MG3900 Sustainable Development: Learning through Social Entrepreneurship Partners

Course Dates: May 16th – 20th, 2022 One Week Intensive
Mandatory Pre-session: Friday, April 22, 2022 from 6:00 – 8:00pm
Class Format: 9am to 5pm, Synchronous via zoom
Instructor: Prof. Iris Berdrow  E-mail: iberdrow@bentley.edu

This course qualifies as a Global Experience, specifically as a Domestic Cultural Immersion Experience (DCIE). In addition, the course counts towards a service-learning certificate.

Course Description

Sustainable Development is defined in “Our Common Future”, a report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (1983), as “development which meets the needs of current generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” The subsequent growth of interest in, and practice of, sustainable development has embraced the understanding that it is not about how companies spend their profits, but rather how they generate their revenue. In particular, how their revenue generating activities impact people (employees and society), place (locale and the environment) and profits (organizational and stockholder financial benefits) – the triple bottom line. The notion of responsible leadership has risen as the guiding star for achieving sustainable development.

This course focuses on sustainable development practices in the context of entrepreneurial businesses, thus providing students the opportunity to understand how culture influences managerial practice in terms of positive impact on people, place and profits. The course will focus on how culturally conditioned values, attitudes, beliefs and norms of behavior influence the development of responsible leaders, and their ability to achieve sustainable development. Students will have the opportunity to learn about U.N. Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs) and how they can be achieved through grassroots efforts.

The course is project-based. Students will work with a social entrepreneur (project partners) in South Africa. Teams of up to 5 students each will meet virtually with project partners and their teams to complete specific projects based on the partner needs. Each team will present their project to the class and partners at the end of the course week. All project work and partner meetings will be supported and facilitated by the leadership team from Emzingo U. During the week, students will also participate in class lectures, exercises, and teamwork. The course work is entirely online through zoom. Students are expected to be present from 9 to 5, Monday through Friday (Friday’s class will end earlier). No evening sessions are expected.

A mandatory pre-session for all registered students will be held on Friday, April 22, 2022 from 6:00 – 8:00pm. Students who do not attend the pre-session will be removed from the course. If there are specific reasons why you cannot attend this session, you should contact the instructor.
Course Themes

1. Responsible Leadership: Students will learn the specific characteristics defining responsible leadership, and the challenges in achieving it.
2. Sustainable Development and the Triple Bottom Line: Students will learn the factors by which organizations achieve sustainable development. Particular focus will be placed on the triple bottom line, an audit of the organization’s achieved responsibility towards people, place and profits.
3. Stakeholder Analysis: Students will learn how to identify key stakeholders who make critical decisions and map out their differing objectives such that optimal decisions can be made.
4. Culture – mine, ours and theirs: Learning about cultures is different than experiencing the implications of cultural differences on the behaviors of self and others. An emphasis is placed on engaging in self-reflection while being immersed in another culture.

Academic Requirements:

Readings: While there is no textbook assigned, there will be readings and a prerecorded lecture to be completed before the first class.

Prework Assignment: Before the first class, students will complete a prework assignment including several readings. The assignment is due before the start of the first class of the intensive week.

Projects: Teams will work on assigned projects with their South African project partners. All project partners meetings and teamwork meetings will happen during class time. Team deliverables include a project report and presentation. Both will be due and delivered on the last day of class. Individual team members will complete peer evaluations.

Reflection Paper: Students will complete a 4-6 page reflection paper analyzing their experience against their pre-course self-assessment results. The reflection paper will be due one week after the end of class.

Student Evaluation:

1. Class Preparation, Participation & Citizenship 15%
2. Prework Assignment 20%
3. Team based Report and Presentation for Project Partners 40%
4. Reflection Paper 25%