

FINA 5330 / FINA 4330

Sustainable Finance

Instructor: Professor Stuart Gillan
Office Hours: By Appointment
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Class Time: M,W 12:30-1:50pm
Classroom: BLB 040

COURSE OVERVIEW

Course Description:

This course provides (1) conceptual and theoretical foundations for corporate Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) policies and actions and investors' preferences regarding such policies and actions and (2) how such policies and actions affect firm performance, investor reactions, and portfolio risk and return. ESG issues have assumed an increasingly important role for corporations, investors, and society as a whole. After taking this course you will be able to incorporate what you learn in both your professional career and personal life.

Prerequisites:

As specified in the course schedule.

Course Objectives:

The course goal is to provide a basis for critically assessing the actions of investors and corporations with regard to ESG actions and policies, including the potential motivations and consequences of such actions and policies.

- Understand key aspects of the ESG environment.
- Understand the rationale for, and potential sources of value in, ESG actions and policies.
- Develop data skills to assess ESG policies.
- Integrate financial theory with practical tools and real-world data.
- Practice analytical and critical problem-solving skills.

Course Materials:

Required:

- Readings for each class session posted/linked on the course website.
- Microsoft office or equivalent
- Computer with a camera that allows for real-time participation in online class meetings if needed
- Access to current business publications that report on ESG, such as the *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, *Financial Times*, or the *Economist*. Online sites such as *Impact Alpha* or *Bloomberg Good Business* or *Bloomberg Green* are also useful resources.

Required computer/digital skills:

- Canvas
- Email with attachments
- Spreadsheet programs, primarily Excel
 - Ability to summarize and present data
- Presentation and graphics programs such as Powerpoint

Syllabus changes:

If any Syllabus changes are required for any reason I will announce such changes in class and on the course Canvas site.

Course Format:

The class will consist primarily of discussion with some lectures included. It is essential that you come to class *prepared to actively participate* in the discussions of the day's topic and be familiar with material from prior class sessions. The readings are essential preparation, as you will be called upon to participate in class discussion.

Individual Assignments and Participation:

Most weeks will involve completing an individual reading assignment. In addition, you will be required to present a current business-press article on material related to the class during the semester. You are required to prepare and present a 5-minute PowerPoint presentation of the article and develop two questions to put to the class for discussion. As this is a discussion-based class your participation is also important and will be graded.

FINA 5330 Individual Project and Presentation

An individual capstone presentation project focusing on an analysis of a specific Environmental, Social and Governance issue. The key deliverable is an individual presentation of the project's results to the class toward the end of the semester. More details of the project will be discussed in class during the semester.

Group Assignments:

Most weeks will involve working in groups on assignments, sometimes using Excel, that are to be handed in at different points during the semester. We will use various financial databases including S&P Capital IQ and the MSCI ESG database for these.

Group presentation:

A group capstone presentation project focusing on a company analysis of Environmental, Social and Governance issues. The key deliverable is a group presentation of the project's results to the class toward the end of the semester. More details of the project will be discussed in class during the semester.

Final Exam:

The exams will be closed book and will consist primarily of qualitative conceptual questions. Exams are an individual effort and no collaboration is permitted. The midterm exam will be held in class Monday October 26. The final exam will be held in person at the University scheduled exam time of Wednesday December 14, 10:30am-12:30pm.

Grading:

4330 (Undergraduate)	
Individual Component	
Assignments and Participation	10%
Business Article Presentations	10%
Mid Term Exam	15%
Final exam	15%
Group Component	
Group Assignment 1	15%
Group Assignment 2	15%
Final group presentation	20%
Total	100%

5330 (Masters)	
Individual Component	
Assignments and Participation	10%
Individual Project	15%
Business Article Presentations	10%
Mid Term Exam	15%
Final exam	15%
Group Component	
Group Assignment 1	10%
Group Assignment 2	10%
Final group presentation	15%
Total	100%

Your final grade will be determined based on your total percentage grade accumulated over the semester as follows:

Letter Grade	Course Percentage Grade
A	90-100
B	80-89.99
C	70-79.99
D	60-69.99
F	Below 60

Course Policies**Communication:**

Please use your official UNT email address to communicate with me. I will typically respond to emails within 24-48 hours on weekdays. Please do not expect a response over the weekend.

**** Please include FINA 5330 or FINA 4330 in the subject line of your email ****

Please use appropriate and professional etiquette when communicating via email or in person. As business students, you should exhibit a high level of care as to whether your message is communicated clearly and in an appropriate manner, so the recipient can understand. Proofread your email before you send! You want your email to reflect well on you and your intelligence. Check for spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors. Emails are not text messages, so be sure to use a format and language that is appropriate in a business context. Also be aware of your “tone” and language. Use appropriate greetings, full sentences, and a closure statement. Do not use text message shortcuts or acronyms.

Attendance:

Attendance and class participation is expected as much of the learning in this course comes from in-class discussions.

At the same time, it is important for all of us to be mindful of the health and safety of everyone in our community, especially given concerns about COVID-19. If you are ill or wish to be excused from class for a university approved absence, please inform me *prior to being absent* as to what may be preventing you from coming to class so I may make a decision about accommodating your request.

If you miss a class, review the materials for the day posted on the Canvas website and then discuss what we did during the class meeting day with one of your classmates. If you have follow-up questions, please reach out to me to discuss. In general, missing more than 2 classes in any 2–3-week window of the course is excessive and will adversely affect your participation grade.

Academic Integrity:

The G. Brint Ryan College of Business takes academic honesty seriously. Ethics and integrity are important business values, essential to building trust and adhering to both professional and legal standards. Academic dishonesty destroys trust, damages the reputation and the value of the degree and is unacceptable.

According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions from admonition (a warning) to expulsion from the University.

Some of the most common examples of academic integrity violations include plagiarism or cheating, such as unauthorized assistance on examinations, homework, research papers or case analyses. Your work must be entirely your own. When working on assignments, you should not discuss your work with others unless approved by the course instructor. Group assignments should only be discussed with members assigned to your group, and all group members may be held accountable in some way for known academic integrity violations in a group assignment.

Another example of academic dishonesty relates to improper attribution. When preparing your assignments, you must cite all outside sources in the manner requested by your instructor. Copying or using material from any source prepared by or previously submitted by others, at UNT or other institutions, or downloaded from the Internet, is plagiarism. Unless directed otherwise in an assignment, large scale “cutting and pasting” from other sources, even if properly

footnoted, is not appropriate. You should synthesize this material in your own words and provide a footnote.

Your instructor will specify what materials, if any, may be used on the tests and exams. Using materials other than those permitted, talking with other individuals during the exam, individuals exchanging information about an exam when one has taken the exam and the other has not, or copying or using material from another individual's exam is academic dishonesty and will result in a meeting to discuss academic integrity violations and potentially issue sanctions mentioned above, and may result in ineligibility for academic scholarships. The use of online assistance, such as sites commonly used for finding homework solutions, group chat, cell phones, smart watches, and similar tools during exams is not allowed for any reason unless specifically permitted. No portion of an exam may be copied or photographed without permission.

Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the University's status as an institution of higher education. A student is responsible for responding to a request to discuss suspected academic dishonesty when issued by an instructor or other University official. If a student fails to respond after a proper attempt at notification has been made, the University may take appropriate academic actions in the absence of the student's participation.

The University has a very specific honesty policy. You are expected to know and to follow this policy. https://policy.unt.edu/sites/default/files/06.003.AcadIntegrity.Final_.pdf

Acceptable Behavior:

Behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The University's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct.

ADA Accommodations:

Please inform me during the first week of class if you have any conditions that may limit or affect your ability to participate in this course so that we can make necessary arrangements. UNT makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide a student with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding one's specific course needs. Students may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation. For additional information, see the ODA website at disability.unt.edu.