ESPM 198: Going Green or Greenwashing?

Facilitated by: Natalie Allen and Anjika Morari
Instructor of Record: Ignacio Chapela

Proposal/Purpose for the Decal:
This is a 12-week course that teaches students about current popular sustainability trends and to spot how greenwashing is easily done intentionally and unintentionally. We created this course because sustainability goals and environmentally conscious decision making has entered almost every field from engineering and policy making to design and business. As students who may end up working on sustainability projects or as managers, it's important to have a proper understanding of what being eco-conscious in your field means. Furthermore, how can you uplift true sustainability despite the barriers of the “real world”? We hope to give students the tools to integrate holistic sustainability into their career and raise the critical questions about how we should progress our society’s environmental action. Instead of just focusing on existing examples, we also focus on the theoretical foundations needed to think green in multiple settings. We draw from decolonization, social theory, and nontraditional forms of knowledge to “holistically” understand the difference between going green and greenwashing.

UNITS: 1 Units

Reading List:
Core readings- excerpts for lessons and activities will come from here
1. Transforming Consumption by Dara O Rourke
2. Sustainability: Is Consciousness the Key? by Sadhguru
3. 7 Cheap Things by Raj Patel
4. Max Neef: Barefoot Economics
5. For The Wild: Settler Colonialism
6. Small is Beautiful *** on your own
7. Inflamed by Rupa Mayra and Raj Patel
8. Braiding Sweetgrass

Statement of frequency of class meetings
Class will be held once a week on Thursdays from 4-5pm, depending on the availability we receive from the decal schedule. Ideally we want to meet once a week for 1 hour.

Clear description of assignments and requirements for passing the class:
Students will be expected to have prepared the assigned readings ahead of time as they will be discussed in class. Group activity and discussion are a major component of this course and preparation will be necessary to provide thoughtful responses to the whole class and small groups.

Performing case studies will be another component of this class. Outside research, time will be required in order to put together a comprehensive analysis of the student’s chosen topic. These projects can be done individually or in small groups. Case Studies are designed to apply concepts and frameworks taught in class and provide a real world connection for students.

*this course will adhere and abide by the UC BERKELEY CODE OF ACADEMIC HONESTY

Weekly schedule of topics/assignments covered each day of class: (subject to small revisions)

**Module 1: Purpose & Introduction**
>Objectives:
  - What is Greenwashing?
  - Why take this decal?

**Module 2: Why is there a Confusion?**
>Objectives:
  - History of Environmental Education and Movement
  - Subtle & Indirect Forms of Greenwashing
  - Regulations on Greenwashing

**Module 3: Tools for a New Way of Thinking**
>Objectives:
● Framework - A Tool to Address The Full Scope when making green decisions
● Understand the creation, shortfalls, and benefits of the Framework

Module 4: Application & Final Project

>Objectives:
● To be able to choose a current case of greenwashing, and intelligently research through the framework a justification for why it is greenwashing.
● To be able to choose a current case of true green action, and intelligently research through the framework a justification for why it is not greenwashing.

Goal: Research, Identify, & Spot Greenwashing

Why: All Environmental Education is not the same, learning it in a classroom setting you receive mainstream views that thrive only in academia & industry, their priorities are taught and make it seem like there are only a few things that can be done. But it's important that we try to understand what caring for the environment means in a way that goes beyond what is shown in academia & the market because it affects student's ability to think of critical solutions.

→ Imagine you're the CSO of Amazon, it is important to know what is greenwashing even though you will still be held within the bounds of your job. You will be able to think deeper and be more creative. It makes you more suitable for roles like this!

→ There is more to do than just point blame. You need to know correct environmental education if you want to go beyond the norms & push the standards. You could be the person writing the sustainability report or write the next environmental policy, and you can ensure it is as impactful and genuine as possible.

WEEK BY WEEK TENTATIVE OUTLINE:

Module 1
1. Week 1: introduction, course overview
   a. What is Greenwashing lecture
   b. How does it span multiple fields?
   c. Course objectives & why should you take this?
   d. Activity!
Module 2

2. Week 2: History & Context of Environmental Education
   a. Pre-Lecture Activity!
   b. Colonial Histories, Knowledge & Power Relationships
   c. Activity!
   d. Differences in environmental education and how it can lead to greenwashing.
   e. Homework: Go back find the presence of these framework in your chosen report
      i. Reading: Drivers of Greenwashing

3. Week 3: Scope of Sustainability Action - Regulation and Trends of Greenwashing
   a. Reading Discussion: Drivers of Greenwashing
   b. Why Greenwashing is easy from a legal and operational perspective?
   c. Real Life Consequences
   d. Regulations/Legislation
   e. Group Activity!
   f. Homework: Continue in class activity for next week!

Module 3:

4. Week 4: Introduction to Research Based Framework
   a. “Turn in Homework”: Presentation on Findings from last week
   b. Introduction of framework
   c. How was this framework created?
   d. How do we use it to guide our research?
5. Week 5: Applying the Framework
   a. How do we use it in multiple fields and situations?
   b. Responsibility of a Framework
   c. Objectivity and Morality
   d. Activity!

6. Week 6: Continued Work with Framework/Project Introduction
   a. Continuation of last weeks activity, peer discussion, clarification
   b. Activity!
   c. Introduce the Project
      i. **Homework: Come to class with ideas!**

Module 4:
Final Project: In groups of 2, pick 2 different eco solutions you are passionate about in your field, develop two presentations on why each solution is or is not greenwashing based on your research guided by the holistic sustainability framework.
Week 7: Brainstorming
Week 8: Final Project Check In 1: Work Week
Week 9: Final Project Check in 2: Work Week
Week 10: Presentation 1
Week 11: Presentation 2

Key learning outcomes:
1. Learn why greenwashing exists and in what forms it exists.
2. Identify what kind of information is presented and the impact it has
3. Broaden knowledge on the many factors that influence how an environmental solution is gauged
4. Utilize a framework and pose better questions to critique greenwashing practices
5. How to write and make a case for why an action is or is not greenwashing using research
6. Learn how students of all backgrounds and disciplines can use their specialties to progress the environmental movement, in a way that doesn’t engage in greenwashing

Method(s) of instruction:
In-Person lecture and collaborative style instruction. This class will encourage group discussions and activities to tackle research on larger concepts related to greenwashing.

A typical class day will look like 20 minutes of lecture, 10 minutes of group discussion, and 30 minutes of collaborative work - either looking through the relevant case study/excerpt or writing brief responses to the day's lecture.

There will be more time allotted for group work as the final case study project approaches.

Method(s) of evaluation of student performance:
Attendance and group participation will all be taken into consideration when evaluating students.
- Attendance: 30%
  - Must be present for 8/12 meetings
- Group Work: 35%
  - 25% of 35% is for the weekly assignments
  - 10% of the 35% is for corrections and peer reviews
- Final Case Study: 35%

**UC BERKELEY CODE OF CONDUCT**