



**DEPARTMENT OF LEGAL STUDIES AND BUSINESS ETHICS**  
**LGST 4010: Global Social Impact**  
**Wharton Undergraduate Capstone Course Syllabus**

**Fall 2024**

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Classroom: TBD  
Office: 631 Jon M. Huntsman Hall  
Class Times: Tuesday, 3:30-6:30PM

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**Office Hours:** By appointment. Should you have any questions or concerns about the class, please do not hesitate to contact me via email [petkoski@wharton.upenn.edu](mailto:petkoski@wharton.upenn.edu) or phone.

### **OVERVIEW**

Multitudes of pressures shape the global ecosystem, including geopolitical turmoil, volatile markets, systemic corruption, weakened institutions, the lingering impact of COVID-19, increased shareholders and shapeholders demands, the constant dialogue on environmental, social, and governance (ESG) issues, AI disruptions, and climate change. The transformative influence of AI and social media further underscores the need for nuanced understanding of the increased interdependence of stakeholders and the multiple roles individuals play within this interconnected web. The ESG ecosystem is moving to ESG/AI ecosystem. Corporate entities grapple with external pressures and heightened expectations. Balancing financial returns with ESG considerations proves challenging, as stakeholders closely scrutinize corporate actions. The ESG/AI ecosystem's evolving and inefficient nature presents additional hurdles, with confusing standards and greenwashing becoming prevalent concerns. Greenwashing, where companies falsely claim ESG compliance or exaggerate the magnitude and effort of their ESG/AI work, raises legal and ethical concerns. Stakeholders are increasingly aware of these issues, emphasizing the need for transparency and genuine commitment.

What role can business, through its core activities, innovations, and nontraditional financing and partnerships, play in meeting local and global needs related to ESG priorities? How to deal with the increased complexity and the dynamic of change of the external ecosystem accelerated by AI disruptions? What is the relationship between the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and ESG? How to enhance environmental, social, and governance impact through leadership, social intrapreneurship and entrepreneurship, and disruptive social innovations? What are the challenges of measurement and reporting? Can technology, including AI help solve Sustainability/ESG related problems? Does business have a responsibility to help address these priorities? Are there limits to what can and should be done through business? What are successful examples of business approaches to meeting these priorities? What is the responsibility of the other stakeholders, including international financial institutions, such as the

World Bank Group and IMF; foundations; donors; non-government organizations; and development agencies? What is the role of GEN-Z?

This undergraduate capstone course, sponsored by the Legal Studies and Business Ethics Department<sup>1</sup>, is designed to give Wharton students the chance to connect academic theory with complex real-world problems, including issues arising within the award-winning social enterprise projects identified by the World Bank's "Ideas for Action (I4A)"<sup>2</sup> and the "SDGs&Her"<sup>3</sup> Initiatives, as well as ESG Research Papers/Projects published in the first volume of the Zicklin Review<sup>4</sup>. The emphasis is on learning conceptual models and frameworks that help navigate the complexity and dynamism of real-life implementation. It moves beyond "one size fits all" approach and instead focuses on the choices that top executives, managers, and intrapreneurs/entrepreneurs face in a specific strategic situation. The aim of the course is to integrate and strengthen students' academic skills by applying them in cross-functional ways to the real-world Sustainability/ESG research or startup projects. The course addresses the aspects of human nature - the hidden biases and behaviors and emotions - that undermine shared understanding of the Sustainability/ESG/AI issues and their implementation and takes the students through the questions intrapreneurs and entrepreneurs should address as they go from an idea to implementable solutions with purpose and impact. The course also requires students to grapple with current ethical and legal challenges that business organizations and entrepreneurs face, such as defining the purpose of a business, determining how to incorporate global standards (like the ESG and SDGs) and AI into a business strategy, and designing mechanisms to promote ethical behavior and combat such systemic challenges as corruption. ***All these issues will be addressed through Sustainability/ESG/AI related team research papers/projects.*** The best papers will be considered for possible publication in the next volumes of the Zicklin Review.

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<sup>1</sup> In line with the Wharton [The ESG Initiative](#), and AI & Analytics Initiative (WAI AI).

<sup>2</sup> The I4A Initiative was jointly sponsored by the World Bank and Wharton's Zicklin Center for Business Ethics Research. It includes an annual competition for global social enterprise founders with new winners every year. Thousands of projects were submitted annually from over 140 countries. From these, a handful were honored with an award. Every year, the best proposals were published in M. Mohieldin and D. Petkoski (Editors), "*Financing and Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals – Ideas for Actions*", The World Bank Group, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019. The books are available online. For more details visit: <http://www.ideas4action.org/> Facebook: [https://www.facebook.com/ideas4action?view\\_public\\_for=1550087675237501](https://www.facebook.com/ideas4action?view_public_for=1550087675237501).

<sup>3</sup> The SDGs&Her Initiative was jointly sponsored by the World Bank and Wharton's Zicklin Center for Business Ethics Research, in partnership with UNDP and UN Women. It included an annual competition for women global social enterprise founders with new winners every year. Thousands of projects were submitted annually from over 140 countries. For more details visit: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/who-we-are/news/campaigns/2020/sdgs-and-her-initiative>.

<sup>4</sup> From the note "From the Editors": With the leadership and support of Dean Erika H. James, Wharton is placing the ESG movement and responsibility in business, more generally, at the forefront of our school's contribution to its many Stakeholders and their communities ([The ESG Initiative](#), Wharton School). The Zicklin Center for Governance and Business Ethics Research is committing significant resources to this important project by launching the ZICKLIN REVIEW.

The ZICKLIN REVIEW is an on-line, "project-oriented" journal launched with a singular purpose: to offer a forum for young professionals and thought leaders (including our own undergraduate, MBA, and doctoral students) to address the most urgent development challenges of their generation—namely, challenges within the ethics, responsibility, and development space. We have high aspirations for how this project-oriented journal will reflect, shape, and impact thinking on campus and well beyond. The voices of those with the greatest stake in the successful outcome of "responsible development" deserve greater recognition. In this regard, our strategy with the ZICKLIN REVIEW builds on the influence and impact of the Ideas for Action and SDGs&Her Initiatives that the Zicklin Center jointly launched with the World Bank in 2014 and 2018, respectively.

As the students learn new concepts, they will immediately put their newly acquired knowledge to practice by directly applying what they learn in an actual Sustainability/ESG/AI research paper/project. Students will be partnered with 3-4 other peers to work on actual paper/projects. The students will work in teams to analyze specific aspects of the project and be challenged to produce concrete plans to improve/extend/expand/implement the project under the guidance of the instructor and other experts. The students will be encouraged to interact directly with relevant stakeholders, including experts from the World Bank Group, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the International Labor Organization (ILO), the Commonwealth, and other partner institutions, as part of their involvement in the Zicklin Review. Interaction with multiple stakeholders will encourage students to deal with competing ideas, investigate contradictions, and consider multiple forms of evidence to make recommendations. Students suggestions will be shared with interested parties. Students will be engaged in the organization of and will present at a global actionable knowledge exchange [conference](#), which will take place on **October 18**. Please put October 18 in your calendar.

### **Instructional Methods**

The course uses readings, lectures, guest speakers, exercises, cases, I4A and SDGs&Her projects, Zicklin Review articles, individual and team assignments, and class discussion. Reading assignments provide an important foundation for class discussion and students are expected to come to class well prepared to discuss the reading materials. Lectures will be used to highlight key points from the readings and provide additional information to supplement the readings. The case discussions are mainly based on strategic (not financial and technical) issues. Exercises, cases, Zicklin Review articles, I4A and SDGs&Her projects will provide additional insights and opportunities to apply what students have learned to real-world issues. Because each student brings unique perspectives and experiences to the class, participation in class discussions and activities is essential to student's own learning as well as that of other class members. To further enrich students' learning, they will also receive feedback from external experts on their team Sustainability/ESG/AI related research paper or project.

### **Expectations**

Class will be conducted according to concert rules:

- Class starts and ends exactly on time. Students and faculty are expected to be timely.
- Students should remain in attendance for the duration of class, except in an emergency.
- Students should display nameplates.
- Aside from cases of major illness, an absence may be excused only with prior notice to the professor – who will decide in accordance with his own discretion whether or not to excuse the absence. (See below)
- No computers, tablets, or other electronic devices may be used in class. Nope, not kidding.

**Attendance.** You should expect to spend several hours per week on required readings. Contributions to discussions that demonstrate your independent understanding of the required readings will be central to your grade. Contributing obviously requires attendance. You are expected to attend all sessions and participate in all group activities and class discussions. I realize that senior year is an extremely busy and stressful time at Wharton, and I want to be accommodating. But I ask you to consider the nature of this class. First, we meet once a week, so if a student misses just one session, a fairly significant amount of course materials is missing. Second, the class is an "experimental-learning" - course most classes sessions utilize group activities, which cannot be "made-up". Thus, if you miss a class, you not only miss out on

the learning yourself, but you also are likely disadvantaging your classmates' learning because they are counting on your participation in these activities.

**Excused absences are for medical reasons, religious holidays, or for official university business only. Please note that an interview is not an excusable reason to miss class.** To be granted an excuse absence, you must e-mail the TA at least 48 hours in advance to make arrangements for in-class exercises and obtain any relevant materials. Of course, I realize that unforeseeable issues or emergencies arise, in which case I will make accommodations for students. If you receive an excused absence, then you need to make up the work by completing the deliverables design by the TA. If you fail to complete this assignment, your excused absence becomes unexcused.

If you miss class for reasons other than those specified for excused absence, then you will receive unexcused absence. **For any unexcused absence, there will be a half letter grade reduction in your final grade in the course (e.g. an "A" goes to an "A-"; an "A-" goes to a "B+; etc.).**

**Late Papers and Extensions:** Late papers will be penalized 1/3 grade for each day late (so an A- paper turned in one day late would get a B+), with weekends counting for one day. Extensions will be granted for medical or other emergencies, and in some cases for other serious conflicts. If you need to request an extension, you should do so as early as possible.

### **Policy on Use of Generative AI**

You may use AI tools such as ChatGPT to assist you, such as for research, understanding concepts, or developing initial ideas. AI can be a valuable means to facilitate your learning; however, it should not be an alternative to learning. It is a violation of Wharton ethics rules to submit work that is entirely created by someone else, or by software such as AI tools. Plagiarism or other forms of cheating will be dealt with severely under relevant university procedures.

Be aware that AI tools are imperfect. They may be biased, inaccurate, or "hallucinate" false information. You are responsible for the content of your submissions, so review any AI-generated material carefully. If you use AI tools for assignments in this course, you are expected to disclose that in your response, and identify how you employed them. You should identify prompts you used, and the relationship of what the AI created to what you eventually submitted.

### **Guest Speakers and Resource**

Guest speakers and resource experts will be invited to address the topics in the course, with emphasis on designing an ESG/AI research paper or startup project. Resource experts will provide inputs on implementation challenges associated with the projects. The coursework in the class sessions, outlined below, will focus on models for student team' own Sustainability/ESG/AI related research papers or startup projects.

## **GRADING**

**Overall Contribution to Class (20%)** The course is intended to engage students in critical and systems thinking, problem solving, analysis, interpretation, and synthesizing information; and help them to develop the analytic skills and substantive framework to address challenges as they arise in addressing complex business and Sustainability/ESG/AI challenges. Many of these challenges will involve justifying one's position to those in disagreement. Students are encouraged to approach this course with a discovery driven mindset backed by rigor and due diligence. To this end, the course emphasizes articulating reasoned arguments. Class participation is an integral component of this emphasis. Class participation

assumes students have completed all the course prep materials (readings, videos, challenge questions, etc.) on time and by the due date and they are prepared to discuss the content with their peers. In addition, “participation” is defined as quality contributions to class discussion and exercises. Class attendance, class participation, class debates, case study analysis, instructor evaluation, and peer ratings will comprise 20% of the grade. Peer accountability: Given the emphasis on teamwork for this course, the peer assessment will have a significant impact on the final grade. The Peer Rating component will work as follows. Each student will rate (on a secure website with confidentiality assured) each other student on a 1 (bottom) -- 10 (top) scale based on that peer’s overall, demonstrated contribution to the class’s learning and development, as well as projects work. Comments on each student’s specific contributions will be solicited and weighed in the “Contribution to Class” grade awarded by the instructor.

**Individual Assignments (40%)** This includes weekly assignments, such as readings and case write-up, and Legacy and Reflection Papers.

**Projects Work (30%)** At the very beginning of the semester, students, in teams, are required to select a Sustainability/ESG/AI research paper/project. Individual student’s project work grade will be adjusted by her/his individual contribution assessed by the end of semester peer evaluation. (See Peer accountability above for details).

**Project Presentations and Contribution to the Global Actionable Knowledge Exchange conference, (10%)** Project Presentations will account for 10% of the available points. More details on the presentations and how they will be evaluated, as well as the contribution to the Global Actionable Knowledge Exchange Conference will be available on Canvas.

**Note:** More details on the assignments, including readings and case write-ups, and Legacy and Reflection Papers, as well as the due date will be available on Canvas. Individual and team assignments must be completed and submitted by the due date.

## INSTRUCTOR

**Djordjija Petkoski** is a Lecturer and Senior Fellow at the Wharton School and serves as an adviser and consultant to the World Bank, ILO, IOE, OAS, other development organizations, governments, and global companies. Most recently, his research, capacity development, and consulting activities include: Helping Sustainability/ESG/AI Executives – corporate leaders and investors - make their Sustainability/ESG/AI Ecosystem Journey more inclusive and impactful; Innovative Innovations - understanding of how entrepreneurs and intrapreneurs think and feel about innovating in the Sustainability/ESG/AI space; Actionable and impactful innovative partnerships; Addressing legacy through deeper understanding of the personal and professional journey, enlightened by passion, purpose, core values, and conscience; The integrating role of HR in the context of Sustainability/ESG/AI, diversity, equality, and inclusion (DEI), and Gen-Z; New approach to Executive Education by utilizing Coaching and Actionable-Transformative-Capabilities Development. His recent research and consulting have revolved around the utilization of AI in the framing and resolving complex, dynamic problems. His focus is on the corporate strategies and organizational cultures that foster sustainable development, inclusive of the responsible implementation of AI technologies. At Wharton, he teaches courses on responsibility in global management, corporate responsibility and ethics, global social impact, and social impact and responsibility in the MBA, undergraduate, and executive programs. He held various senior positions at the World Bank, including head of the Business, Competitiveness and Development Program.

During his nearly 20 year tenure at the World Bank he focused on multi-disciplinary and multi-stakeholder approach to business and development issues; competitiveness and sustainable development at the national and corporate level; anti-corruption and ethics; collective action and the changing role of business in society; corporate social responsibility, creating shared value, the base of the pyramid; innovation, entrepreneurship, intrapreneurship; knowledge exchange; and leadership and leading and managing change<sup>5</sup>. He co-launched Ideas for Action (I4A)<sup>6</sup> and SDGs&Her<sup>7</sup>, joint initiatives created by the World Bank and the Zicklin Center at Wharton. I4A and Africa COVID-19 Challenge<sup>8</sup> are knowledge and action-oriented platforms that provide young leaders around the world with a unique opportunity to help (1) shape the international development agenda with emphasis on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and ESG; and (2) build capacity to combat COVID-19 in Africa using ideas and innovations from young entrepreneurs. He is co-editor of the Zicklin Review, and the author or co-author of 15 books and over 180 articles and reports. He is a frequent guest at the Knowledge@Wharton Sirius Satellite Radio. In addition to two Ph.D. (one in Economics and one in Electrical Engineering), he has an MPA from Harvard Kennedy School. He was a Fulbright Scholar at Harvard University and a Visiting Scholar at Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

## COURSE OUTLINE

There is no textbook for this course. This syllabus and the readings **are subject to change** at the discretion of the instructor to accommodate the flow and interests of the class and the schedule of guest speakers. If unsure of any assignments, please ask for clarification at the end of class. The reading for each class must be completed before the lesson for which it is assigned.

### SUMMARY

#### **Class 1, August 27**

**The Big Picture – Sustainability/ESG in the Age of AI; What’s Business For? Overview of Themes, Questions, and Approaches**

#### **Class 2, September 3**

**The Hard Truth about Impact; From an Idea to Implementable Solutions with Purpose and Impact; Value Creation – for Whom and by Whom?**

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.linkedin.com/in/djordjija-petkoski-a4a43661/>

<sup>6</sup> The I4A Initiative has reached nearly 2,000,000 individuals by print and social media. Over 12,000 registered teams with more than 40,000 students and young professionals from 142 countries and territories sent nearly 6,000 proposals. In addition, Ideas for Action hosts special events at the IMF and World Bank Annual Meetings. For more details visit: <http://www.ideas4action.org/>

<sup>7</sup> Petkoski co-chaired the World Bank, Wharton, UNDP, and UNWomen SDGs&Her Initiative – an online competition for women micro-entrepreneurs to showcase how they are supporting the SDGs through their business operations (<https://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/sdgs-2030-agenda/brief/sdgs-and-her>).

<sup>8</sup> At the very beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Zicklin Center for Business Ethics Research at the Wharton School and its many partners launched a new initiative: Building Capacity to Combat COVID-19 in Africa: Ideas and Innovations from Young Entrepreneurs. (<https://www.worldbank.org/en/who-we-are/news/campaigns/2020/sdgs-and-her-initiative>)

**Class 3, September 10**

**What's the Need for Measurement and Reporting? Is Sustainability Reporting Oversold? How Hard is to Measure ESG/AI Impact?**

**Class 4, September 17**

**Human Nature - Enhancing Impact through Leadership, Values and Purpose; From Personal to Organizational Change for Impact**

**Class 5, September 24**

**ESG/AI Ecosystem, Stakeholders, and Partnership Strategies.**

**Class 6, October 1**

**Leading and Managing Transformative Change; Creating Sustainability/ESG/AI Culture**

**Class 7, October 8**

**Addressing Complex Development Challenges; The Global Sustainability/ESG/AI Ecosystem; Responsibility in Emerging Markets**

**Class 8, October 15**

**ESG/AI Research Papers/Projects Presentations; Course Review; and Takeaways**

**Feedback**

I am committed to making this course a valuable learning experience for you and I will make any necessary changes to keep us on track. I strongly encourage anyone with specific or general questions regarding the course structure, content, or discussions to contact me via email or phone.