



SUSTAINABLE TRANSITION MANAGEMENT

GNAM SNOC 2025

KOZMINSKI UNIVERSITY

Teaching Faculty:

Prof. Franjo Mlinaric, mfranjo2003@kozminski.edu.pl

Przemysław Wasilewski, MA, pwasilewski@kozminski.edu.pl

Lecture Time: 20 hours (20 x 45 min.)

Location: Online

Dates Tuesdays (2025)

Sep 02, 09, 16, 23, 30.

Oct 07, 21.

20 seats will be allocated to students at member schools of the Global Network for Advanced Management (GNAM). GNAM member schools will determine the number of course credits earned. Kozminski University considers this course to be a 3 ECTS, full-semester course.

COURSE OVERVIEW:

This course offers an in-depth exploration of sustainability management, equipping students with the knowledge and skills to navigate the evolving landscape of corporate sustainability. Through a comprehensive curriculum, participants will gain insights into the regulatory frameworks, business strategies, and leadership roles essential for driving sustainable value creation. The course covers key areas such as the integration of ESG principles, sustainable business models, stakeholder engagement, and the use of metrics to evaluate and guide sustainable transition efforts. By examining real-world case studies and applying learned concepts to practical scenarios, students will be prepared to lead and influence corporate sustainability initiatives.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The aim of the course is to equip students with a comprehensive understanding of the diverse factors that influence business operations within the context of sustainability. Students will develop the skills to identify and analyze complex challenges related to sustainable transitions, formulate effective research questions, and propose innovative solutions. Additionally, the course will enable students to critically assess the implementation of sustainable strategies, including AI-based solutions, and enhance their ability to communicate and engage with various stakeholders. Ultimately, students will be prepared to design and lead corporate sustainable transition programs that contribute positively to both the company and society.

After this course, you will be able to:

- **Comprehend** the complex legal, ethical, social, environmental, economic, technological, and financial factors influencing business operations, with a particular focus on the company's impact on the economic, social, and natural environment.
- **Identify and diagnose** intricate problems, processes, and opportunities associated with the company's operations and its environment, especially in the context of sustainable transition challenges. You will also learn how to formulate research questions and develop alternative solutions for specific issues in sustainable transition.
- **Critically evaluate** the effectiveness and implications of implementing sustainable transition strategies, including the use of AI-based solutions.
- **Communicate effectively** with diverse stakeholders, prepare comprehensive reports, and present issues related to company management, particularly in corporate sustainability. You will also gain skills in leading discussions using specialized terminology.
- **Initiate and lead** public interest activities, especially in the design and implementation of corporate sustainable transition programs.

GRADING SCALE

Definition	Kozminski U. grading scale		
	Grade	%	ECTS grade
Excellent, outstanding performance with minor errors.	5.0	100 - 92	A
Very good, above average standard but with some errors.	4.5	91 - 84	B
Good: generally sound work with number of notable errors.	4.0	83 - 76	C
Satisfactory plus: fair, but with number significant shortcomings.	3.5	75 - 68	D
Sufficient: performance meets minimum criteria.	3.0	67 - 60	E
Fail: some more work required before credit can be awarded.	2.0	59 and below	F

COURSE CONTENT AND SCHEDULE

Session	Topic	Assignment	Reading
Week 1 Sep. 2 nd 12:00 CET 3h FM	Introduction to sustainability management – Is there a business model?	Every student team selects a publicly traded company and prepares a 5 minute presentation on how ESG issues (i.a. clients behavior, climate changes, risks and regulatory pressures) impacts the business model. <u>Teams present at the beginning of the first session.</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> McKinsey (2019), Five ways that ESG creates value TCFD (2022), Task force on Climate-related Financial disclosures – Overview WSE (2023). ESG Reporting Guidelines for issuers. WBCSD (2024), Building the business case for sustainability
Week 2 Sep 9 th 12:00 CET 3h FM	Business case for sustainable value creation - sustainable value creation map	Teams use business model canvas to demonstrate sustainable value creation potential of the chosen company. as well as current activities that may destroy value if not transformed (e.g. stranded assets).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> McKinsey (2022), Playing offense to create value in the net-zero transitions WBCSD (2024), Sustainability in the equity story Unilever real life case (2024), Climate transition action plan
Week 3 Sep 16 th 12:00 CET 3h PW	<p>Leadership and organizational culture: people as the key for change, the role of CSO</p> <p>Stakeholder engagement and communication strategy: customers, employees,</p>	Teams review key external and internal stakeholders of the chosen company and build hypotheses about their expectations, needs and worries regarding sustainable transition. The teams draft plans how to test these hypotheses via	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eccles, Taylor (2023), The Evolving Role of Chief Sustainability Officers, Harvard Business Review Winston, Polman, Seabright (2023), Middle Management Is the Key to Sustainability, Harvard Business Review Eccles (2024), Moving Beyond ESG, Harvard Business Review AA1000 Stakeholder Engagement Standard (2015)

	investors, communities	different engagement strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UN, Greenwashing – the deceptive tactics behind environmental claims
Week 4 Sep 23 rd 12:00 CET 3h PW	Planning sustainable transformation	Teams outline key areas of focus for a given company considering i.a. products and markets, business models utilized, assets and business portfolio, supply chain, financing possibilities etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Atasu, Dumas, Wassenhove (2021), The Circular Business Model, Harvard Business Review Young, Gerard (2021), Four Steps to Sustainable Business Model Innovation McKinsey, Decarbonize and create value: How incumbents can tackle the steep challenge
Week 5 Sep 30 th 12:00 CET 3h (co-teaching) FM, PW	Metrics and targets for sustainable value creation	Students propose upgrade of the existing company strategy, prioritize areas of focus, suggest governance changes and suggest new KPIs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whelan (2022), ESG Reports Aren't a Replacement for Real Sustainability Accenture (2023), Destination Net zero TCFD (2021), Guidance on Metrics, Targets, and Transition Plans WBCSD (2024), CEO Guide to the Climate-related CPAS Deloitte (2024), Global Human Capital Trends
Week 6 Oct. 7 th 12:00 CET 2h FM	Unpacking the sustainability narrative: The ABB Case	As a consulting team, analyze ABB's Sustainable Equity Story to extract insights that will inform your own final project strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ABB (2025), ABB – A technology leader in electrification and automation
Week 7 Oct. 21 st 12:00 CET 3h (co-teaching) FM, PW	Sustainable transition plan in practice	A sustainable transition plan is presented by every team and a PPT report (15 pages) needs to be delivered.	

COURSE VALIDATION:

Progress presentation (10%)

Consultant memo-individual (40%)

Final project (40% PPT report; 10% final report presentation)

Explanation:

- **Team Selection and Company Choice:** At the start of the course, each student team selects one publicly traded company to analyze throughout the semester.
- **Consultant Memo (individual).** It is a compilation of individual 1-pager concepts (in .doc file), which are focused on previous week assignment and readings. This 1-pager shall be prepared after a short discussion in the team but demonstrate individual professional opinion on the situation and possible solutions. Thus, its content is even expected to vary from one team member to the other. This assignment is preparing every team member to build her/his own fact-based perspective which needs to be later consolidated in the Work-in-Progress team presentation. These individual assignments bring 40% of the grade.
- **Work-in-Progress Presentations:** Each team will deliver one progress presentation based on the previous week's topic and assignment. Presentation dates will be shared in the first session. While the focus should be on the latest assignment, teams are encouraged to reference relevant insights from earlier work. The presentation should include 10-12 professionally designed slides, with clear structure, visual consistency, and high-quality formatting — showcasing the application of key concepts from readings and lectures to the selected company.
- **Assignment Submission:** Assignments are **due one week after the related session**. The work should be based on the discussed topic/reading and show its relevance to the company's case. Only first week meeting begins with a 5 min presentation of ESG issues of every team.
- **Final Project Presentation:** The final presentation should consolidate key insights and findings from all previous assignments, showcasing the team's overall analysis, diagnosis and recommendations. Teams should present their project as professional consultants, commissioned by the CEO to develop a credible and compelling sustainable transition business case for the company. The final submission should be **25-30 slides** (main presentation 15-17 content slides; appendices 8-15 slides).
- **Final Project Presentation Deadline:** The final PPT report must be submitted one week after the last session.
- **Final Presentation Guidelines:** The final presentation **will last 10 minutes**, with each team member responsible for presenting part of the content, **followed by a 10-minute Q&A session**. Detailed guidelines and expectations will be provided during the course and in written form.

Final project structure and assessment:

Title: Sustainable transition plan for company X

Project outline:

1. Business Model Impact of ESG Issues (5 points)
Objective: Evaluate how ESG factors (e.g., client behavior, climate change risks, regulatory pressures) impact the current business model of the selected company.
2. Sustainable Value Creation (5 points)
Objective: Demonstrate the company's sustainable value creation potential using a business model canvas and identify activities that may destroy value if not transformed.
3. Stakeholder Engagement and Communication Strategy (10 points)
Objective: Build a comprehensive engagement plan based on stakeholder expectations, needs, and worries regarding sustainable transition.
4. Sustainable Transformation Plan (10 points)
Objective: Outline key areas of focus for the sustainable transition of the company (e.g., product/market strategies, supply chain, business models).
5. Metrics, Targets, and Governance (10 points)
Objective: Propose governance improvements, upgrade KPIs, and suggest prioritized areas for sustainable value creation.

Final PPT report deadline: One week after the last session.

READINGS:

TPT Homepage: <https://transitiontaskforce.net/>

WBCSD. Sustainability in the equity story. <https://www.wbcsd.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/WBCSD-Sustainability-in-the-equity-story.pdf>

CDP. 2024. The State of Play – 2023 Climate Transition Plan Disclosure. <https://www.cdp.net/en/reports/downloads/7783>

WSE. 2023. ESG Reporting Guidelines. https://www.gpw.pl/pub/GPW/ESG/ESG_Reporting_Guidelines.pdf

Latest professional articles related to ESG topics.

Non-obligatory reading:

Schoenmaker, D., & Schramade, W. (2023). Corporate Finance for Long-Term Value. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-35009-2>

BIO OF THE FACULTY TEAM MEMBERS

Prof. NU Franjo Mlinarič, PhD

Franjo is an experienced faculty and consultant with international practice in the private and public sector, co-founder of a BI start-up and a private Institute iRDM, associate editor of Lex Localis and former head of a top FT ranked Master program in FA at Kozminski University. He is the founding member of Polish Sustainable Investment Forum (POLSIF), KU ESG Manager and director of the research center RES-Reimagine Sustainability. Moreover, he is heading three prestigious post-graduate programs: Sustainable finance and ESG, Professional supervisory boards, and AI in finance and controlling.

He loves to combine scientific rigor with consulting experience in international environment, and is passionate about promoting and implementing sustainable development ideas. He gathered most of his experience in the SW Balkan area being a leading economic advisor for various key national projects (motorways, telecommunications, airport infrastructure, incineration installations and automotive industry) and author of major economic impact studies.

He is a seasoned court expert in the field of valuation, restructuring, business damages and structured financial products. He also holds two state certificates: chartered financier and certified supervisory board member. His research focuses on sustainable value creation and ESG transition models as well as on economic impact of public investment. He co-authored many books and articles, which earned him an associate professorship at NU in Slovenia and assistant professor position at KU.

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Przemysław Wasilewski, MA

Przemysław is currently a Research Assistant at the Strategy Department at Kozminski University, focusing on sustainability strategies and ESG risk management.

He is also an experienced practitioner in strategy, corporate finance, and business transformation. He has held top-management positions and non-executive director roles in various large corporations (including Fortune 500) in the oil and gas, energy, and chemical industries. As both a researcher and executive manager, he tries to bridge the gap between management science and real-world business pragmatics.

He graduated from the Warsaw School of Economics and completed the Advanced Management Program at IESE Business School, as well as various executive education courses at top institutions, incl. Wharton, MIT, Duke and United Nations System Staff College.

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