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**SUSTAINABILITY ETHICS**  
**COURSE # SSM2020H**  
**COURSE OUTLINE**  
**Winter 2022**

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**Instructors:**            **Professors Len Brooks and Simon Appolloni**

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**Office Hours:**    **Prof. Len Brooks, by email appointment**  
                         **Prof. Simon Appolloni, by email appointment**

**Classroom:**        **Virtual in January**, thereafter **in-person at L1230** in the IMIx Complex, if Covid permits.

**Zoom link for Virtual delivery in January:** <https://utoronto.zoom.us/j/89794284529> Passcode: 288028

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### **Course Objectives**

Many students finish their Masters' degree, *but know little about* how business decisions are made, how they should be made, and how to have an optimal impact on corporation executives and their decisions. This course is designed to provide the background understanding of business and ethics to ensure that you can argue effectively and ensure that your master's level knowledge is able to make a significant favourable impact on your employer.

In this course, you will develop an understanding of: (1) the ethics of sustainability and innovation, (2) business governance and ethics, (3) how business views sustainability, (4) how to influence corporate strategy and decision making through business ethics, and (5) important current and future topics and issues in sustainability and innovation ethics. The focus of the course will be practical and will build upon a historical understanding of ethical developments to offer students a perspective on current practices as well as future prospects.

### **Learning Outcomes**

Upon completion of this course, course participants will be able to:

- Understand the linkage between sustainability, stakeholders, ethics, governance and success,
- Recognize ethical dilemmas related to sustainability,
- Appreciate the opportunities and risks inherent in sustainability problems,
- Make practical, defensible decisions about them,
- Influence corporate decision makers to take sustainability ethics into account effectively, and
- Apply ethical reasoning to sustainability dilemmas encountered in the future.

## Course Material

### Required textbook

*Business & Professional Ethics for Directors, Executives & Accountants*, L.J. Brooks & P. Dunn, Cengage Learning, Inc., Boston, MA, USA, 9e, 2021. Digital version available from VitalSource.

**Required Readings** for Prof. Appolloni’s section (outlined in the course schedule below), will be available through the Library Reading List found on Quercus.

## Instructional Approach

This course is taught primarily through the Socratic discussion of issues, and the use of readings, cases, and videos where appropriate. Class participation will be graded. Short exercises will also be used, and students will be required to demonstrate the application of business ethics to a sustainability issue or concern in an essay assignment. The course will end with an examination of all the topics covered.

## Grading – Components of Coursework and Weights

Learning in this course will be evaluated both on group as well as an individual basis as specified. In group coursework, group members will share the same grade adjusted by peer evaluation.

Written Analysis of Sustainability Issue	To be assigned (Individual) <i>Due dates: March 23 for options 1 and 3, March 30 (last class) for option 2</i>	20%
Application of Business Ethics Analysis	See below for details (Group) <i>Due: February 16, 2022</i>	20%
Class Participation	In-class Contribution (Individual)	20%
Examination		40%
<b>Total</b>		<b>100%</b>

### Written Analysis of a Sustainability Issue (Individual Assignment)

The purpose of this assignment is to help you explore and integrate an aspect of sustainability ethics in a way that is meaningful for you and your program. The main thrust is that whichever option you choose, you are able to explore one dimension of sustainability ethics in a way that is enlivening, fruitful, and impactful. **Choices must be discussed with Prof. Appolloni before the end of the 2nd week of classes.** See the **Individual Assignment Appendix** at the end of this course outline for further details.

### **Application of Business Ethics (Group Assignment)**

Working in groups of 3, students will choose a sustainability-related issue that presents an ethical dilemma for a corporation (see February 16<sup>th</sup> list for ideas). They will prepare a **report** that will include their ethical analysis of the issue, and how they would attempt to influence the strategy, decision making and actions of the company to recognize the problem and implement your analysis and recommendations. The issue chosen must be approved in advance by Prof. Brooks. The real name of the company involved cannot be used unless authorized by Prof. Brooks. Students will make a **brief PowerPoint presentation** to our class on Feb. 16 as if they were presenting to the corporation decision makers.

### **Class Participation**

Class participation requires you be present in the class each week, pre-read the cases, participate actively in lecture discussions as well as in class exercises. Class participation grades are based on quality of contribution in discussions during class sessions, class presentations and in-class exercises.

### **Academic Misconduct**

Students should note that copying, plagiarizing, or other forms of academic misconduct will not be tolerated. Any student caught engaging in such activities will be subject to academic discipline ranging from a mark of zero on the assignment, test or examination to dismissal from the university as outlined in the academic handbook. Any student abetting or otherwise assisting in such misconduct will also be subject to academic penalties.

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to Ouriginal.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Ouriginal.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism.

**Any modifications to the course will be announced and explained in class.**

### **Course Drop Deadline**

For information purposes, the School of Graduate Studies deadline to drop this course without academic penalty is February 20, 2021. Please note that MScSM Program students must have the written permission of the Program Director to drop a course. Please consult with the Program Registrar if you are considering dropping a course.

## SSM2020 – 2022 Course Schedule

WEEK	DATE	CONTENT
1	Wednesday January 12 Virtual	<p><b>Introduction – Len Brooks &amp; Simon Appolloni</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Wisdom is knowledge that matters – useful frameworks</li> <li>➤ Sustainability, business, business ethics, and risk management – an overview</li> <li>➤ Objectives – tools and how to use them to influence management</li> <li>➤ Ethics, sustainability ethics, innovation ethics and business ethics compared</li> <li>➤ Ethical dilemmas and how to deal with them – ethical reasoning</li> <li>➤ Business ethics development – drivers, milestones, relevance</li> <li>➤ <b>Reading:</b> Brooks &amp; Dunn, Ch. 1; various recent media articles – links posted</li> <li>➤ <b>Case Studies:</b> <i>VW Cheats on Emission Tests; Harry Potter &amp; the Green Brigade; Merck &amp; River Blindness; Angry Activists – President’s Choice Diapers (Discussion)</i></li> </ul>
2	January 19 Virtual	<p><b>Corporate Governance, Strategy &amp; Risk Management – Brooks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Where do business &amp; sustainability ethics fit into: Corporate Governance, strategy setting, implementation &amp; monitoring Operational decisions Risk assessment &amp; management?</li> <li>➤ How can you argue successfully for ethical sustainability issue treatment?</li> <li>➤ <b>Reading:</b> Brooks &amp; Dunn, parts of Ch. 5 &amp; 7</li> <li>➤ <b>Cases:</b> <i>Kardell Paper Co.; Brent Spar Decommissioning Disaster; The Exxon Valdez; Texaco: The Ecuador Issue; Nestle Bottles Water in a California Drought</i></li> </ul>
3	January 26 Virtual	<p><b>Creating an Organizational Culture Sensitive to Sustainability – Brooks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Organizational culture – why it is important, what it is, how it works</li> <li>➤ Cultural sensitivity to sustainability – what it means</li> <li>➤ Control &amp; monitoring mechanisms</li> <li>➤ Whistleblowing mechanisms</li> <li>➤ Crisis management</li> <li>➤ <b>Reading:</b> Brooks &amp; Dunn, Ch. 5</li> <li>➤ <b>Cases:</b> <i>BP’s Corporate Culture; BP’s Gulf Oil Spill Risk Management Tylenol Recalls (2010): Its Still About Reputation, Crisis Management Case</i></li> </ul>
4	February 2 In-person, Covid permitting	<p><b>Practical, Defensible Ethical Decision Making – Brooks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Rules of Thumb</li> <li>➤ Stakeholder Theory &amp; Stakeholder Decision Analysis</li> <li>➤ Practical ethical decision techniques</li> <li>➤ Comprehensive ethical decisions</li> <li>➤ <b>Reading:</b> Brooks &amp; Dunn, Ch. 4</li> <li>➤ <b>Cases:</b> <i>BetaSeron Decision (A); Ford Pinto</i></li> </ul>

5	February 9	<p><b>Stakeholder Reporting – Brooks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ CSR/Sustainability/GRI Measurement, reporting formats &amp; challenges</li> <li>➤ Integrated Reporting – the future</li> <li>➤ UN Report – sustainability finance</li> </ul> <p><b>Workplace Ethics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Conflicts of interest, employee rights, testing, harassment, discrimination, fairness, civility, trust</li> </ul> <p><b>Reading:</b> Brooks &amp; Dunn, Ch. 7 <b>Cases:</b> #MeToo, discrimination, Sexual Abuse at Penn State, Texaco’s Jelly Beans</p>
6	February 16	<p><b>Presentations on Influencing Management to “Do The Right Thing” when Confronted with Ethical Dilemmas such as: - Brooks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Which cars are best – hybrid gas, plug in hybrids, electric, hydrogen?</li> <li>➤ Pollute or install anti-pollution equipment</li> <li>➤ Examples of Reputation Risks &amp; Opport. from Bad &amp; Good Sustainability Mgt.</li> <li>➤ Building Proposed Hwy 413 Ethically and Sustainably</li> <li>➤ Building a gas pipeline under Lake Michigan</li> <li>➤ Managing &amp; Reporting on Climate Risk – on a specific company</li> <li>➤ Create a sustainability mindset and culture in an airline</li> <li>➤ Convince a transport company to create and use a dashboard for innovative and environmentally sensitive culture.</li> <li>➤ Other topics as agreed</li> <li>➤ <b>Group Assignment Due</b></li> </ul>
7	March 2	<p><b>Environmental Ethics, Sustainability &amp; Values – Appolloni</b></p> <p><i>We will conduct an overview of environmental ethical thinking &amp; terms with emphasis on values; specifically, we will discuss:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Ethical Theory: schools of thought – overview</li> <li>· Environmental ethics: schools of thought – overview</li> <li>· Anthropocentric, Speciesism, biocentric &amp; ecocentric ethical perspectives</li> <li>· Value: intrinsic vs extrinsic</li> <li>· Notion of “The Religion of the Market” and Consumerism as a new World Religion</li> </ul> <p><b>Readings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Kimberly K Smith, Chapter 4: “Do We Have Duties to Nonhumans?” in <i>Exploring Environmental Ethics An Introduction</i>. 1st ed. (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2018), 41-56.</li> <li>· David Loy, “The Religion of the Market.” <i>Journal of the American Academy of Religion</i> (1997) 65 (2), pp. 275-290.</li> </ul>

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>8</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>March 9</b></p>	<p><b>Biocentrism, Ecocentrism, The Land Ethic, Gaia &amp; Soil – Appolloni</b>  <i>We will investigate two contemporary environmental ethical perspectives on the biotic community through the lens of soil, concentrating on the place and role of the human being; specifically, we will discuss:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· The integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community</li> <li>· The land pyramid</li> <li>· The notion of Earth as a living organism</li> <li>· Soil as a living entity</li> <li>· Individualism vs community</li> </ul> <p><b>Readings/viewing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Aldo Leopold, “The Land Ethic,” <i>A Sand County Almanac</i> (New York: Oxford University Press: 1949).</li> <li>· James Lovelock, “The Living Earth,” <i>Nature</i>, 12/2003, Volume 426, Issue 6968, pp. 769 – 770.</li> <li>· “It’s Time We Stopped Treating Soil Like Dirt,” <i>The Guardian</i> YouTube Network video. July 2019.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>9</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>March 16</b></p>	<p><b>Ecofeminism and the marginalization of ‘Other’ – Appolloni</b>  <i>We will discuss ecofeminist perspectives underlining the connections between the domination of the human and the natural world; specifically, we will discuss:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Environmental racism</li> <li>· Determinant of corporate location decisions</li> <li>· Standpoint theory</li> <li>· Visceral connections</li> <li>· ‘Unequal ecologies’</li> <li>· Patenting life</li> </ul> <p><b>Readings/viewing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Vandana Shiva, “Monocultures of the Mind,” <i>Trumpeter</i> 10, no. 4: 1999.</li> <li>· Vandana Shiva on Stombo:  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q3d9k23UyQQ">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q3d9k23UyQQ</a></li> <li>· Mary Phillips, “Re-Writing Corporate Environmentalism: Ecofeminism, Corporeality and the Language of Feeling.” <i>Gender, Work &amp; Organization</i> 21, no. 5 (September 1, 2014): 443–58. doi:10.1111/gwao.12047.</li> </ul>

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>10</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>March 23</b></p>	<p><b>Indigenous Ethics and Water – Appolloni</b>  <i>We will discuss Indigenous lifeways and their notion of kinship with nature that challenge conventional corporate understandings of water as commodity; specifically, we will discuss:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Environmentalism of the poor</li> <li>· Politics of water</li> <li>· Notion of Filial Kinship with nature</li> <li>· Water as life</li> <li>· Reciprocity</li> <li>· Sacredness</li> </ul> <p><b>Readings/viewing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Trish Glazebrook and Jeff Gessas, “Standing Rock: Water Protectors in a Time of Failed Policy,” in <i>The Wonder of Water: Lived Experience, Policy and Practice</i>. Edited by Ingrid Leman Stefanovic. Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2020. 171-196.</li> <li>· Deborah McGregor, “Traditional Knowledge: Considerations for Protecting Water in Ontario,” <i>The International Indigenous Policy Journal</i> 3, no. 3, 2012: 1-21.</li> <li>· Video: “Chatting about the Environment with Indigenous scholar Deborah McGregor” (my personal interview, will be made available through Quercus).</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>11</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>March 30</b></p>	<p><b>On Knowing and Being in the Natural World – Appolloni</b>  <i>We will look at ways of knowing that go beyond prevalent mathematico-rational epistemologies that foster different ways of being in the world; specifically, we will discuss:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· The precautionary principle</li> <li>· Role of humility in environmentalism</li> <li>· Notion of communion of subjects vs collection of objects</li> </ul> <p><b>Readings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Thomas Berry, “The New Story,” in <i>The Dream of the Earth</i>, (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1988),123-137.</li> <li>· David Orr, “Slow Knowledge,” <i>Conservation Biology</i> 10, no. 3 (Jun., 1996): 699-702.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>12</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>April 6</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Examination</b></p>

## Instructors

**Leonard J. Brooks** is Professor of Business Ethics. He is the former Executive Director of the Rotman School's Clarkson Centre for Business Ethics & Board Effectiveness, and Director of the University's Professional Accounting Centre, and Master of Forensic Accounting Program. He has authored many articles and authored or co-authored/edited several books including *Business & Professional Ethics for Directors, Executives & Accountants, 9e* (2021); *Ethics & Governance: Developing and Maintaining an Ethical Corporate Culture, 4e* (2012); and *Principles of Stakeholder Management* (1999). Professor Brooks is a former Director of the Canadian Centre for Ethics & Corporate Policy, and was a member of the Editorial Board of the *Journal for Business Ethics* for fourteen years. He is a Faculty Associate of the University's Centre for Ethics and member of its Centre for Bioethics. His research interests include governance, business and professional ethics, risk management, ethical decision making, conflicts of interest, and developing and maintaining an ethical corporate culture. He received the 2000 Ethics in Action Award – Ongoing Social Responsibility – Individual in recognition of his leadership in the field of corporate social responsibility. In 2019 he received the Master Teacher in Ethics Award, from The Wheatley Institute at Brigham Young University.

Webpages:

<http://www.rotman.utoronto.ca/FacultyAndResearch/Faculty/FacultyBios/Brooks>

<https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/management/people/len-brooks>

**Simon Appolloni** is Assistant Professor at the School of the Environment, University of Toronto. He received his doctorate in the Study of Religion, in conjunction with the Collaborative Program in Environmental Studies, School of the Environment, University of Toronto. He has taught courses on environmental ethics, tourism ethics, and religion and ethics at both the undergraduate and graduate levels at the School of the Environment, Humber College and at Brock University. His book, *Convergent Knowing: Christianity and Science in Conversation with a Suffering Creation* (McGill-Queens University Press, 2018), is an exploration of a new epistemic framework for Christian ethical thinking. His current research interest lies in understanding and utilizing pedagogies of hope that build resilience within students as they navigate paths toward sustainability. Simon has maintained his pre-doctoral volunteer work within the environmental-social justice not-for-profit sector.

<https://www.environment.utoronto.ca/people/directories/all-faculty/simon-appolloni>



## **Appendix – Sustainability Ethics Individual Assignment – Professor Appolloni**

Worth 20% of final mark

Due dates: March 23 for options 1 and 3, March 30 (last class) for option 2

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of this assignment is to help you integrate an aspect of sustainability ethics in a way that is meaningful for you and your program. The main thrust is that whichever option you choose, you are able to explore one dimension of sustainability ethics in a way that is enlivening, fruitful, and impactful. Choices must be discussed with me before the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of classes.

A variety of options are available to you. I am listing below three suggestions, but others, in consultation with me, are possible as well.

Due dates: March 23 for options 1 and 3, March 30 (last class) for option 2. For all options, students will be required to present in the last class a 5-minute (max) talk to their peers briefly explaining their reflection/research along with a short observation about the experience.

### **OPTION 1: Ethics Report Card - Case Study (2,000 to 3,000 words, typed, double spaced)**

**The rationale behind this option:** Of our five course objectives itemized on the syllabus, the second, third, and fourth are geared to help you understand (2) business governance and ethics, (3) how business views sustainability, and (4) how to influence corporate strategy and decision making through business ethics. This ethics report card will have you develop these skills.

#### **The Task:**

1. Pick a company or organization that has decided to incorporate sustainability into its program.
2. Document the case study; what happened? What measures were taken? What goals were set? What practices and policies were adopted? How did the company measure or enforce these practices and policies?
3. Present the ethics report card: How did they do? Using an ethics rubric, rate how successful the group was in adhering to their sustainability ethic.

**Grading** will be based on the precision and accuracy of findings, the depth of analysis and how well evidence is supported. Grading will also consider the clarity of writing, mechanics, and grammar.

### **OPTION 2: Tree Journal Writing (4,000 to 6,000 words – can be handed in hand-written if legible)**

**The rationale behind this option:** The study of environmental ethics is in many ways a study of relationships. What is our relationship with the other-than-human in the natural world?

Scientist and Indigenous author of the Potawatomi Nation (in the US) Robin Wall Kimmerer writes, “I go sit with my Sitka Spruce grandmother to think. I am not from here, just a stranger who comes with gratitude and respect and questions of how it is we come to belong to a place. And yet she makes me welcome, just as we are told the big trees of the west kindly looked after Nanabozho.” [an Indigenous figure in the creation cosmology - Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Milkweed Editions, 2013, p. 212)]. In a similar fashion you will sit (or stand) with a tree on campus to discern your own response to this same query of how it is we come to belong to a place.

**The task:**

1. Find a tree on campus (any tree that no one else has selected) and befriend it (at least for the duration of the course for at least 8 weeks cumulative within the semester) and spend at least 15 min./week with the tree.
2. Take a picture of you with the tree.
3. Conduct and record some basic research about your tree – its species, origins, approximate age, size, likes and dislikes [i.e.: habitat: soil, moisture, temperature, light etc.], seasonal changes, and vulnerabilities (3 pages maximum).
4. Keep a journal on any thoughts, ideas or creative undertaking [could be a drawing, a poem, a song, for instance], that comes to you as you spend time with your tree. **Make sure to weave into your reflections aspects of any of our readings and/or class discussions.**

**Grading** will be based on the precision and accuracy of findings, the depth of reflection on thoughts and how they explore course readings/class discussions. Grading will also consider the clarity of writing, mechanics, and grammar.

**OPTION 3: Book review (1,000 to 1,300 words, typed, double spaced)**

**The rationale behind this option:** Students may wish to focus on one aspect of sustainability ethics (as outlined below). This option to review a book allows students to analyze a specific issue in more depth.

**The task:**

1. Choose a book from the list below, one that you have not yet read (1 book per student); other books may be considered but must be accepted by me first.
2. Devote 1/3 of the review to a summary of the book, 1/3 to the book’s importance or how it advances an argument in the field and 1/3 to critical analysis. **You are encouraged in your analysis to bring in material covered in course readings and/or class discussions.** If you refer to course readings or a book other than the one under review, please reference data (all standard forms acceptable: APA, MLA, Chicago).
3. At the top of the review, please give the following information: *Author/Editor(s). Title (including subtitle). City: Publisher, Year of Publication. Cover (HB or PB) Number of pages. Price. ISBN number.* Include your name as reviewer.

**Grading** will be based on the precision and accuracy of findings, the depth of reflection on thoughts and how they explore course readings/class discussions. Grading will also consider the clarity of writing, mechanics, and grammar.

**Choices of books to review (books are available on reserve through the UTM library)**

(Sustainability ethics and spirituality)

Berry, Thomas. *The Great Work: Our Way into the Future*. New York: Bell Tower Publishing Group, 1999.

(Sustainability ethics and economics)

Jackson, Tim. *Prosperity without Growth: Economics for a Finite Planet*. London: Earthscan, 2009.

(Sustainability ethics and commerce)

Hawken, Paul. *The Ecology of Commerce: A Declaration of Sustainability*. New York: Collins Business, 1993.

(Sustainability ethics and politics)

Klein, Seth. *A Good War: Mobilizing Canada for the Climate Emergency*. Toronto: ECW Press, 2020.

(Sustainability ethics and ecofeminism/justice)

Shiva, Vandana. *Earth Democracy: Justice, Sustainability and Peace*. Cambridge, Mass.: South End Press, 2005.

(Sustainability ethics and societal transformation)

Wallace-Wells, David. *The Uninhabitable Earth: Life after Warming*. New York: Tim Duggan Books, 2020.

(Sustainability ethics and Indigenous worldviews)

Wall Kimmerer, Robin. *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Milkweed Editions, 2013.