

Ecopreneurship
Marshall Goldsmith School of Management
Alliant International University

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Session I (first eight weeks) Classroom: A-3

The course – creating a green business

The sustainability revolution will create many opportunities for ecopreneurs who create new green businesses, services and products. Key areas for improvement: renewable energy, improving energy and water use efficiency, water harvesting, using natural materials, replacing goods with services, dematerialization, and biomimicry.

Ecopreneurship is easy to understand, but challenging. Ecopreneurs are individuals and teams who conceive new green business opportunities and who take on the risks required to convert these ideas into reality. They may do it to make money, to gain recognition, to enjoy the process or innovation, or to solve problems they realize are critically important.

Ecopreneurs have to look ‘outside the box’ and examine issues in fundamentally different ways from the conventional approaches. They will have to understanding the fundamental causes of problems, develop new solutions, incubate and champion these new ideas and foster their adoption, assemble the resources needed to bring them to commercial reality, and to launch and grow their green business ventures.

Ecopreneurs identify unsolved problems, or unmet needs and then meet them with innovative and sustainable solutions. These may be products or services, based on win-win solutions and improving the triple bottom line.

Textbook.

The Art of the Start. 2004. by Guy Kawasaki. Penguin Portfolio. ISBN 1-59184-056-2
Week 1: chapter 1, wk 2:ch 2, wk 3:ch 3, wk 4:ch 4, wk 5:ch 5-7, wk 6: ch 8-10, wk 7: ch 11.

See also: 2002 Greenleaf Publishing **Greener Management International** vol. 38, Summer 2002. GMI Theme Issue: Environmental Entrepreneurship.

The Course Week by Week

- 1) Introduction to Ecopreneurship, Critical global challenges and research sources, the triple bottom line (economics, environment, society)
- 2) Eco-efficient and eco-effective design, products and services, eco-industrial design and development. Ecological accounting systems – MFA, MIPS, etc.
- 3) Emerging Markets – needs, opportunities, incentives
- 4) Getting Started: strategy for a new green business, Positioning, Pitching, Writing a business plan
- 5) Bootstrapping, recruiting, raising money (and **midterm**)
- 6) Operating and Managing a startup
- 7) Branding and Marketing, Accounting, Finance, and Legal Issues
- 8) Green business for the 21st Century (and **presentations and final**)

Course goals for understanding

1. Demonstration of a global outlook and understanding of the meaning of sustainability.
2. Understanding of business startups and entrepreneurship.
3. Understanding of business resources in print and on the web
4. Skill in research and critical thinking to assess the quality of information and its importance.
5. Competency in interpersonal communication with oral, written, quantitative and computer skills
6. Understanding of the interdisciplinary nature of knowledge
7. Understanding of management issues in creating and operating a new enterprise.

Course objectives

1. Integrate each students unique experiences and background into this class.
2. Understand the importance of culture on other cultures, the economy, the environment, and historical and future development patterns. Relate environmental constraints to development patterns and sustainability
3. Develop increased respect and understanding for the role of business in solving environmental and cultural challenges.
4. Apply critical analysis skills to understanding and solving current world challenges.
5. Interpret and present important information for classmates.
6. Understand the inter-relatedness of all things and the importance of systems thinking to solve complex problems and develop sustainable solutions.
7. Learn to work well with teams in analyzing and presenting discussions and displays of important concepts and papers.
8. Provide a meaningful project at the end of the class to help prepare for the future.

Course assessment

1. Class understanding, in class writing and projects, presentation, essay questions and exam questions.
2. Class participation, research papers, exams.
3. Communication - analysis and presentation of a paper to class (seminar style), in class assignments.

Assignments	Percent of grade	Date
A. Memos and other in class assignments	20%	week by week
B. Project management plan	10%	week 3 Feb 8
C. Research	10%	week 5 Feb 22
D. Business plan	20%	week 7 Mar 8
E. Presentation	10%	week 8 Mar 15
F. Midterm	10%	week 5 Feb 22
G. Final	20%	week 8 Mar 13

A. In Class

Memos, plans, and short project statements will be written in class, based on the statement of a problem or opportunity. Thinking fast and working efficiently is essential. Training helps!

B. Project management document and plan 1-2 pages.

Many great projects fail because management fails. Developing project management skills will make you more employable and a better student. Your first task is to create a project management plan for this course (due week 2). There will be cash prize for the best plan. After they are reviewed between week 2 and 3, you will then use it and turned it in at the end of class. For business operations it can be helpful to learn and use Microsoft Project or a similar software tool.

A project includes: a set of activities with a specified final product. It will have non-routine tasks, distinct start finish dates, and resources constraints. Sounds like a university course doesn't it? There are many systems for managing projects well, yet few people learn to manage their time or projects well. It can help you stand out in a job interview and at work.

Developing a solid project management plan requires developing a clear understanding of the tasks involved, a breakdown of big tasks into little tasks or steps, estimates of the time each will take, dependencies between tasks, the sequence in which tasks have to be done, and the critical time points when things "have to be done". Milestones are important points for checking progress.

If the components of the project depend on each other then a Critical Path approach may be best. If tasks are relatively independent then a simpler approach will work, perhaps a Gantt chart or PERT (program evaluation and review technique) chart. Many other project management tools are available, some suitable for use with pen and paper and some only available as software programs. Methodologies also are customized by project type, some are specifically for IT development, others for complex manufacturing, and still others for business management. The most commonly software is probably still Microsoft Project. Several free project management tools are on the web, try them! Many have a 30 day free trial period. Look for "project management" GANTT timeline software tools free. The Project Management Institute has many other resources for sale and some on the web also.

The best one to use depends on who you are and how your mind functions, the nature of the project, and the importance of the project. Good project management can ensure that projects are done on time, it can save time and money, improve your quality of life (less stress), and improve quality of service and products.

For this class you need to prepare a management plan that lists the "project" components and critical dates for all class activities. Typically this includes a series of steps for each component, and what has to be done by a specified date for the project to be completed on time. As a result – simply stating Paper due Week 5 will not be sufficient – you should list the steps that lead to an "A" paper. Your management plan for this class may fit on one page. It should include all of the coursework. A completion date is included for each and a check box to tick off when it is done. If more than one person is responsible for parts (i.e. a team project) then make sure everyone agrees on when things will be started and completed.

Task C. Research assignment

(this becomes a modified GANTT chart as shown in class)

Task	Description	week 1	week 2	week 3	week 4	week 5	week 6	week 7	week 8
3.1.	select and pretest topic								
3.2.	check with professor								
3.3.1.	research library								
3.3.2.	research data bases								
3.3.3.	research internet								
3.4.	collate notes, check citations								
3.5.	outline paper								
3.6.	draft paper								
3.7.1	self edit								
3.7.2	have second student edit								
3.7.3	redraft paper and submit for preliminary grade								
3.7.4	correct paper incorporating instructor's comments								
3.8.	final corrected paper due								



Assignment C: Begin with Effective research

This is training for effective library and internet research. Conducting research effectively and managing information well is essential to starting a new business of any kind and critical for an innovative new green venture. Research helps you find out how, why, what, where, and when. You can assess the market potential, find out who the competitors are, and what many of the critical factors may be. You may even find a business plan and information on a likely competitor or someone who has done the same thing in another part of the country or the world. Use this research to set up your business plan and papers – take complete notes and accurate references for clear citations of sources and bookmark web sites.

Step 1: Choose a research topic. This might be any one of our key topics of this class as a possible **new** business opportunity or an existing green business and suggestions for improving it. Ideally it will be on a new area where an ecopreneur may find fame and fortune. If it is not clearly an ecopreneurial topic please ask me for approval.

Step 2: Develop a short list of key words for the search - include as first section of research report.

Choosing search terms and using Boolean logic (and/or/order) to limit results is essential, i.e. “green cleaning products”. Different browsers and data bases use different markers to set word order, adjacent words, etc. Always look up and use advanced or expert searching “help”. Quotation marks can be used “to include phrases” in most browsers. Using additional key words can limit search results to only the best resources.

Step 3: Start with the excellent resources of the AIU library (or use resources at UCSD).

<http://library.alliant.edu/library/libdatabaseon.htm> (you can also link up from off campus see library web page for details)

Begin with **OCLC First Search** which connects you to 37 databases! [sample search solar water heater = 397 hits] Start here with your search terms and then try data bases such as Business Source Premier [swh = 22], Academic Search Premier [swh = 111], Lexis-Nexis [swh = 125] and similar data bases with full text of many articles on line.

Keep track of your results! If you work at the library you can get help from the reference librarians. Note down on your research history describing where you went and what you found. List your search strategy and results. You must report results for **at least five data bases**. For this class the following three databases should be consulted on all papers and projects. Learn how to use them efficiently. **LEXIS-NEXIS** – full text of newspapers, articles. Very good coverage. **BUSINESS SOURCE PREMIER** and **ACADEMIC SEARCH PREMIER**.

MEDLINE (the National Medical Library is also a very useful tool for personal or family medical problems).

Step 4. Melvyl

You must include the results for a search for books with your research title words in Melvyl:

<http://melvyl.cdlib.org>.

This is the University of California libraries' data base of their books and periodicals (with several million entries). You can find items at UCSD easily. There are also many specialized databases at UCSD's libraries including many CD based data bases. Free weekend parking makes it well worth visiting - you can identify location of journals and magazines and books before you go.

Provide a list of the books on your topic that you find in Melvyl with shelf numbers and full citation detail.

Step 5. The California Digital Library - Searchlight

The University of California and cooperating libraries are moving more material to the web every day. Their cross data base and library search is called Searchlight. Try it. <http://www.cdlib.org>
This offers two broad search areas: Science and Engineering & Social Sciences and Humanities. Try a search with your key words.

List results of your search for your key words in Searchlight.

Step 6. Web Crawl. Use at least 2 search engines.

The worldwide web is a powerful research tool. Search engines or browsers such as Google, Yahoo, or ... These are indexed and assembled using different strategies and sometimes provide very different results. Use additional terms to limit results to just what you need. Always try **advanced searching**. Use linked words and descriptors to find just the items you want. Don't use corn plastic to look up natural plastics but try "corn plastic" sustainable

Internet sources are often supported by manufacturers or advocacy groups and information is not always complete or truthful. Give greater weight to neutral and **peer reviewed academic journals** such as Journal of Industrial Ecology, Greener Management International, Journal of Cleaner Production, books, and important newspapers (NY Times, LA Times). Many are now available on-line. Some data bases allow you to search only in refereed or academic journals. Try it!

List your search results. You must have at least two different search engines in your search profile. You must identify the search engine, provide the URL for the web search page, the search terms you use and the number of hits. List all the terms and quotation marks you added to reduce the number to a manageable number of sites to review.

Step 7. Sample Notes

These library and web resources will help you improve your understanding of your topic. Don't plagiarize them. Many students are not familiar with good note taking. This requires practice and I will give you feedback on your note taking. Transcribe the information you find into your own words. You must turn in a sample from your research notes--which should be computer printed, providing full reference data and shelf numbers or URLs as well as your notes.

You must turn in "your" notes from at least two of your key sources: one from the library, a scientific journal, or a book and one from the web. Include all relevant citation information. Notes should be in your words not copied from text or book directly.

Step 8. Two internet site reviews – make sure they are about ecopreneurship or sustainable business management! You might start with "sustainable management" as a filter term.

Web pages and the internet/worldwide web have become an important source of information presentation and research. Yet much of the information is poorly presented and often questionable. For this assignment review a number of sites that address questions covered in this class and find two good ones - then write a short review (1/2 to 1 page each). These may be shared with the class so be accurate in listing the URL. Include the search engine you used to find it. Consider such things as:

1. Screen Design and Layout

How does each page utilize the screen? Does the layout draw you in or does it look like it was just sort of dropped there? Are page/screen sizes consistent or do you have to keep resizing the window as you move through the site? Does your eye feel invited to "go with the flow" or is it assaulted? Can you print the screen? Does it fit on one page or is it so wide it drifts onto a second?

2. Information Design

Is the information broken up into digestible chunks? Is it broken up into segments that make sense logically? Is it "nested" logically? If there are long blocks of copy, are descriptive subheads used to help organize the info and give the reader a preview/overview? Can you jump text with buttons or links?

3. Text as a Graphic Element

Is it readable? Too small/too big/just right? Does the typography (font) - especially that used for titles and headlines -- fit the subject matter and audience? Is its use consistent?

4. Copy

Does the information make sense? Is there jargon? Are there misspelled words or other typos? Does it provide the information you were expecting? Does it actively engage you? Are you bored reading it?

5. Navigation Scheme

Is it easy to move throughout the site? Does the navigation make sense? Do you feel like you are lost or did you actually get lost? Are the links consistent? Do you have a sense of what the icons mean before clicking? Do you get booted out? Or worse yet, locked in so you can't go back?

6. Stylistic Unity

Does the site maintain a consistent style? Or appropriate changes in different sectors?

7. Graphics and music

Are graphics optimized or compressed properly? Do they look jaggy, shimmery, squished, have weird halos, edges that look odd, or anything else that makes them look unprofessional? Are the photos clear and crisp or out of focus with pixels showing. Is there music or video?

8. Colors

Do the color choices make the information easy to read? Do they create an atmosphere suitable to the subject? do they work well together?

9. Usability

Does everything work? Does it load quickly? Does it fit on your screen? Can you tell that something is not appearing or not performing as it is supposed to? Do you get error messages?

10. Links

Are there links to other related sites? Do they work? How is the quality of the links?

11. Overall: Information quality and authority

Does this site have credible, reliable and understandable information? Is it referenced? Is the research plausible and are sources of information identified? What possible bias might it have? Does it draw you in, keep you interested, and prevent you from getting lost and confused? Does it tell a story? Would you recommend it? How could it be improved?

12. Give it a grade (remember these are supposed to be web sites you think are good)

Further reading: Alexander, J.E. and M.A. Tate. 1999. Web Wisdom. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, New Jersey 156 p.

These are to be short – preferably no more than 1 page each. Use the internet review steps. List the full site address, how you found it (which browser), what you like or dislike about it. Is the index good, is it flat and tedious or does it draw you in? Are there good photos? Music? Does it have good links?

D. Your business plan

Every new green venture faces unique decisions in the areas of strategy, marketing, operations, human resources, finance, accounting, and business law. Based on the material that will be covered in class, each student must either come up with an idea for a new eco-venture that they would be interested in starting or work on an existing team project (solar in San Diego or green products for hotels). You will then perform an analysis for that new and present your findings and recommendations to the class. This can be done by teams if you wish. Your business plan will be graded based on the completeness, quality and presentation of the information. Be realistic, document claims, reference articles and reviews, be flexible, optimistic, highlight your unique characteristics. A short version might only include: 1,4,5,7,8,9. A startup often works best from a simple pitch (10 power points not a hundred in a completed business plan). A mantra instead of a mission statement will explain in just a few words what your company will be for its workers, and a tag line for its customers. Nike's mantra is "authentic athletic performance", tag line "just do it".

The pitch

1. Title slide
2. Problem
3. Solution
4. Business model
5. Underlying magic (mantra and tag line)
6. Marketing and sales
7. Competition
8. Management team
9. Financial projections
10. Current status, accomplishments, timeline and use of funds

A more formal business plan might include: (required for 6999 students)

If the pitch is successful and you start doing things well, you may be asked to develop a more complete business plan, by then you should better understand what you need to do, costs, risks and rewards. This may include a more exhaustive explanation of what you are all about. Often they include:

1. Introduction – cover letter, cover sheet, table of contents
2. Executive summary – two to four pages to convince someone to read the whole thing (**a key part**)
3. The business environment – where your company/product/service fits, trends for sector, opportunities, future
4. The business profile – what you will do, who you are and why it makes sense, organization, operation, legal base (patents, copyrights, etc.)
5. The market -- consumers/clients (who, how many), competitiveness with competing products or services, geographic area, ability to meet needs, retention and recruitment of more consumers/clients
6. Anticipated challenges and resource requirements – competitors, your edge, weakness to overcome, protection of ideas or design, staffing, training, depth of management
7. Marketing – selling the product or service, publicity, promotion, merchandizing, market research
8. Financial projections – past, profit and loss, balance sheet, cash flow (risk and reward)

E. Your presentation will be based on your initial business plan (10-14 slides) – you will pretend you are pitching it to a group of venture (vulture) capitalists – why should they fund your business?

Presenting ideas is critical in business and community life. Your talk will cover your green business proposal. Expect to talk for 12 minutes exactly. Prepare an outline of the key points and use graphic aids - overhead transparency, Powerpoint, chart or display. This is a good time to start using Powerpoint if you have not used it

before. Your time as presenter is valuable (so is the time of your audience) - make sure it counts. Make sure you get the handout on giving a good talk or look it up on the web.

Use visuals! We only remember about 10 percent of what we read, 20 percent of what we hear, 30 percent of what we see, but 50 percent of what we hear and see. Overheads, slides, videos, computer projections, or paper tablet or flip charts all work. Presenters using visuals are perceived as: more professional, credible, interesting and persuasive. Studies have found that meetings were (28%) shorter, and the side using visuals won 2/3 of debates (either pro or con). Consensus was reached in 79% of groups using visuals v/s only 58% of controls.

Powerpoints have become the norm in most situations. Keep it simple, streaming video and music may be appropriate for some uses. Overheads and flip charts also work in some cases. Backup graphics are still a good idea even when you plan to do a Powerpoint– 2 or 3 may save the day if the CD, projector, or computer crashes or won't interface properly.

A typical talk outline

- Introduction,
- Key points
- Conclusion
- Simplify graphs and tables
- Maps: picking the appropriate scale and presenting the needed information in a user friendly way.
- Limit text
- **Use large text**
- 6-7 lines per page is better
- Only 6 to 7 words per line

F. The **midterm** will include both knowledge based and critical thinking questions. (in class)

G. The **final** will focus on critical issues in ecopreneurship (take home)

Green Business Magazines

Adbusters - <http://www.adbusters.org>

Biocycle - <http://www.jgpress.com/biocycle.htm>

Business Ethics magazine - <http://www.business-ethics.com>

Business Strategies and the Environment - <http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/cgi-bin/jhome/5329>

Clean Technology and Environmental Policy - Springer Verlag, Heidelberg, German -

http://www.springeronline.com/sgw/cda/pageitems/document/cda_downloadaddocument/0,11996,0-0-45-130296-0,00.pdf

Conservation in Practice - <http://www.conbio.org/inpractice>

Corporate Environmental Strategy (UK) - <http://www.cesjournal.com/Pages/HomePage.htm>

Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management - <http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/cgi-bin/jhome/90513547>

CSR Wire - <http://www.csrwire.com>

E - <http://www.emagazine.com>

Earth Island Journal - <http://www.earthisland.org>

EcoCity Magazine - <http://www.ecocitymagazine.com/>

Ecological Economics - <http://www.elsevier.com/locate/ecocon>

Ecological Engineering -

http://www.elsevier.com/wps/find/journaldescription.cws_home/522751/description#description or try <http://www.agnr.umd.edu/users/Bioreng/bioeco.htm>

Ecological Restoration Journal - <http://www.wisc.edu/wisconsinpress/journals/journals/er.html>
Eco-Management and Auditing - <http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/cgi-bin/jhome/5354>
Environmental Building News - <http://www.buildinggreen.com/menus/ebn.cfm>
Environmental Design and Construction - <http://www.edcmag.com>
Environmental Law and Management - <http://www.lawtext.com/lawtextweb/default.jsp?PageID=2>
Environmental Protection - <http://www.eponline.com>
Environmental Quality Management (The International Journal for Corporate Sustainability) -
http://www.sd3.co.uk/downloads/CES_ArloBrady.pdf
Ethical Corporation magazine (UK) - <http://www.ethicalcorp.com>
Fresenius Environmental Bulletin - http://www.psp-parlar.de/feb_auswahl.asp
Green@Work magazine - <http://www.greenatworkmag.com>
Greenbiz.com - <http://makower.typepad.com>
Green Business Letter - <http://www.GreenBizLetter.com>
Greener Management International – <http://www.greenleaf-publishing.com/gmi/gmihome.htm>
GreenMoney Journal - <http://www.greenmoneyjournal.com>
Home Power <http://www.homepower.com>
In Business magazine - <http://www.inbusiness.org>
International Journal of Environmentally Conscious Design - <http://www.ijecdm.com/>
International Journal of Life Cycle Assessment - <http://www.environmental-expert.com/magazine/ecomed/lca/>
International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education - <http://gort.ucsd.edu/newjour/i/msg03273.html>
International Journal of Sustainable Development - <http://www.environmental-center.com/magazine/inderscience/ijsd/>
Journal of Cleaner Production - <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science>
Journal of Corporate Citizenship (UK) - <http://www.greenleaf-publishing.com>
Journal of Environment and Development - <http://irps.ucsd.edu/jed/>
Journal of Environmental Assessment Policy and Management <http://www.worldscinet.com/jeapm/jeapm.shtml>
Journal of Environmental Policy and Planning - <http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/1523908x.asp>
Journal of Industrial Ecology - <http://mitpress.mit.edu/JIE>
Journal of Material Cycles and Waste Management - <http://www.environmental-expert.com/magazine/springer/10163/>
Journal of Sustainable Product Design - <http://www.cfsd.org.uk/journal/archive/index.html>
LOHAS Journal - <http://www.lohasjournal.com>
Organization and Environment - <http://www.coba.usf.edu/jermier/journal.htm>
Perdido: leadership with conscience - <http://www.perdidomagazine.com>
Permaculture Magazine - <http://www.permaculture.co.uk/mag/home.html>
Refocus (The International Renewable Energy Magazine) - <http://www.re-focus.net>
Resource (Engineering and Technology for a Sustainable World) - <http://www.asae.org>
Restoration Ecology Journal <http://www.ser.org>
Solar Today - <http://www.solartoday.org>
Sustainable Industries Journal - <http://www.sijournal.com>
The Last Straw (The International Journal of Straw Bale and Natural Building) - <http://www.thelaststraw.org>
The Sustainability Report - <http://www.sustreport.org>
Tomorrow Magazine (Europe) - <http://www.tomorrow-web.com>