

York University
Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies
School of Administrative Studies
Winter 2024
AP/ADMS 4537 3.00 Sustainable Investing

DATE and TIME: Thursday, 7:00 to 10:00 p.m.

LOCATION: ACW 009

COURSE DIRECTOR: Walter Viguiliouk walterv@yorku.ca

PREREQUISITES: AP/ADMS 3531

TEXTBOOKS

Readings will be assigned by the course director using online and other digital sources.

OPTIONAL READING:

Students will be expected to read the news on a regular basis in order to discuss current events as they pertain to sustainable investing.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is for students who are interested in pursuing careers in the investment profession, and specifically within the rapidly evolving area of sustainable and responsible investing. The course is based on new strategies and techniques that institutional investors are adopting with respect to integrating Environmental, Social and Governance (“ESG”) into their investment decision making. It goes further to discuss the fundamental principles and prevailing ESG frameworks that institutional investors are adopting to help them enhance their capital allocation decisions. The course requires students to think critically about how ESG factors and themes can be used to identify investment risks and opportunities that will help enhance expected returns.

Students will work on complex integrated company case studies.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. To understand the link between material sustainability information and a company’s financial performance

2. To understand the difference between Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) information and decision-useful material sustainability information for investors
3. To understand, interpret and apply Sustainable Accounting Standards Board (SASB) Standards and the Task Force on Climate Related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) framework in full.
4. To assess and analyze company ESG disclosures and performance
5. To know the differences between the various approaches to sustainable investing (ESG integration, Impact investing, Positive/Negative screening, Thematic ESG investing, Shareholder engagement, etc.)
6. To understand Climate Change related investment risks and opportunities
7. To know the fundamental drivers behind the growth and demand behind sustainable investing
8. To develop communication and presentation skills needed to express your position and opinions as a professional
9. Scrutinize corporate financial statements and other disclosures based on ESG disclosures and performance
10. To write an informed report on the ESG performance of a company and to present the finding orally in class

GRADING SCHEME

- Class Participation10%
- Midterm Exam25%
- Assignments25%
- Final Exam40%
- Total100%

ASSIGNMENTS/ CASE STUDIES

Students will work in groups to complete the assignment. Each group will select or be assigned a target company. The group will be required to prepare for a mock engagement with the company. More specific instructions will be provided in class. You will be given plenty of time to research your company, prepare your gap analysis, and develop your engagement plan. Groups will present their mock engagements in each class after the midterm. All engagements presented in class will be subject to the final examination.

EXAMINATIONS

The date of the final exam will be scheduled by the registrar's office.

The midterm exam will cover all the materials covered in the first 6 lectures.

CLASS PARTICIPATION

This is an interactive class. Class discussion and participation are very important. Each class will begin with a discussion of recent news events related to sustainability.

COURSE OUTLINE: Please note the order of the topics and the assignment dates may be changed during the term, depending on the progress made in class. All changes will be announced in class. Students need to follow the directions given at the end of each class and posted on the course website. Other case studies, readings and assignments may be given in addition to the ones indicated below.

4537 Course Outline

Lecture number	Main Topic	Contents	Readings and assignments
Lecture #1	Introduction to Sustainable Investing		
Lecture #2	Corporate Governance		
Lecture #3	Materiality & Sustainability Accounting Standards Board (SASB)		
Lecture #4	Climate Change & the Task Force on Climate Related Financial Disclosures (TCFD)		
Lecture #5	Active Ownership & Engagement		
Lecture #6	ESG Integration into Stock Selection and Portfolio Management		
Lecture #7	Midterm		
Lecture #8	Social Factors (TBD)		
Lecture #9	Environmental Factors (TBD)		
Lecture #10	Mock Engagements		

Lecture #11	Impact Investing & Social Development Goals (SDGs)		
Lecture #12	Course Review and Exam Prep		

Finance Area policy on DSA (Deferred Standing Agreement)

It is the policy of the Admin Studies finance area that instructors will NOT sign a DSA form if you miss both the midterm and final exams. Students in this situation will need to petition for deferred exam, late withdrawal, or a remedy appropriate to their circumstances. If the midterm is missed due to illness, appropriate documentation must be provided to the course director within two weeks of the missed work. Do NOT hand it into the office.

RELEVANT UNIVERSITY/LA&PS/SCHOOL REGULATIONS

The regulations on many aspects of coursework that apply to you are on:

<http://sas.laps.yorku.ca/students/>

You are responsible for understanding and following these regulations.