Columbia University School of Professional Studies
Master of Science in Sustainability Management

SUMA K5525 Consumerism & Sustainability
Fall 2016, Thursdays, 6:10-8:00 PM
3 Credits

Instructor: Celine Ruben-Salama, MBA &MPA Environmental Science Policy
csr2109@columbia.edu, 917-770-3040
Office Hours: By appointment and before/after class
Response Policy: Email is my preferred mode of communication. Students can expect a response within 24 hours, 7 days a week.

Course Overview
Today’s western consumption habits - inextricably linked to a globally aspirational lifestyle - are highly unsustainable. Growth in consumer goods markets, and indeed consumers, continues at a staggering pace. Limitations to this linear system are becoming increasingly apparent. Technology, globalization and sustainability concerns are shifting the way that companies think about their product offerings and their relationships with consumers. These same forces are redefining the role of corporations in society.

In the years to come, corporations, the engines of consumerism, will play a pivotal role in the shift towards a circular economy and sustainable consumption. Consumers have a part to play too. Market research reveals growing consumer demand for sustainable products. Yet, despite the growing availability, actual demand for many of these products is lackluster. Corporate sustainability management professionals are being called upon to help close the gap between consumer’s purchase intentions and their actual behavior vis-à-vis sustainable purchasing. To successfully drive change towards sustainable products, services and consumption patterns, it is critical for corporate sustainability management professionals to adopt a consumer-centric mindset in the development of sustainable products and services, as well as to align corporate sustainability programs with overall business goals and processes. This course is designed for those who will hold positions in corporations with responsibilities for mapping and managing environmental, social, and governance (ESG) issues relating to products and services, and for communicating and engaging with customers, civil society organizations, suppliers, and investors through marketing messaging and other corporate communications. It is assumed that students have limited experience in marketing strategy and implementation.

Through interactive lecture, case studies and examples, as well as, hands-on exercises, students will gain experience applying fundamental business frameworks and strategic marketing principles combined with a sustainability lens. This includes understanding the marketplace, understanding consumers, understanding the nature of and purpose of products and services, as well as, understanding communication strategies.

We will start by introducing a tool-set by which to analyze the marketplace. Students will apply SWOT analysis and the Porter’s Five Forces Model to conduct company and industry analysis, and gain facility distilling the nature of competitive advantage. Sustainability related trends and pressures will be considered in this context for various industries. Using the cognitive behavioral problem solving model, marketers predict purchasing behavior based on consumer needs. Over the course of the semester, students will become familiar with this model, and gain facility with segmenting consumers into homogeneous groups based on demographics, psychographics, and, benefits sought. Attitudes and behaviors around sustainable consumption will be explored, as well as, when, if, and how sustainability aspects should be communicated to consumers. Aspects of the marketing mix, such as, product features, pricing, distribution, and promotions have an effect on consumer demand for sustainable products and services. These levers will be explored in detail. Students will apply lifecycle analysis to assess product impacts and use their findings as a basis to redesign existing products to reduce or eliminate negative environmental impacts while offering the same or better value to consumers. We will discuss how to avoid making false marketing claims and “Greenwashing” and become familiar with best-practice tactics for establishing credibility with consumers around sustainability. Finally, we will cover strategies and tactics for reaching the intended target audience. Students will become familiar with a set effective communication strategies, and gain an understanding of how to best use them with different market segments. In addition, the fundamentals of planning and executing targeted marketing campaigns, including media planning, messaging and advertising will be covered.

Upon completion of this class, students will be able to apply the strategic marketing framework and LCA analysis to successfully launch commercially viable, sustainable products and services into the marketplace.

This course satisfies the M.S. in Sustainability Management requirements in General and Financial Management. This course is also approved for the Certificate in Sustainability Analytics requirement.

Learning Objectives
By the end of this course students will be able to:

- Assess a company’s internal strengths and weaknesses, sustainability strategy and performance and its position in the marketplace vis-à-vis competitors and identify profitable business opportunities related to achieving sustainability goals.
- Use Life-cycle Analysis (LCA) to identify and define the environmental impacts of any given product and distinguish sustainable products from conventional products.
- Define and assess alternative strategies to improve product sustainability while maintaining commercial viability using strategic marketing framework to perform product-level market analysis including: sizing, competitive analysis, segmentation, and targeting.
- Segment consumers based on needs, behavior and attitudes (product-related and sustainability).
- Use cognitive psychological model to predict consumer behavior in the marketplace.
- Craft effective communications and marketing strategies for sustainable products, services, and companies.
- Effectively engage consumers, suppliers and other stakeholders in behaviors that enhance sustainability and promote brand value and loyalty.

Readings

Required readings


* GoodGuide. Website. <Goodguide.com>. (or download the free app)


* Makower, Joel. "Earth Day and the Polling of America 2015." GreenBiz. 6 Apr. 2015. Web. (6 pages) (read a few previous year's too)


* Okala Ecodesign Strategy Wheel Okala. 2012. Print. (61 pages)


**Recommended readings**


*Cholette, S. Sustainable Supply Chain Basics. Leonard Transportation Center at CSU San Bernardino. Print. (17 pages)


**Resources**

*Columbia University Library*

Columbia’s extensive library system ranks in the top five academic libraries in the nation, with many of its services and resources available online: [http://library.columbia.edu/](http://library.columbia.edu/).

**SPS Academic Resources**

The Office of Student Life and Alumni Relations (SLAR) provides students with academic counseling and support services such as online tutoring and career coaching: [http://sps.columbia.edu/student-life-and-alumni-relations/academic-resources](http://sps.columbia.edu/student-life-and-alumni-relations/academic-resources).

**Software**

*Sustainable Minds LCA Software* (Subscription type: Student) – optional

**Newsletters**

In order to keep up with current events, please subscribe to at least two newsletters from the following sites:

- [http://3blmedia.com/](http://3blmedia.com/)
- [http://wwwcsrwire.com/](http://wwwcsrwire.com/)
Footprint Calculators
Use the following links to online calculators to complete your writing assignment for week 2.
- Ecological
- Carbon
- Water
- Slavery

Course Requirements (Assignments)
In total, there are 12 assignments for this class. During the course of the semester, students will complete a term project in groups, producing a term project report and delivering a presentation. The remaining ten assignments consist of weekly, writing assignments. The details of each of these assignments, follows.

10 Point-of-View Writing Assignments – 45% of final grade
For 10 classes, you will be asked to share your point-of-view, in 250 words or less, on specified writing assignments relating to the class topic and weekly readings. Writing assignments are designed to provide students with the opportunity to internalize each week’s class topic and, over the course of the semester, build a tool kit to achieve all of the course objectives. Each student’s work will be evaluated individually, by the TA and lecturer, on a weekly basis, according criteria outlined below in the section Evaluation/Grading.

Term Project: Product Redesign & Launch – 45% of final grade (Report 30%, Presentation 15%)
Over the course of the semester, in groups of five, you will create a proposal for the redesign of a product or service produced by a Fortune 1000 company that improves on the existing product’s ecological footprint, while maintaining mainstream appeal and commercial viability. The proposal will include your go-to-market plan. Deliverables for the term project include a 25-page report, as well as a 20 minute, group, oral presentation with presentation slides.

Term project shall demonstrate that students have achieved the learning goals for the course and shall cover the following:

Background research
- Product-level market analysis including: sizing, competitive analysis, segmentation, and targeting
- Corporate sustainability profile and sustainability context
- SWOT Analysis

Redesign concept
- Life-cycle Analysis (LCA) Analysis
- Ecological impact of redesign
- Commercial viability of redesign

Go-to-Market Plan
- Marketing strategy
- Articulation of target segments
- Distribution strategy
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- Key messages and marketing communications
For the report, student’s work will be evaluated, as a group, by the lecturer, according to the criteria outlined below in the section Evaluation/Grading. Student’s presentations will combine an individual and group grading components, according to the criteria outlined below in the section Evaluation/Grading.

*Participation – 10% of final grade*
Attendance alone does not count towards your participation grade. Active class participation is critical and will be tracked by the TA. You may also gain participation credit by making two comments per week on the discussion forum in addition to your weekly writing assignment.

**Evaluation/Grading**
Final course grades will be assigned by the lecturer. The grade break-down is as follows:

- Participation – 10% of final grade
- 10 Point-of-View Writing Assignments – 45% of final grade
- Term Project Report – 30%
- Term Project Presentation – 15%

The details for evaluation and grading of each of these assignments, follows.

*Participation – 10% of final grade*
Attendance alone does not count towards your participation grade. Active class participation is critical and will be tracked by the TA. You may also gain participation credit by making two comments per week on the discussion forum in addition to your weekly writing assignment.

*10 Point-of-View Writing Assignments – 45% of final grade*
Each Point-of-View writing assignment is worth 4.5% of final grade, in total, the 10 Point-of-View writing assignments account for 45% of your final grade.

The lecturer and TA will assign numeric grades from 0-100 based on the weighted average of the following evaluation criteria:

a) Point of view – did you answer the question and take a strong stance (45%)
b) Supporting evidence – did you use examples from your experience, readings, current events to prove your point (45%)
c) Writing style and grammar – is it easy for the reader to grasp your main point and is the writing error free (10%)

All postings should be submitted no later than two days before class meets, before Midnight. There will be no credit granted to any written assignment that is not submitted on the due date noted in the course syllabus without advance notice and permission from the instructor. Assignments submitted late with permission from the instructor will be marked down one letter grade.

**Term Project: Product Redesign & Launch – 45% of final grade (Report 30%, Presentation 10%)**
Over the course of the semester, in groups of five, you will create a proposal for the redesign of a product or service produced by a Fortune 1000 company that improves on the existing product’s ecological footprint, while maintaining mainstream appeal and commercial viability. The proposal will include your go-to-market plan. Group term project reports shall demonstrate that students have achieved the learning goals for the course. Deliverables for the term project include a 25-page report, as well as a 20 minute, group, oral presentation with presentation slides.

**Term Project Report – 30% of final grade**
In a 25-page report, worth 30% of your final grade, you will outline your group’s product redesign proposal, as well as the research and analysis behind it. The lecturer will assign numeric grades on the Term Project Report, from 0-100 based on the weighted average of the following evaluation criteria:

- Background research (25%)
  - Product-level market analysis including: sizing, competitive analysis, segmentation, and targeting
  - Corporate sustainability profile and sustainability context
  - SWOT Analysis
Redesign concept (50%)
  - Life-cycle Analysis (LCA) Analysis
  - Ecological impact of redesign
  - Commercial viability of redesign

Go-to-Market Plan (25%)
  - Marketing strategy
  - Articulation of target segments
  - Distribution strategy
  - Key messages and marketing communications

Oral Presentation and Slides – 15% of final grade
In a 20-minute presentation, worth 15% of your final grade, your group will present the highlights of your proposal. Student peers will assign numeric grades for Oral Presentations, from 0-100 based on the weighted average of the following evaluation criteria:
  - Group grade for presentation content (25%)
  - Group grade for presentation style and layout (25%)
  - Individual grade for presentation delivery style (50%)

The following clarifies how points awarded to individual assignments translate into letter grades for the course:
A+ is for extraordinary work, above & beyond; A = 93-100, A- = 90-92, B+=87-89, B= 84-86, B-=80-83, C+=77-79, C=74-76, C-=70-73, D=66-69, F= 65 or fewer.

Course Policies
  Participation and Attendance
This class will be co-created by students through their discoveries and contributions. You are expected to do all assigned readings, attend all class sessions, and engage with others in online discussions. Please arrive for class on time, attend all classes, and to stay until the end of class. If you need to miss a class or leave early for any reason, please discuss the absence with the instructor and/or TA in advance.

Attendance alone does not count towards your grade. Active participation in class discussions is critical, and will be tracked. You may also gain participation credit by making two comments per week on the discussion forum.

Your participation will require that you answer questions, defend your point of view, and challenge the point of view of others.

Late work
Assignments must be submitted on time, according to the due dates in the course syllabus. There will be no credit granted to any written assignment that is not submitted on the due date noted in the course syllabus without advance notice and permission from the instructor. Assignments submitted late with permission from the instructor will be marked down one letter grade.

Citation & Submission
All written assignments must use MLA citation format, cite sources, and be submitted to the course website (not via email).
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session/Date</th>
<th>Topics and Activities</th>
<th>Readings (due on this day)</th>
<th>Assignments (due on this date)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 9/8</td>
<td>Consumerism</td>
<td>Required:</td>
<td>*Personal bio due (X/X)</td>
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<td>Recommended:</td>
<td>*250-word posting about the global impacts of your lifestyle based on your ecological, carbon, water and slavery footprint (use calculators provided in ‘Resources’ section).</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 9/15</td>
<td>Why People Buy</td>
<td>Required:</td>
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### Sizing Up the Market

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<th>3 9/22</th>
<th><strong>Sizing Up the Market</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>*Company Analysis</td>
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<td>*Corporate Strategy</td>
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<td>*Product Portfolio</td>
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<td>*Competitive Advantage</td>
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<td>*Sustainability Profile</td>
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<td>*SWOT Analysis</td>
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<td>*Porter’s 5 Forces</td>
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<td>*Supply Chain</td>
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<td>*Category *Competitors</td>
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<td>*Macro-level trends</td>
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<td>*Market mapping</td>
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<td>*Positioning</td>
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#### Activities:
- *Lecture
- *Discussion

#### Required:


#### Recommended:
- * Cholette, S. *Sustainable Supply Chain Basics.* Leonard Transportation Center at CSU San Bernardino. Print. (17 pages)


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### Sustainability as a differentiator

**Activities:**
- *Lecture
- *Footprint discussion

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1. What are the impacts of your lifestyle? Any surprises? How do you compare to others?

2. Include suggestions for reducing your personal impact. Are they practical? How much control do you have over your impact?

3. Discuss pros and cons of the calculators and whether or not they are useful to consumers.

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**Term project Milestone: Form Term Project teams (X/X)**

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* A 250-word posting analyzing one of the following industries: Apparel, Automotive, Alcoholic Beverages or Household and Personal Products

1. Analyze the industry dynamics in terms of Porter’s 5 Forces.

2. Identify one key sustainability trend for the industry.

3. Explain how this trend will affect industry competitive dynamics in the long term.

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**Term project Milestone: Submit**
### Consumer Behavior

**Topics:**
- Cognitive behavioral problem solving model
- Predicting Behavior
- Customer Acquisition
- Loyalty and Lifetime Value
- Changing Behavior
- Changing Attitudes

**Activities:**
- Lecture
- Discussion

**Required:**


**Recommended:**


1. Do consumers behave rationally in relation to their beliefs about environmental sustainability?

2. Why is it more important to change people’s behaviors than to change their attitudes and beliefs?

3. Who is responsible for negative product impacts in the use phase – the consumers who use the products or companies that supply them?

**Term Project Milestone:** Submit company selection for term project. Include list of 3 suggested products for term project (X/X)

### Segmentation

**Topics:**
- Consumer’s Needs
- Benefits-based Segmentation
- LOHAS
- Luxury
- Masstige
- Bottom of the Pyramid

**Activities:**
- Lecture
- Discussion
- Segmentation Workshop

**Required:**


**Recommended:**

**250-word posting discussing whether or not sustainability is “mainstream.” Provide evidence from your own experience as well as from the readings to back up your assertions.**

**Term Project Milestone:** Submit company selection for term project. Include list of 3 suggested products for term project (X/X)
| | | *Michael Braungart, William McDonough. “Cradle to Cradle” - Chapter 2, and 3, p. 45-91 (46 pages) |
| | | *Dara O’Rourke and Abraham Ringer. “The Impact of Sustainability Information on Consumer Decision Making.” (9 pages) |
| | | *GoodGuide.com (or download the free app) |
| | | *250-words posting about using GoodGuide to review a product you currently use. |
| | | 1. Before using GoodGuide, explain what you like about the product and brand. What benefits do you derive from it? |
| | | 2. Look up your product on GoodGuide. What are some pros and cons from an ESG perspective. |
| | | 3. Did the results surprise you? Explain whether or not you will alter your purchasing habits based on the results of GoodGuide. (X/X)
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Required</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
1. Analyze the fabric softener industry dynamics in terms of Porter’s 5 Forces.  
2. Which of Lenor’s Strategic options would you choose?  
3. Explain why. (X/X) |  
1. Select a print or |
### Closing the Intention Gap

- Effective Communication Strategies
- Partnering with Consumers
- Fun Theory and Gamification Activities:
  - Lecture
  - Discussion


Recommended:

### Establishing Credibility

**Topics:**
- Greenwashing
- FTC Green Marketing Guidelines
- Certifications

**Activities:**
- Lecture

**Required:**


**250-word posting about the Body Shop case.**

1. How did the acquisition affect L’Oreal’s brand image?

2. How did the acquisition affect the
**Green Advertisements Discussion**


**Body Shop’s brand image?**

1. Why was the launch of the Maya product not a success?
2. Describe Maya’s intended target market. In what ways does it differ from Raja’s target market?
3. What would you have done this differently for the Maya launch?

**Recommended:**


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**Targeting**

**Topics:**
- Reaching your target audience
- Loyalty
- The Funnel
- Media planning

**Activities:**
- Lecture
- Case Study Discussion

**Required:**


**11/17**

**250-word posting about the PSI case**

1. Why was the launch of the Maya product not a success?
2. Describe Maya’s intended target market. In what ways does it differ from Raja’s target market?
3. What would you have done this differently for the Maya launch?

**Term Project Milestone: Finalize launch strategy**

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**Oral Presentations**

**Topics:**
- Product Redesign & Launch Proposals

**Activities:**

n/a

**12/1**

**All Term Project Presentation slides due on Canvas no later than midnight**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>250-word posting on a sustainable business opportunity you have identified based on two or more of the trends outlined in Tomorrow's Markets. 1. Briefly summarize the trends you selected to capitalize on. 2. Explain how your business idea aims to further the sustainable development agenda. 3. Why you believe this a viable (profitable) business idea.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13/8</td>
<td>Oral Presentations</td>
<td>*Product Redesign &amp; Launch Proposals</td>
<td>*Group Presentations *Q&amp;A</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 14/15 | Opportunities | *Assessing investment opportunities for profitability and positive impact | *VC Workshop *Course Wrap-Up | Required:  
Recommended:  
| Final date: 12/20 | Term Project Report due | | | *Term project report due via Canvas (before midnight, 12/20) |

**School Policies**

**Copyright Policy**

Please note -- Due to copyright restrictions, online access to this material is limited to instructors and students currently registered for this course. Please be advised that by clicking the link to the electronic materials in this course, you have read and accept the following:

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted materials. Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specified conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be "used for
any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research." If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excess of "fair use," that user may be liable for copyright infringement.

**Academic Integrity**

Columbia University expects its students to act with honesty and propriety at all times and to respect the rights of others. It is fundamental University policy that academic dishonesty in any guise or personal conduct of any sort that disrupts the life of the University or denigrates or endangers members of the University community is unacceptable and will be dealt with severely. It is essential to the academic integrity and vitality of this community that individuals do their own work and properly acknowledge the circumstances, ideas, sources, and assistance upon which that work is based. Academic honesty in class assignments and exams is expected of all students at all times.

SPS holds each member of its community responsible for understanding and abiding by the SPS Academic Integrity and Community Standards posted at [http://sps.columbia.edu/student-life-and-alumni-relations/academic-integrity-and-community-standards](http://sps.columbia.edu/student-life-and-alumni-relations/academic-integrity-and-community-standards). You are required to read these standards within the first few days of class. Ignorance of the School's policy concerning academic dishonesty shall not be a defense in any disciplinary proceedings.

**Accessibility**

Columbia is committed to providing equal access to qualified students with documented disabilities. A student’s disability status and reasonable accommodations are individually determined based upon disability documentation and related information gathered through the intake process. For more information regarding this service, please visit the University's Health Services website: [http://health.columbia.edu/services/ods/support](http://health.columbia.edu/services/ods/support).