Master of Science in Sustainability Management

XXX xxxx: The Sustainable Transportation Economy  
[Scheduled Meeting Times]
3 credits
Elective

Instructor: Scott D Fisher, sf2557@columbia.edu  
Office Hours: By appointment  
Response Policy: I generally respond within 24 hours. If I don’t respond, please send a follow-up email or text me at 609-651-7061

Facilitator/Teaching Assistant, if applicable: [Name, title, email address and phone number]  
Office Hours: [SPS policy: Must state date, time and location; may also indicate by appointment]  
Response Policy: [Include a brief statement about your preferred means of communication and when students should expect a response from you. Will you be available 24/7 or during the workweek only? Will you generally respond within 12 or 24 hours?]

Course Overview
Transportation accounts for about 25% of global GHG emissions. Significantly reducing emissions in this sector is fundamental for addressing climate change. Historically, the technical and commercial tools for tackling emissions in this sector have lagged other sectors (for example, electricity production). But over the last several years, this dynamic has changed and there is now unprecedented capital and brainpower focused on transportation decarbonization. The course focuses on capturing the key elements that will speed the scale-up to low- and no-carbon transportation (“sustainable transportation”) across the breadth of transportation sectors. In doing so, this scale-up will create new industries and business models – and has the potential to benefit a wide group of people, including those who in the past have been disproportionately affected by poor air quality caused by existing transportation sources. The course is designed for any student who wishes to understand these elements in a deeper way.

The course will explore the decarbonization opportunities and challenges across the various transportation sectors, including light duty, commercial fleets, public transportation, aviation, and marine sectors – as well as areas that cut across all sectors, such as battery adoption, the supply chain for materials, fueling/charging, and the impact of hydrogen. Because the carbon content of propulsion fuels is dependent on other sectors (for example, the transition to renewable electricity), the course will examine the energy transition in transportation in the context of broader decarbonization trends. In exploring each transportation sub-sector, the course will focus mainly from the commercial perspective, but will incorporate the external factors (e.g., innovation, policy, macro-factors) that affect commercial success.

The course is intended for anyone wishing to further their knowledge or their career in the areas of sustainable transportation – especially in areas related to electric transportation. The course will rely on lectures and discussions, both led by the professor and guest lecturers. There are no prerequisites for the course. The course assignments will include a combination of problem sets, financial modeling, and case studies/written assignments. No previous financial modeling experience is required; the professor and/or TA will provide any extra help sessions required for any financial modeling work.

Learning Objectives
Upon successful completion of this course students should be able to:
- L1- Explain the challenges and opportunities for decarbonization across different transportation sectors
- L2- Gain fluency with the specific commercial questions that companies looking to develop scalable business models need to address in order to become successful
- L3- Analyze the impact of external factors (policies, technical innovation, macro issues) on commercial business models
- L4- Leverage the financial and analytical tools that companies and governments use to assess the market

Readings

Required Readings


Schroeder, J (2021) “How to Build EV Charging for All: Why You’re More Likely to Get an Electric Uber in Westwood Than Inglewood” Rocky Mountain Institute (9 pages) https://.rmi.org/how-to-build-ev-charging-for-all/


Yue Yanga, Emenike G.Okonkwo, Guoyong Huang, Shengming Xuh, Wei, Suna Yinghehe (2021) “On the sustainability of lithium ion battery industry – A review and perspective” Energy Storage Materials 2021 36 (30 pages) https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ensm.2020.12.019 (note need to ensure right to access for students)

Optional Readings


Assignments and Assessments

The purpose of the assignments is to build an understanding of the relevant tools needed to assess and create sustainable transportation business models. The first assignment will ensure that students are conversant with the various metrics in assessing a business or a policy initiative. The second assignment will focus on building a financial model to evaluate the viability of a sustainable transportation business. The third assignment will involve a detailed case study of one particular transportation business. The fourth assignment will be a group presentation on a particular sustainable transportation business, business strategy, or policy initiative.

For each assignment, feedback will be provided that will allow students to more successfully complete the subsequent assignment. For example, an understanding of the key evaluation metrics from the first problem set will help students complete the financial analysis in the second assignment.

All assignment page lengths are based on using times new roman 12 pt font and double spacing (where applicable). Page numbers do not include notes or works cited. Title pages are not needed.

**Participation, Attendance:** Please be prepared to participate in the class discussion. Relevant, respectful dialogue, thoughtful comments and active listening are all required as important elements of learning in a graduate environment. Active participation in class will lead you to contributing to all of the course learning objectives. (L1, L2, L3, and L4)

**Problem Set:** The purpose of this assignment is to level-set all students with the fundamental building blocks of clean transportation. The assignment will include quantitative and short-answer questions focusing on topics such as the relative carbon content of transportation fuels, basic commercial and financial analyses, the influence of policy incentives, and the impact of technology innovation. (L2, L3)
**Financial Modeling Assignment:** An important element in creating the business case to undertake a particular project is to prepare a financial model for that project. Students will be given certain basic parameters about a clean transportation project, and then asked to use those parameters to build a financial model to assess the business case for an investment in that project. *(L2, L4)*

**Case Study Analysis:** Students will be provided with a case study on a topic related to clean transportation. The assignment will have several questions (both quantitative and qualitative) that will relate to the topic of the case. *(L1, L2, L3, L4)*

**Final Group Presentation:** Students will be asked to research a particular topic related to clean transportation and present their finding on that topic to the class. The assignment will be a group assignment. *(L1, L2, L4)*

**Discussion of Assignments**
Successful practitioners in the transportation economy understand not only the qualitative/contextual elements of their work, but also the quantitative/analytical tools for advancing projects, policy objectives, and business strategies. The course is designed to cover both aspects, but because the quantitative/analytical concepts are best learned through doing the work, the first three assignments are focused on using spreadsheets for data analysis and making financial projections of projects. In the course of completing those assignments, students will gain insights on the broader contextual and macro issues discussed in class and during the reading. For the final assignment, the students will select a specific topic related to the transportation economy and integrate both the quantitative/analytical learnings and the qualitative/contextual learnings from the semester.

The grading for each of the first three assignments is objective, and based on the accurate completion of each of the questions. The first assignment is based on short answers to specific questions, while assignments two and three are more focused on analysis of projects, with each assignment generally building on the previous assignment. By completing the first three assignments, the students will gain a progressively stronger grasp of the analytical/quantitative aspects of the transportation economy and will be prepared for the fourth assignment—the final presentation. The grading for the fourth assignment (a group assignment) will be based on the following criteria: 1) the overall level of student engagement in the topic (cursory analysis vs trying to get a deeper understanding); 2) the extent to which the students integrate analytical concepts from the semester into the project; and 3) the clarity and organization of the presentation and presentation materials.

Assignments will be graded and returned generally within two weeks of submission.

**Grading**
The final grade will be calculated as described below:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>98–100 %</td>
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<td>A</td>
<td>93–97.9 %</td>
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<td>A-</td>
<td>90–92.9 %</td>
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<td>B+</td>
<td>87–89.9 %</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>83–86.9 %</td>
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<td>B-</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>73–76.9 %</td>
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<td>C-</td>
<td>70–72.9 %</td>
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D 60–69.9%
F 59.9% and below

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<tr>
<th>Assignment/Assessment</th>
<th>% Weight</th>
<th>Individual or Group/Team Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>Participation / attendance</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Individual</td>
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<td>Problem Set</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Individual</td>
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<tr>
<td>Financial Modeling Assignment</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Individual</td>
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<tr>
<td>Case Study Analysis</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Individual</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Group Presentation</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Group</td>
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Course Schedule/Course Calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics and Activities</th>
<th>Readings (due before the class session and required unless noted as optional)</th>
<th>Assignments (due on this date)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clean Transportation Foundations – The Technology, Policy, Ethical, and Economic Building Blocks for Understanding the Current Market</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>Course Intro – History of Clean Transportation and the Challenges Ahead</td>
<td>No reading assigned</td>
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<td>IEA (2021), Global EV Outlook 2021 (25 pages)</td>
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<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Environmental and Economic Analysis of Clean Transportation</td>
<td>Reichmuth, D (2021) “Plug in or Gas Up?” (5 pages)</td>
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<td>Heid, B et al (2017) “What’s sparking electric-vehicle adoption in the truck industry?” (14 pages)</td>
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<td>Xinyu Liu et al “Well-to-Wheels Analysis of Zero-Emission Plug-In Battery Electric Vehicle Technology for Medium- and Heavy-Duty Trucks” (9 pages)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Optional Reading</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Section</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Transportation Policy – Guest Lecturer Pam Frank, CEO ChargEVC</td>
<td>No reading assigned</td>
<td>Problem Set</td>
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<td><strong>Fueling the Transportation Transition: Batteries, Charging Infrastructure, and the Transportation Economy</strong></td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Charging Infrastructure for Consumers and Fleets</td>
<td>Schroeder, J (2021) “How to Build EV Charging for All” (9 pages)</td>
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<td>Hagenmaier, M, Wagener, C, Bert, J and Ohngemach, M (2021) “Winning the Battle in the EV Charging Ecosystem” (28 pages)</td>
<td>Optional Reading</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Case Study: Financial Modeling of Fleet Electrification and Charging</td>
<td>Optional Reading</td>
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<td>Heyford, S (2022) “Understanding the Time Value of Money” (2 pages)</td>
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<td>Fernando, J (2021) “Internal Rate of Return” (2 pages)</td>
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<td>Fernando, J (2021) “Net Present Value” (2 pages)</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>The Battery Supply Chain</td>
<td>Searcey, D and Lipton, E (November 29, 2021) “Hunt for the ‘Blood Diamond of Batteries’ Impedes Green Energy Push” (5 pages) or related podcast</td>
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<td>Campagnol, N, Pfeiffer, A, and Tryggestad, C. “Capturing the Battery Value Chain Opportunity” (4 pages)</td>
<td>Optional Reading</td>
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<td>Yue Yanga et al “On the sustainability of lithium ion battery industry – A review and perspective” (30 pages)</td>
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<td>Randall, T (September 14, 2021) “Tesla co-founder has a plan to become king of EV battery materials—in the U.S.” (5 pages)</td>
<td>Optional Reading</td>
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<td>Week</td>
<td>Case Study Topic</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Financial Component</td>
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<td>Week 8</td>
<td>Creation of a Viable Electric Vehicle Charging Business</td>
<td>No required reading</td>
<td>Financial Modeling Assignment</td>
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<td><strong>Sector Case Studies: Deeper Dive into Specific Transportation Sectors</strong></td>
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| Week 9 | Autonomous, Electric, Shared and the Future of Personal Transportation | Klock-McCook, E. Li, S. McLane, R. Mullaney, D. and Schroeder, J (2021) “EV Charging For All” (9 pages)  
Nuno, R. (June 24, 2021) “Issue Brief: Autonomous Vehicles: State of the Technology and Potential Role as a Climate Solution” (8 pages)  
Optional  
Gladwell, M. “I Love You Waymo” (39 minutes) | | |
Rodier, C. Harold, B. Zhang, Y. (2021) “Early Results from an Electric Vehicle Carsharing Service in Rural Disadvantaged Communities in the San Joaquin Valley” | | |
| Week 11 | Hydrogen’s Role in the Future of Transportation | Wanniarachchi, S et al (2022) “Transforming road freight transportation from fossils to hydrogen: Opportunities and challenges”  
Stinson, J (Jan 25, 2022) “Battery-electric vs. hydrogen trucks: The debate heads into 2022”  
Bloomberg (March 20, 2020) “Hydrogen Economy Outlook” | | Case Study Analysis |
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Week 12</th>
<th>Harder to Decarbonize Sectors (e.g., Air Travel, Global Shipping)</th>
<th>Lovins, Amory (August 4, 2021) “Decarbonizing Our Toughest Sectors — Profitably” MIT Sloan Management Review (8 pages)</th>
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<td>Optional Reading</td>
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<td>Gallucci, M. (March 8, 2021) “The world’s first ‘carbon-neutral’ cargo ship is already low on gas”</td>
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<td>Week 13</td>
<td>Company Case Study — Adapting to the Transportation Transition (Guest Lecture – Sara Bogdan, Head of Sustainability, Jet Blue)</td>
<td>No reading assigned</td>
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<td>Week 14</td>
<td>Student Presentations</td>
<td>Student Presentations</td>
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### Course Policies

#### Participation and Attendance

Strong participation and attendance from all students will be a critical element in having a successful semester. Participation is more than attendance. Your participation will require that you answer questions, defend your point of view, and challenge the point of view of others, all in civil fashion. Students are responsible for identifying and learning material missed due to absence.

If you are unable to attend a class, please email me ahead of the lecture.

#### Late work

There are times when work, family, or just needing the maintain the right mental frame of mind will get in the way of submitting work on time. I will grant extensions if you notify me ahead of the due date. However, I will start reducing the grade for the assignment if not submitted in a reasonable period of time after the original due date.

### School and University Policies and Resources

#### Copyright Policy

Please note—Due to copyright restrictions, online access to this material is limited to instructors and students currently registered for this course. Please be advised that by clicking the link to the electronic materials in this course, you have read and accept the following:
The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted materials. Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specified conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be "used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research." If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excess of "fair use," that user may be liable for copyright infringement.

**Academic Integrity**

Columbia University expects its students to act with honesty and propriety at all times and to respect the rights of others. It is fundamental University policy that academic dishonesty in any guise or personal conduct of any sort that disrupts the life of the University or denigrates or endangers members of the University community is unacceptable and will be dealt with severely. It is essential to the academic integrity and vitality of this community that individuals do their own work and properly acknowledge the circumstances, ideas, sources, and assistance upon which that work is based. Academic honesty in class assignments and exams is expected of all students at all times.

SPS holds each member of its community responsible for understanding and abiding by the SPS Academic Integrity and Community Standards posted at [https://sps.columbia.edu/students/student-support/academic-integrity-community-standards](https://sps.columbia.edu/students/student-support/academic-integrity-community-standards). You are required to read these standards within the first few days of class. Ignorance of the School's policy concerning academic dishonesty shall not be a defense in any disciplinary proceedings.

**Diversity Statement**

It is our intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course, that students’ learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that the students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. It is our intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender identity, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, nationality, religion, and culture.

**Ethics Statement**

**Accessibility**

Columbia is committed to providing equal access to qualified students with documented disabilities. A student’s disability status and reasonable accommodations are individually determined based upon disability documentation and related information gathered through the intake process. For more information regarding this service, please visit the University's Health Services website: [https://health.columbia.edu/services/ods/support](https://health.columbia.edu/services/ods/support).

**Class Recordings**

All or portions of the class may be recorded at the discretion of the Instructor to support your learning. At any point, the Instructor has the right to discontinue the recording if it is deemed to be obstructive to the learning process.

If the recording is posted, it is confidential and it is prohibited to share the recording outside of the class.

**SPS Academic Resources**

The Office of Student Affairs provides students with academic counseling and support services such as online tutoring and career coaching: [https://sps.columbia.edu/students/student-support/student-support-resources](https://sps.columbia.edu/students/student-support/student-support-resources).

**Columbia University Information Technology**
Columbia University Information Technology (CUIT) provides Columbia University students, faculty and staff with central computing and communications services. Students, faculty and staff may access University-provided and discounted software downloads.

Columbia University Library
Columbia's extensive library system ranks in the top five academic libraries in the nation, with many of its services and resources available online.

The Writing Center
The Writing Center provides writing support to undergraduate and graduate students through one-on-one consultations and workshops. They provide support at every stage of your writing, from brainstorming to final drafts. If you would like writing support, please visit the following site to learn about services offered and steps for scheduling an appointment. This resource is open to Columbia graduate students at no additional charge. Visit http://www.college.columbia.edu/core/uwp/writing-center.

Career Design Lab
The Career Design Lab supports current students and alumni with individualized career coaching including career assessment, resume & cover letter writing, agile internship job search strategy, personal branding, interview skills, career transitions, salary negotiations, and much more. Wherever you are in your career journey, the Career Design Lab team is here to support you. Link to https://careerdesignlab.sps.columbia.edu/

Netiquette
[Only applies to courses using online platforms]

Online sessions in this course will be offered through Zoom, accessible through Canvas. A reliable Internet connection and functioning webcam and microphone are required. It is your responsibility to resolve any known technical issues prior to class. Your webcam should remain turned on for the duration of each class, and you should expect to be present the entire time. Avoid distractions and maintain professional etiquette.

Please note: Instructors may use Canvas or Zoom analytics in evaluating your online participation.

More guidance can be found at: https://jolt.merlot.org/vol6no1/mintu-wimsatt_0310.htm

Netiquette is a way of defining professionalism for collaborations and communication that take place in online environments. Here are some Student Guidelines for this class:

- Avoid using offensive language or language that is not appropriate for a professional setting.
- Do not criticize or mock someone’s abilities or skills.
- Communicate in a way that is clear, accurate and easy for others to understand.
- Balance collegiality with academic honesty.
- Keep an open-mind and be willing to express your opinion.
- Reflect on your statements and how they might impact others.
- Do not hesitate to ask for feedback.
- When in doubt, always check with your instructor for clarification.