code and Title)* Nil

**Exclusive Courses:**  
*(Course Code and Title)* Nil

## Part II Course Details

### 1. Abstract

The course aims at offering knowledge in the regulatory framework as well as technological and social factors in relation to the environmental sustainability of business operations. Students will also be trained of the practical skills in adopting sustainability as core element in designing the management system and strategies of the business corporation and to enhance competitive advantage of the corporation.

Three broad areas will be covered in the course: 1) environmentally responsible firms and greening governance and production; 2) motivating factors for individual firms in green governance and production; and 3) shifting regulatory frameworks and the influence of the public and non-governmental sector in shaping the business environmental.

The course will adopt a problem-based learning (PBL) approach and students will be asked to undertake a sector environmental performance analysis which will be reported as a term paper. The study will be student-centred and be conducted in small groups.

### 2. Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

(CILOs state what the student is expected to be able to do at the end of the course according to a given standard of performance.)

No.	CILOs	Weighting (if applicable)	Discovery-enriched curriculum related learning outcomes (please tick where appropriate)		
			A1	A2	A3
1.	Explain the basic concepts and analytical tools of corporate environmental strategy and management system	20%	√	√	
2.	Attribute the drivers of business greening at the levels of individual firms, particular industries, and the economy as a whole	20%	√	√	
3.	Interpret the shifting roles of government, market and non-governmental organizations in business environmental management	20%	√	√	
4.	Judge the strategies of environmentally responsible firms, in the areas of greening processes, products, marketing and governance	20%	√	√	
5.	Locate the environmental challenges facing a Hong Kong-based company and construct innovative solutions to the environmental challenges	20%	√	√	√
		100%			

**A1: Attitude**

*Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.*

**A2: Ability**

*Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to self-life problems.*

**A3: Accomplishments**

*Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.*

### 3. Teaching and Learning Activities (TLAs)

(TLAs designed to facilitate students' achievement of the CILOs.)

TLA	Brief Description	CILO No.					Hours/week (if applicable)
		1	2	3	4	5	
	Lectures on concepts, theories and analytical tools of corporate environmental management and strategies	x	x	x	x		3 hours per week
	A environmental performance report	x	x	x			Group report
	Oral presentations on the sector environmental performance analysis reports	x	x	x			Team presentation
	Term papers	x	x	x		x	Team project
	Oral presentations about the term projects	x	x	x		x	Team presentation

### 4. Assessment Tasks/Activities (ATs)

(ATs are designed to assess how well the students achieve the CILOs.)

Assessment Tasks/Activities	CILO No.					Weighting	Remarks
	1	2	3	4	5		
Continuous Assessment: 100%							
Individual case write-ups about the two selected cases (1000-1200 words)	x	x	x			2x10 = 20%	Every student submit 2 case write-ups
Group analysis report on the environmental performance of a core business sector (2000-2500 words)	x	x	x			20%	due by the middle of the semester
An individual interview of an environmental professional	x	x	x	x		10%	4-6 page individual interview report
An oral presentation about the term paper	x	x	x	x		10%	15-minute oral presentation
A 3000- 3500 words term paper on assessing the corporate strategy/approach on environmental challenge/problem	x	x	x	x		40%	Due by the beginning of the examination period.
						100%	

## 5. Assessment Rubrics

(Grading of student achievements is based on student performance in assessment tasks/activities with the following rubrics.)

Assessment Task	Criterion	Excellent (A+, A, A-)	Good (B+, B, B-)	Fair (C+, C, C-)	Marginal (D)	Failure (F)
1. Individual case write-ups		Strong evidence of original thinking; good organization, capacity to analyse and synthesize; superior grasp of cases; evidence of extensive knowledge base.	Evidence of grasp of subject, some evidence of critical capacity and analytic ability; reasonable understanding of cases; evidence of familiarity with class material.	Student has the basic; understanding of the cases; ability to develop solutions to simple problems related to the cases without limited analysis and synthesis.	Sufficient familiarity with the cases to enable the student to offer some simple descriptions of the cases without much analysis and synthesis.	Little evidence of familiarity with the cases; weakness in critical and analytic skills; limited, or irrelevant use of case material.
2. Group analysis report on the environmental performance of a core business sector (2000-2500 words)		Demonstrating comprehensive, in-depth understanding and excellent analysis of the environmental performance of a selected industrial sector of Hong Kong	Demonstrating good to very good understanding and analysis of the environmental performance of a selected industrial sector of Hong Kong	Demonstrating basic but not advanced understanding and analysis of the environmental performance of a selected industrial sector of Hong Kong	Demonstrating partial but very inadequate understanding and analysis of the environmental performance of a selected industrial sector of Hong Kong	Failure to demonstrate understanding and analysis of the environmental performance of a selected industrial sector of Hong Kong
3. An individual interview of an environmental professional		Well-selected interviewee; excellent preparation of interview questions; skilful proceeding of the interview; succinct write-up and reflection of interview findings.	Good selection of the interviewee; good preparation of interview questions; skilful proceeding of the interview; succinct write-up and reflection of interview findings.	Average selection of the interviewee; adequate preparation of interview questions; acceptable proceeding of the interview; and some write-up and reflection of interview findings.	Inadequate selection of the interviewee; insufficient preparation of interview questions; unsmooth proceeding of the interview; poor write-up and little reflection.	Improper selection of interviewee; no preparation of interview questions in advance; failed completion of the interview; and poor writing and no reflection
4. Group oral presentation of term project		Excellent preparation for the term project topic; succinct presentation of key research questions, methods, and data and facts; persuasive assessment findings and policy	Good preparation for the term project topic; clear presentation of key research questions, methods, and data and facts; sound assessment findings and policy recommendations; and good interaction and	Adequate preparation for the term project topic; average presentation of key research questions, methods, and data and facts; acceptable assessment findings and policy	Inadequate preparation for the term project topic; meagre presentation of key research questions, methods, and data and facts; insufficient assessment findings and policy	No preparation for the term project topic; poor presentation of key research questions, methods, and data and facts; self-contradictory assessment findings and policy recommendations; and

		recommendations; and proactive interaction and mutual support among team members.	mutual support among team members.	recommendations; and modest interaction and mutual support among team members.	recommendations; and lacking mutual support among team members.	little or no participation.
5. Group paper of term projects		Demonstrating comprehensive, in-depth understanding of CEM concepts and excellent application of the CEM analytical tools to assess and the Environmental Management System (EMS) of a Hong Kong-based private or public company and to recommend on improving its environmental performance, with active participation in and contribution to the entire research processes of term projects.	Demonstrating good to very good understanding of CEM concepts and good application of the CEM analytical tools to assess and compare the EMS of a Hong Kong-based private or public company and to recommend on improving its environmental performance, at least with satisfactory participation in and contribution to major research processes of team projects.	Demonstrating basic but not advanced understanding of CEM concepts and basic application of CEM analytical tools to assess and compare the EMS of a Hong Kong-based private or public company and to recommend on improving its environmental performance, with at least occasional participation and useful contribution in the entire research processes of term projects.	Partial but very inadequate understanding of CEM concepts and inadequate application of the CEM analytical tools to assess and compare the EMS of a Hong Kong-based private or public company and to recommend on improving its environmental performance, with at least some limited group participation.	Failure to demonstrate understanding of CEM concepts and to apply the CEM analytical tools to assess and compare the EMS of a Hong Kong-based private or public company, with poor attendance and little constructive group participation.

### **Part III Other Information** (more details can be provided separately in the teaching plan)

#### **1. Keyword Syllabus**

*(An indication of the key topics of the course.)*

Environmental management; Environmental risk; Business opportunity; Competitive advantage; Environment regulation; Environmental management system; ISO 14001; Ecosystem services; Life cycle analysis; Life cycle management; Environmental product differentiation; Cost reduction; Industry self-regulation; Climate change; Greening the supply chain; Reverse supply chains; Extended Producer Responsibility; Partnerships and stakeholders; Base of the Pyramid; Environmental Cost Accounting; Market failure; Sustainability; Green economy, Environmental governance; Corporate social responsibility; Voluntary environmental program; and Business plan.

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#### **2. Reading List**

##### **2.1 Compulsory Readings**

*(Compulsory readings can include books, book chapters, or journal/magazine articles. There are also collections of e-books, e-journals available from the CityU Library.)*

1. Esty, D.C. and A. Winston. *Green to Gold: How Smart Companies Use Environmental Strategy to Innovate, Create Value, and Build Competitive Advantage*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009.
2. Reinhardt, F. *Down to Earth*. Cambridge: Harvard Business Press, 1999
3. Hoffman, A. *Competitive Environmental Strategy*. Washington DC: Island Press, 2000

##### **2.2 Additional Readings**

*(Additional references for students to learn to expand their knowledge about the subject.)*

1. Coase, R. 1960. The Problem of Social Cost, *Journal of Law and Economics*: 1-44.
2. Porter, M. E. 2008. The Five Competitive Forces that Shape Strategy. *Harvard Business Review*: 24-40.
3. Esty, D. C. and M. E. Porter. 1998. Industrial Ecology and Competitiveness: Strategic Implications for the firm. *Journal of Industrial Ecology*, 2(1): 35-44.
4. Porter, M. E. and Claas van der Linde. 1995. Green and Competitive: Ending the Stalemate, *Harvard Business Review*, 73(5): 120-134.
5. Reinhardt, F. 1999. Bringing the environment down to earth. *Harvard Business Review*, 77(4): 149 - 157.
6. Solow, R. 1992. *An Almost Practical Step Toward Sustainability*. Washington: Resources for the Future.