



**The Lee Kong Chian School of Business**  
**Academic Year 2023/24**  
**Term 2**

## **MGMT242 CORPORATE SUSTAINABLE PRODUCT AND SYSTEM DESIGN**

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### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Companies increasingly seek to be more sustainable, but many firms struggle to operationalize the concepts within their organizations and supply chain, or to translate theoretical concepts into practical value for themselves and their customers. Sustainability practitioners must not only help develop (i.e., design) and sell a sustainable product or service, but an entire mind-set, and where necessary, to devise changes in business models and operations. The course will guide students, working in teams, through a development process involving market and strategic assessment, positioning of the product (including its sustainability attributes), customer-centric design, and business model innovation. This will in turn lead students to develop value propositions and marketing, which will be presented in a final pitch session to the client's representatives. The primary methodology will consist of design thinking techniques, which will be broadly used and adapted to the sustainability context. Phases of design include the understanding of candidate consumers' (users') needs by qualitative means, creation of basic product concepts and prototypes, and the testing and validation of prototypes with users. Implications will also be drawn for the client's business model. Note that the course may be more time-intensive than a content-based or normal SMU-X course, as it centers on a project with a methodology (design thinking), but also involves content on sustainability and business, and involves some use of analytical techniques such as secondary market research (e.g. assembling of data on consumer segment numbers). Note that the data and analysis may change depending on the client involved. As an example, a past class client was a multinational nutritional supplements company interested in servicing Asian markets with a sustainability value proposition. Future clients will be different firms.

### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

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

- Describe basic societal concepts and frameworks on sustainability and be able to guide a corporate's sustainability-based product and/or service design with these frameworks.
- Conduct a strategic and/or market assessment for a specific product, including the manner of orientation (towards sustainability) of selected consumer markets (including overseas ones). This may include conducting qualitative and secondary research on potential customers.
- Identify and solve a problem of how corporations can become more sustainable by innovating to meet consumer needs. Specifically, design a value proposition via design thinking for a selected customer segment, including the devising of a strategy to improve the product's acceptance by the firm's potential customers and its broader market.

### **PRE-REQUISITE/ CO-REQUISITE/ MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE COURSE(S)**

Please refer to the Course Catalogue on OASIS for the most updated list of pre-requisites / co-requisites for this particular course. Do note that if this course has a co-requisite, it means that the course has to be taken together with another course. Dropping one course during BOSS bidding would result in both courses being dropped at the same time.

## ASSESSMENT METHODS

Class Participation	20%
Group Project	45%
Peer Evaluation	5%
Individual Final Assignment	30%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>100%</b>

## INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND EXPECTATIONS

### Class Participation

Participation is a central part of the learning process in this class. Your participation mark reflects your contribution to your classmates' learning. This includes attendance, preparation prior to class including reading assigned materials and completion of mini assignments, and active participation in class discussions and group activities in class.

### Groupings and Group Size

You are encouraged to find your own group members, based on diversity requirements. Each group of 4-5 members should have a diverse mix of majors, gender and nationality (including exchange students). The group-member list should be submitted to the TA no later than the second week of class.

### Individual Assignment

There will be one individual assignment in the semester. The assignment will give students an opportunity to demonstrate their own research and critical thinking capability outside of their group. The assignment will be described in detail in class.

### Group Projects and Pitches

The objective of the project is to allow students to apply what they have learnt in class to a client's sustainability challenge. Students will be required to use design thinking framework understand the needs of stakeholders (including customers), ideate solutions to enhance acceptance of sustainable products/services and build prototypes to validate assumptions and gain early feedback. There will be at least 2 project presentations to the client during this course. Details will be provided during the project kick-off in week 2.

## CONSULTATIONS

As this is a project-based course with design thinking methodology involved, there will be at least 45-60 minutes allocated for group work during class after week 3. Groups are *strongly* encouraged to seek consultation from me during our normal class time. Individuals or groups who require consultation outside of class time may schedule separate times with me.

## RECOMMENDED TEXT AND READINGS

There is no assigned textbook for this course.

Students are expected to complete assigned readings from the lesson plan *prior* to the relevant class session, to facilitate fruitful class discussion.

## UNIVERSITY POLICIES

### Academic Integrity

All acts of academic dishonesty (including, but not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, facilitation of acts of academic dishonesty by others, unauthorized possession of exam questions, or tampering with the academic work of other students) are serious offences.

All work (whether oral or written) submitted for purposes of assessment must be the student's own work. Penalties for violation of the policy range from zero marks for the component assessment to expulsion, depending on the nature of the offense.

When in doubt, students should consult the instructors of the course. Details on the SMU Code of Academic Integrity may be accessed at <https://oasis.smu.edu.sg/Pages/DOS-WKLSWC/UCSC.aspx>.

### **Copyright Notice**

Please note that all course materials are meant for personal use only, namely, for the purposes of teaching, studying and research. You are strictly not permitted to make copies of or print additional copies or distribute such copies of the course materials or any parts thereof, for commercial gain or exchange.

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### **Accessibility**

SMU strives to make learning experiences accessible for all. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers due to disability, please let me know immediately. You are also welcome to contact the university's disability services team if you have questions or concerns about academic provisions: [included@smu.edu.sg](mailto:included@smu.edu.sg). Please be aware that the accessible tables in our seminar room should remain available for students who require them.

### **Digital Readiness for Teaching and Learning (DRTL)**

As part of emergency preparedness, instructors may conduct lessons online via the Zoom platform during the term, to prepare students for online learning. During an actual emergency, students will be notified to access the Zoom platform for their online lessons. The class schedule will mirror the current face-to-face class timetable unless otherwise stated.

**WEEKLY LESSON PLANS** (Subject to change, final version provided at beginning of semester)

Week	Title	Tentative Topics (actual topics to be allocated after client project is confirmed by instructors)
1	Overview of course; Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Definitions of sustainability, sustainability drivers and trends</li> <li>Sustainable Development Goals</li> <li>Introduction to design thinking and role of design in sustainability</li> </ul>
2	Client briefing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Why corporations invest in sustainability (brief introduction)</li> <li><u>Client introduction</u>: Goals, sustainability mission, product overview, problem for the class</li> </ul>
3	Sustainability and design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Frameworks for assessing sustainability</li> <li>Bringing sustainability into design</li> <li>Design thinking process and introduction to field research</li> <li>Case discussion: Reinventing Solar Energy Supply for Rural Africa</li> <li><a href="https://thisisdesignthinking.net/2016/05/reinventing-solar-energy-supply-for-rural-africa/">https://thisisdesignthinking.net/2016/05/reinventing-solar-energy-supply-for-rural-africa/</a></li> </ul>
4	Sustainability markets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design thinking (I). Empathy: User need-finding</li> <li>Introduction to sustainability markets</li> </ul>
5	Strategy, design and sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design thinking (II): Ideation</li> <li>Strategy design and sustainability</li> <li>Case discussion: Andradas Case</li> <li><a href="https://www.rsm.nl/fileadmin/CDC/SDG_12_Andradas_Case_formatted_final_corrected3.pdf">https://www.rsm.nl/fileadmin/CDC/SDG_12_Andradas_Case_formatted_final_corrected3.pdf</a></li> </ul>
6	Stakeholders and design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design thinking (III): Prototyping and validation</li> <li>Case discussion (TBC)</li> </ul>
7	Business models	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case discussion (TBC)</li> <li>Business models, design and sustainability</li> <li>Consultations with teaching team</li> </ul>
8	<b>Recess week</b>	
9	Interim Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project review with client</li> <li>Consultations with teaching team</li> </ul>
10	In-class project work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consultations with teaching team</li> </ul>
11	In-class project work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consultations with teaching team</li> </ul>
12	In-class project work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consultations with teaching team</li> </ul>
13	Final Presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presentation of pitch slide deck to clients and teaching team</li> <li>Report submission</li> </ul>
14	Study break	
15	No exam	