

GROUP TERM PROJECT WITH DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS AND RUBRICS



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COURSE:

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT 3.0

(LAWG 502)

SUMMARY

In this course, students complete a Group Term Project (3-5 students per group). They choose one of three options for the project: (1) create a business plan or model for a new social enterprise; (2) draft an innovative policy proposal; or (3) draft a memo outlining a new avenue of strategic public interest litigation in the field of sustainable development. The course outline contains specific instructions and unique grading rubrics for each project option. Groups submit a 1-page brief early in the term and receive feedback from the instructor before moving forward with their projects.

GOALS

- Develop students' ability to envision effective transitions to sustainability by collaborating with peers
- Alleviate students' concerns about assessment in order to reduce anxiety
- Encourage students to submit high-quality, thoughtful work
- Assess group projects rigorously, equitably, and transparently

“Adding specific instructions helps improve the quality of the work. It helps to create clarity as to what the basic component of an assignment is, and that clarity just creates better work. Over time, I discovered that it also helps alleviate anxiety among students.”

- Sébastien Jodoin

STEPS

- 1 The instructor provides detailed instructions and assessment rubrics for each project option in the course outline so that students have ample time to read and ask questions.
- 2 Early in the semester, each team submits a 1-page brief that explains the broad objectives of the term project, as well as a preliminary outline of the eventual deliverable.
- 3 The instructor provides substantial feedback on the briefs and outlines.
- 4 Later in the term, each group meets with the instructor to discuss their progress.
- 5 Groups prepare 15-minute oral presentations and respond to peer feedback during a 10-minute Q&A session.
- 6 Groups submit their project deliverable and an assessment of their peers' contributions to the project based on a rubric.
- 7 The instructor provides feedback to each group based on the unique rubric for their project option.
- 8 Groups have the option to revise their work further to instructor feedback and continue developing their projects after the course is over.

ASSESSMENT

The group term project is worth 50% of the final grade. Each of the three project options has a unique rubric:

- [Option One: Social Enterprise Business Plan](#)
 - [Option Two: Innovative Policy Proposal](#)
 - [Option Three: Strategic Public Interest Litigation Memo](#)
- The group oral presentation is worth 30% of the final grade (applies to all options). ([rubric](#))
 - The peer assessment of each member's contribution to the project is worth 10% of the final grade (applies to all options). ([rubric](#))

READY TO TRY IT OUT?

HERE'S SOME ADVICE ...

- Draw inspiration from existing rubrics (from colleagues or the internet) and adapt them to the objectives of your course.
- Ask students for feedback about your assessment methods.

BENEFITS

- The different project formats encourage students to make connections with the world beyond the classroom.
- Students are better equipped to understand and meet assignment expectations.
- Students learn to view instructions, rubrics, and feedback as opportunities for learning.

CHALLENGES

Students may need guidance regarding how to deal with critical feedback. Clarifying from the outset that you are invested in their progress helps students understand that critical feedback does not represent failure. Giving positive feedback to balance criticism keeps students motivated to learn.

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