

Ph.D. Program Syllabus

Department	College of Management	Compulsory/Elective	Elective
Course title	Strategic Sustainability	Credit(s)	1
English Taught (EMI)	Yes		
Academic Year/Semester	115 Academic Year, 1st Semester / Fall 2026		
Instructor	Dr. Timothy B. Palmer	Time	Online: Dec. 29-31, 2026 (asynchronous; 1 hour each) In person: Jan. 10, 9:00-13:00; Jan. 16, 9:00-16:00; Jan. 17, 9:00-18:00
Instructor Contact	WhatsApp: +1 2695477825 Email: timothy.palmer@wmich.edu		
Pre-requisite courses	None required		
Learning Objectives	After completing the course, students will be able to: • Evaluate how environmental, social, and governance (ESG) challenges reshape the formulation and execution of business strategy in a rapidly changing global environment. • Apply established strategic management frameworks (e.g., industry analysis, resource-based view, stakeholder theory) to analyze complex sustainability-related business decisions. • Assess the strategic opportunities, risks, and trade-offs associated with contemporary sustainability issues—including climate change, circular economy, social equity, supply chain resilience, and sustainable finance—from the perspective of long-term value creation. • Develop evidence-based strategic recommendations that integrate financial performance with environmental and social outcomes, demonstrating how sustainability can serve as a source of competitive advantage and organizational resilience.		

Course Descriptions	This condensed doctoral seminar explores the intersection of strategic management and sustainability, examining how environmental, social, and financial challenges are reshaping competitive strategy and organizational success. Drawing on established strategic management frameworks, students will investigate how organizations create long-term value while responding to evolving stakeholder expectations, technological change, regulatory pressures, and global sustainability challenges. The course integrates concepts such as stakeholder theory, competitive advantage, the resource-based view, circular economy, climate strategy, sustainable finance, and corporate governance. Through interactive discussions, participants will critically evaluate strategic responses to complex sustainability issues and develop evidence-based recommendations that balance economic performance with environmental stewardship and social impact. Designed for doctoral students, the seminar emphasizes strategic thinking, critical analysis, and the application of theory to contemporary business practice in both developed and emerging economies.			
Course Attributes	Competition; Problem-solving; Practice-based			
Teaching materials	Self-made PPTs; self-made videos			
Teaching Resources	Downloadable files			
Textbooks/References	Optional open-access texts • Strategic Management (Kennedy) ◦ https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/textbooks/mastering-strategic-management • A Primer on Sustainable Business (LibreTexts) ◦ https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/textbooks/271 Required Case Creating a Climate Fit Life Through Carpet Tiles (Interface) https://www.rsm.nl/fileadmin/Corporate/About_RSM/Positive_Change/SDG_Cases/Interface_-_Creating_a_Climate_Fit_Life_through_Carpet_Tiles.pdf Required Article Harvard Business Review, "Getting Strategic About Sustainability" https://hbr.org/2025/01/getting-strategic-about-sustainability			
Assessment	Participation	30%	Final examination	70%
Other description	Course format: 3 hours of asynchronous online instruction and 15 hours of in-person instruction (18 total instructional hours). ● The January 10 session includes a one-hour lunch break. ● The final examination will be held during the final two hours on January 17, 2027, and will be open-notes.			

Course Schedule (Tentative)

Session	Date	Description	Remark
1	Dec. 29, 2026	Course Introduction; Contemporary Sustainability: Challenges and Opportunities	Asynchronous (1 hr)
2	Dec. 30, 2026	Understanding the External Environment: Sustainability's Environmental Pillar; Climate Change; Biodiversity	Asynchronous (1 hr)
3	Dec. 31, 2026	Understanding the External Environment: Sustainability's Social Pillar; Global Poverty; Human Rights in the Global Supply Chain	Asynchronous (1 hr)
4	Jan. 10, 2027	The Strategic Management Process; Mission, Vision and Governance for Sustainability; Sustainability Goal Setting; Performance Management and Triple Bottom Line	In person, 3 hrs (9:00-13:00; including breaks)
5	Jan. 16, 2027	Stakeholder Management for Sustainability; Corporate Social Responsibility; Materiality Assessment; ESG	In person, 6 hrs (9:00-16:00; including 1 hr lunch)
6	Jan. 17, 2027	Business Strategy for Sustainability; Double Materiality; Social Enterprises; Sustainability Reporting Mechanisms; Strategic Communication Practices	In person, 6 hrs (9:00-18:00; including 1 hr lunch); open-book final in last 2 hrs