COURSE OUTLINE

ACCT 325 Corporate Sustainability Accounting and Reporting

Semester 2, 2017
Paper Description and Aims

This paper aims to provide a detailed overview of social and environmental accounting (Accounting for Sustainability). The paper focuses on corporate social responsibility and the reporting practices of corporations, environmental performance, business ethics, biodiversity and climate change accounting and recent trends in corporate sustainability reporting. ACCT325 has been designed to provide students with the knowledge they need to become corporate sustainability managers and consultants.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this paper, you should be able to

- Explain the meaning of social and environmental accounting and sustainability reporting,
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the international guidelines and regulations related to social and environmental reporting and accounting,
- Analyse corporate sustainability crises and critically evaluate the role of business and accounting in sustainable development,
- Communicate effectively (both orally and in writing) corporate sustainability reporting practices and disclosures,
- Comprehend the ethical, social and environmental implications of corporate actions
- Understand the issues related with social and environmental audits, and
- Comprehend the broad concept of business ethics.

Teaching Staff

Course Coordinator & Lecturer
Name: Dr Mansi
Office: Commerce building, Room 331
Email: mansi.mansi@otago.ac.nz
Office hours: Monday 11-12:30 pm
           Wednesday 11-12:30 pm

Teaching staff
Name: Linda Harold
Office: Commerce building, Room 335
Email: linda.harold@otago.ac.nz
Office hours: Tuesday 10-11am
             Thursday 9-11 am

You should contact the Course Coordinator (Dr Mansi) with any course and content related enquiries about the paper.

Class Representatives
Class representatives are an important means of communication between students and staff. Contact details for your student class representatives can be found on the Blackboard page for this
Your class representative’s name and contact details will be posted on Blackboard early in the semester.

**Course Delivery**

The Vice Chancellor and the University expects all students to attend all classes. Every week a student must attend the one-hour lecture and one two-hour seminar.

**Lecture Day/Time:** Monday: 1.00pm – 1.50 pm   Room: TBA

**Lectures** present the key conceptual material through discussion and interaction between teaching staff and students. Lectures are supported by readings. If you miss a lecture, you are advised to get the lecture notes from another student in the class.

**Seminars** begin in the second week of semester. There are 11 seminars throughout the semester (Weeks 2 -12). **Seminars** are interactive, collaborative sessions in which students attempt to cement concepts presented at lectures with their peers in a supportive environment. Each two-hour seminar creates a forum for live discussions on the contemporary sustainability issues related to the broad concept of social and environmental accounting. **Before coming to the seminars, you are required to read the weekly recommended readings.** To prepare for seminar, you need to download and read the weekly readings that have been assigned for the week (and make notes). Due to copyright issues, we are unable to download the articles for you, but they can be downloaded through the library databases. Please see the Central Library for help with this.

Seminars focus on discussion and activities around the key issues from the weekly readings and cases mentioned in the course calendar. Students will be invited to take a lead role in the seminar discussion, chairing the discussion, solving problems or making a presentation to start the seminar. In the seminars, questions related to the weekly topic will be discussed and you are required to reflect high-order thinking skills. Seminar questions will be based on identifying the real-world sustainability problems and issues, providing solutions, assessing a situation or discussing an argument. Students are expected to attend every seminar and read the suggested readings before coming to the seminars. Students are required to actively participate in the classroom, analyse an argument raised during the seminar, participate in group discussion and synthesise real-world corporate sustainability examples and theoretical knowledge. You cannot actively participate in any seminar discussion if you have not prepared for class.

**Seminar Day/Time**
Stream A1: Tuesday: 2.00-3.50 pm, Room : TBA
Stream A2: Wednesday: 1.00-2.50 pm, Room : TBA
Stream A3: Monday: 3.00-4.50 pm, Room : TBA
Stream A4: Wednesday: 4.00-5.50 pm, Room : TBA

Seminars offer you the opportunity to work in groups on a series of tasks designed to apply the concepts that you have been exposed to in class and from your reading, and to stimulate your interest.
in the course as it applies to contemporary sustainability accounting issues. The key feature of seminars, as opposed to lectures and individual study, is the participation of all members of the seminar group. **Prepare for seminars before going to them.**

Students unable to attend a seminar are expected to catch up on missed material from the classmates/groupmates or lecturer. All topics covered in the lectures and seminars are examinable.

**Course Calendar** The course calendar (in this outline) details scheduling information. Note that this calendar may change as the course proceeds. Any changes will be announced at lectures and be detailed on Blackboard.

*Students are expected to prepare for and attend all classes to gain the full benefit from the course.*

**Expectations and Workload**
For a typical 18-point paper at the University of Otago, you are expected to spend about 180 hours (approximately 12 hours per week) in lectures, seminars, private study, reading weekly readings, preparing assignments and other course related activities. It is expected that you will do eight hours of study outside the classroom per week.

**Course Learning Resources**

**Textbook information**: There is no text book required for this course. Students must read and make their own notes from the weekly recommended readings mentioned below. It is strongly suggested to read **ALL** the recommended weekly readings before coming to the lecture and seminar. For any reason, you are not doing the required weekly readings; it is more likely that you score poor marks in your internal assignments and final exam. All the resources are available at the library.

**Recommended readings**

**Week 1**

Week 2


Week 3


Week 4

Week 5

Week 6

Week 7

Week 8
Week 9

- Epstein, M., & Buhovac, A. (2014). A new day for sustainability: is your company ready to take on increased responsibility for its activities throughout the globe? Strategic Finance, 25.

Week 10


Week 11


Week 12


Supporting Books

The Oxford Handbook of Corporate Social Responsibility, edited by Andrew Crane, Abagail McWilliams, Dirk Matten, Jeremy Moon, Donald S. Siegel, OUP Oxford.
In addition to these resources, every week your lecturer will upload extra reading material (media reports and newspaper articles) on Blackboard. So, it is strongly recommended that you follow Blackboard announcements.

Blackboard

https://blackboard.otago.ac.nz/ provides you with access to course materials, class notices, and resources. Blackboard is used to email the whole class so it is important that you check your student email and Blackboard regularly.

Further information about student support, learning support and information, academic integrity and other University resources for students is available on the COMMERCE_UG_2017: Commerce Undergraduate Students site on Blackboard.

Student Webmail

We will use your student email account to email you information relevant to your programme. To forward your University email address to an email address that you use regularly:

1. Log into your StudentMail account (http://www.otago.ac.nz/smlanding/) using your student username and password.
2. Click the Cog button (top right corner).
3. Click on Mail under Your App Settings.
4. Under Accounts on left hand side, select Forwarding.
5. Under the Forwarding heading, type in the email address you want your email to be forwarded to. You can also choose to have a copy of these emails kept on your StudentMail account, so please check the box if you would like this.
6. Click the Save button.

Assessments

All material presented is examinable (except where stated otherwise) by assignments and the final examination. All-important assessment information, such as due dates and times, content, guidelines and so on, will be discussed at lectures and, where appropriate, detailed on Blackboard. Students are responsible for ensuring that they are aware of this information, keeping track of their own progress and catching up on any missed classes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Due date</th>
<th>% of final grade</th>
<th>Requirements to pass this paper</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Critical reflection (individual)</td>
<td>Week 9</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>You need to achieve a total of at least 50% in the internal assignments to sit in the final exam.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-going class participation</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group presentation</td>
<td>Week 4-8</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>Week 7</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>Will be announced later</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>You need to achieve at least 40% in the final exam and overall 50% to pass this course.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Course Requirements

Assignment 1: Critical reflection (individual)
This is an individual assignment. Students are required to provide a critical review of one highly cited research paper in the area of social and environmental accounting (list provided below). This is not a descriptive essay; rather you are required to reflect much higher skills of critical writing. It is strongly suggested that you read your selected paper at least three times before writing a critical review. Recommended readings will provide you the edge to ‘think outside the box’ and approach the sustainability accounting concept in innovative ways. You are required to include the recommended reading references in your Assignment one and to illustrate the ability to add your own perspective and draw conclusions.

This assignment is worth 10%.

You need to demonstrate the following things (but not limited to) in your written assignment:

- Discuss the key points/issues raised in the papers.
- Identify and evaluate the sustainability issues/sustainability crisis or problems highlighted in the papers.
- Identify the key positive and negative sides of the problem/s raised.
- Make clear arguments on the basis of considerable thought and provide your own suggestion/solution to the problem/s highlighted.
- You must include at least five (5) references in your assignment.

Kindly use the APA (American Psychological Association) referencing style in your assignment. Style guides are also available on the University Library website: http://www.otago.ac.nz/library/quicklinks/citation/index.html

The word limit for Assignment 1: 1500 words maximum and not less than 1450 words.

Due date: 11 September, 2017 (Monday – Week 9). A hard copy should be submitted by 5.00 pm.

Late assignments will not be accepted.

Choose any one article for your assignment one from the following list:

Assignment 2: On-going class participation

Those students who have sincerely contributed to the classroom discussion (both lectures and seminar) in a constructive manner, by making the classroom an invigorating learning environment, will be awarded a participation grade. Your lecturer will note students’ attendance, as well as their participation/contribution, and based on this will award the participation marks at the end of the semester. The lecturer will closely watch all students and their active participation in class. Interim feedback will be provided in various forms.

To gain the maximum benefit from classes, students are required to attend all classes. If you do not attend class, you cannot participate in the seminar discussion and class activities. Attendance will be checked in each seminar, and randomly in lectures. The key feature of the seminars is the active participation of all members of the class. There are obvious advantages to becoming an active participant in class discussions. Not only will you likely find class more enjoyable, but also we have observed a strong correlation between student participation grades and final course grades.

Class participation is more than just raising your hand! Please note that attendance is not sufficient for earning credit.

On-going class participation is worth 10%.

Assignment 3: Group presentation
This assignment consists of a group presentation (10%). Groups will be formed in week 2 during the seminar. Each group will be allocated one company (MNC) to critically analyse, compare and contrast its social and environmental accounting disclosures over a period of two different years. Group presentations will start from week 4 onwards. The presenting groups should regard themselves as sustainability consultants who are hired by the company concerned. Group presentation should last between 25 and 30 minutes. All members in the group have to present. A non-presenting group member will incur a zero mark.

Non-presenting groups have to ask at least one question (after listening to the presentation) to the presenting groups. Question/s should be related to the presentation. For this effort, a mark will be awarded at the discretion of the teaching staff to the questioning group.

All the assignments will be discussed in detail during the week 2 seminar.

Midterm
The midterm test is a closed book two-hour test held outside regular class time. A two-hour written terms test will be held in week 7 (time and date to be announced closer to the date). It will examine the course material from week 1 up to the end of week 7, inclusive. Midterm is worth 25%.
Final Exam

The final exam will be held during the official university examination time. We have no say in when this will be. If you have any problems with the time and/or date, you need to contact the Examinations Office in the Registry Building. Final exam is worth 45%.

The final exam will be two hours long, and you must achieve at least 40% (40/100) to pass the paper, regardless of internal marks. The exam will cover all topics covered throughout the semester. Students are responsible for ensuring that they are aware of this information, keeping track of their own progress, and catching up on any missed classes.

Learning Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Outcome</th>
<th>Critical</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Midterm</th>
<th>Exam</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Explain the meaning of social and environmental accounting and sustainability reporting</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the international guidelines and regulations related to social and environmental reporting and accounting</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyse corporate sustainability crises and provide a range of holistic social and environmental solutions</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Communicate effectively (both orally and in writing) corporate sustainability reporting practices and disclosures</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Comprehend the ethical, social and environmental implications of corporate actions</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Understand the issues related with social and environmental audits</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comprehend the broad concept of business ethics</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Course Calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lecture/Tutorial Number</th>
<th>Week Commencing</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Seminar exercises &amp; cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Monday 10 July</td>
<td>Accounting for sustainability: An introduction</td>
<td>No seminar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Monday 17 July</td>
<td>Corporate Social Responsibility and Accounting</td>
<td>Case: Apple manufacturer Foxconn factory suicides¹ Seminar exercises based on weekly topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Monday 24 July</td>
<td>Guest Lecture by Warren Allen, CEO External Reporting Board of New Zealand</td>
<td>Cradle to Cradle Approach Seminar exercises based on weekly topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Monday 31 July</td>
<td>International Sustainability Frameworks &amp; Guidelines</td>
<td>Case: Rana Plaza Factory fire in Bangladesh Seminar exercises based on weekly topic Assignment 2 : seminar group work/company presentation begins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Monday 7 August</td>
<td>Accountability and Sustainability theories</td>
<td>Case: BP Oil spill Seminar exercises based on weekly topic Assignment 2 : seminar group work/company presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Monday 14 August</td>
<td>Green washing and impression management: Measuring Sustainability</td>
<td>Case: Shell in Nigeria Seminar exercises based on weekly topic Assignment 2 : seminar group work/company presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Monday 21 August</td>
<td>Accounting for ecosystems</td>
<td>Biodiversity framework Dolphin's death in New Zealand Seminar exercises based on weekly topic Assignment 2 : seminar group work/company presentation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mid-semester break 28 Aug-1 Sep

¹ Students are required to do the online search and gather information on the weekly seminar case
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Additional Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Monday 4 September</td>
<td>Sustainability and Business Ethics</td>
<td>Case: Ethical issues inside Nestle</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Case: Business ethics and Hazardous waste</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Seminar exercises based on weekly topic</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Assignment 2 : seminar group work/company presentation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Monday 11 September</td>
<td>Corporate Social and Environmental Responsibility Reporting in developing countries</td>
<td>Tata group: case study</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Seminar exercises based on weekly topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Assignment 1 due this week</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Monday 18 September</td>
<td>Corporate Governance and CSR</td>
<td>Seminar exercises based on weekly topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Monday 25 September</td>
<td>Social and Environmental Auditing</td>
<td>Seminar exercises based on weekly topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Monday 2 October</td>
<td>Integrated Reporting</td>
<td>Seminar exercises based on weekly topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Monday 9 October</td>
<td>Future of sustainability accounting &amp; Conclusion</td>
<td>No seminar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Disclaimer

While every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this document is accurate, it is subject to change. Changes will be notified in class and via Blackboard. Students are encouraged to check Blackboard regularly. It is the student’s responsibility to be informed.