

Erb Seminar Syllabus

STRAT 525 / EAS 526

2021 Fall B | Ross Business School
Friday, November 5 & Friday, November 19

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Course Objectives

The Erb Seminar is a 1.5-credit course, designed and delivered by the Erb Institute and tailored specifically for incoming Erb students—including both first-year students, as well as second-year Ross and SEAS students who joined Erb as mid-year admits.

This class will examine the interplay between social and environmental sustainability, social justice and business within the context of the city of Detroit. Students will examine the complex challenges and solutions for creating a more sustainable world through the lens of energy justice, circular economy, water justice and economic empowerment.

This is a discussion-based course that offers students the opportunity to explore a carefully selected set of sustainability issues. Because this course is conducted as an “On the Road” experience, students will be traveling to Detroit to discuss real-life sustainability risks, challenges and opportunities. The goal is that this early exposure will help prepare and shape continued learning and experiences in the program as well as inform students’ understanding of



the intersection of business sustainability and justice. Following the “On the Road” experience, students will be asked to synthesize their learning experiences and key takeaways.

Erb Seminar has three complementary learning objectives:

- **Sustainability Exposure:** Expose students to a broad understanding of the complex sustainability risks, challenges and opportunities, using the city of Detroit as a contextual model.
- **Practitioner Perspective:** Temper the business perspective with real-life experiences and learnings of seasoned sustainability professionals who also have a rich perspective on how these sustainability issues play out against the backdrop of Detroit.
- **Erb Community:** Build community within the new cohort of Erb students.

This is a survey course, which presents a high-level introduction to a wide range of sustainability issues rather than a theoretical analysis or deep dive into any one issue area. A combination of Erb speakers and invited sustainability practitioners will lead the sessions. The discussions are designed to be interactive and engaging—which means that the full learning experience will depend on both speaker and student involvement.

The Erb Institute’s perspective on “robust sustainability” covers a broad range of economic, social, environmental, labor, and human-rights risks and opportunities for business. Our stakeholder-based view of the firm (contrasted with the traditional shareholder-based view) recognizes the role of both internal and external stakeholders in helping companies to better understand sustainability issues, minimize risks and leverage business opportunities.

Last, by “business”, we mean more fundamentally “markets”—a label that covers not only big for-profit transnationals, but also smaller B-Corps, social enterprises, start-ups, nonprofits that partner with business, activist and advocacy groups that pressure the business and government agencies that craft and enforce social, environmental and economic policy.

Speaker Engagement

Each of the speakers has been hand-picked for their deep social / environmental sustainability experience through business in the Detroit. They come from a variety of business, non-profit and policy backgrounds.

Course Guidelines and Expectations

The success of the course relies on a shared set of expectations and guidelines:

- Be present, engaged and actively participating in each class session
- The course discussions may address difficult, uncomfortable and challenging principles. Multiple perspectives on the same issues may be addressed. Please come prepared to



learn from various speakers and seek to understand their perspectives which have been informed by deep experience in each topical area.

- Health and safety are the number one priority of the course. Students will be expected to adhere to University of Michigan guidelines with regards to mask wearing.
 - Please no eating or drinking on the bus.

Evaluation

This course is built around dialogue of key sustainability issues and challenges. The course is more intensive in discussion and speaker engagement, than in research and long written analyses. The assignment and evaluation below reflect these priorities.

ASSIGNMENT	DESCRIPTION	EVALUATION
Participation	Attendance and active engagement with speakers	50%
Synthesis of “Erb on the Road” Experience	Review and analysis of your key learnings	50%
TOTAL:		100%

Course grades will be reflective of the Ross elective course grading policy

Attendance

The guest speakers provide a unique opportunity for candid, in-depth conversation with a select group of business and nonprofit leaders who have dedicated their careers to sustainability. Class time is designed for presentations by the guest speakers as well as a discussion and analysis of key concepts.

This in-class learning can't happen without being in-class! The expectation is set high for 100% attendance to class, and active participation (engagement with the speakers, cell phones put away) in the discussions. Because this course will take place over the course of two days, you'll have the rest of the Fall B term free.

If you are scheduled for a meeting with a recruiter that overlaps with Erb Seminar, please inform the Ross Career Development office to help manage scheduling conflicts. Students should input their course schedule into the Ross Career Services system to minimize conflicts.



Disability Accommodation

If you think you need an accommodation for a disability, please contact the instructors at your earliest convenience. Some aspects of this course (such as the assignments, the in-class activities and speaker engagement within and beyond the classroom) may be modified to facilitate your participation and progress. As soon as you make us aware of your needs, we will work with U-M's [Office of Services for Students with Disabilities \(SSD\)](#) to help us determine appropriate academic accommodations. SSD typically recommends accommodations through a Verified Individualized Services and Accommodations (VISA) form. Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such.

Instructor

EMILY KEELER, STUDENT-ALUMNI AFFAIRS MANAGER, ERB INSTITUTE

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Emily is responsible for enhancing the learning experience of Erb's dual-degree students and undergraduate Erb Fellows with business-sustainability content, including short-term projects and multi-year collaborations with companies and non-profit partners in the US and abroad. As the Student Affairs and Alumni Manager, she provides student support through on-going advising, programming, co-curricular and academic planning. Emily is responsible for increasing the quality and diversity of the Erb student body across industries, sustainability issue areas and global experience as well as supporting the network of over 500 Erb alumni in 20+ countries. Emily supervises the Student/Alumni team, leads fundraising efforts to support student impact projects, provides support for the Erb student government and develops high-impact projects.

Class Sessions

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 5TH

- Meet at Ross, Blau Hall Entrance at 7:00 AM

Time	Location	Speakers	Description/Content
7:00 am	Ross - Blau Hall Entrance Jeff T. Blau Hall		Check in with course instructor Board bus and travel to Detroit



	700 E University Ave, Ann Arbor, MI 48104		
8:30 - 10:00 am	Residence of Kerry Duggan 1783 Iroquois Ave Detroit, MI 48214	Kerry Duggan, Dr. Brandy Brown, Ben Dueweke	<p>Welcome to Detroit.</p> <p>Kerry Duggan: History of sustainability in Detroit, context for social and environmental issues; examples of work with Obama and Whitmer administrations and introduction to key concepts.</p> <p>Dr. Brandy Brown & Ben Dueweke Introduction to Walker-Miller Energy services as a key player in addressing energy issues. Themes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link between energy policies and social justice • Economic empowerment • Rectifying past disinvestments • Advocating for change <p>Breakfast will be served outside</p>
10:00 - 10:30 am			Travel
10:30 - 11:15 am	Rebel Nell 1314 Holden Street. Detroit MI 48202	Amy Peterson	<p>Rebel Nell as a model for social enterprise and economic empowerment in Detroit. Themes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does it mean to be a mission-driven organization? • Economic empowerment
11:15 - 11:45 am			Travel



11:45 - 12:45 pm	Buddy’s Pizza Downtown 1565 Broadway St, Detroit, MI 48226		Lunch at Buddy’s Pizza , a Detroit dining establishment.
12:45 - 1:20 pm	Buddy’s Pizza 1565 Broadway St, Detroit, MI 48226		Travel
1-3pm	We the People St. Peter's Episcopal Church 1950 Trumbull Detroit, MI 48206	Monica Lewis-Patrick	<p>WTP is a community-based grassroots organization, WTP aims to inform, educate, and empower Detroit residents on imperative issues surrounding civil rights, land, water, education, and the democratic process.</p> <p>Themes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History and context for water issues in Detroit • Water as a human right • Examples of community partnerships • Advocacy
3:30 - 4:00 pm			Travel from We the People to ISAIC
4:00 - 5:00 pm	ISAIC - Industrial Sewing and Innovation Center 5800 Cass Ave Detroit, MI 48202	Joseph Lybik, Jennifer Gaurino	<p>ISAIC (Industrial Sewing and Innovation Center) is a Detroit based non-profit committed to positive impact through sustainable production of high-quality goods and centered around people, education, advanced manufacturing and upward mobility work workers.</p> <p>Themes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concept of progressive good • Sustainable fashion • Economic empowerment

5:00 - 6:05 pm			Travel back to Ross from ISAIC
6:05 pm End Trip	Ross - Blau Entrance Jeff T. Blau Hall 700 E University Ave, Ann Arbor, MI 48104		

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 19TH

Meet at Ross, Winter Garden at 7:00 AM

Time	Location	Speakers	Content
7:00 – 7:45am	Ross – Winter Garden, Weiser Dining Room R1450		Breakfast will be served. Please arrive at 7am if you plan to eat. Students can socially distance or eat outside.
7:45 am	Ross – Main Entrance 701 Tappan Ave, Ann Arbor, MI 48104		Begin boarding bus & travel to Detroit
9:00 – 11:00 am	Meeting spot for tour: Roasting Plant Detroit 660 Woodward Ave, Detroit, MI 48226 <i>Tour will end at the same place.</i>	Jeanette Pierce In order to accommodate the group size, students may bring headphones to dial in: Call In #: 929-436-2866 Meeting ID: 313-555-1701 Password: 313	Walking Tour of Detroit. Themes include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Downtown’s assets from architecture to cultural gems • History of Detroit, including racist policies that have impacted the city’s Black community

		<p>One tap mobile: +1 929 436 2866,,3135551701#</p>	<p>and shaped today's climate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion of Detroit's challenges including blight, population loss and gentrification • Overview of downtown's innovation and impactful projects and small businesses
<p>11:00-12:00 pm</p>	<p>Rock Studio 1048 Woodward Ave, Detroit MI 48226</p>		<p>Lunch</p>
<p>12:00 - 1:30 pm</p>	<p>Rock Studio 1048 Woodward Ave, Detroit MI 48226</p>	<p>Kate Gasparro & Laura Grannemann</p>	<p>Bedrock is a commercial real estate firm in downtown Detroit, specializing in the strategic development of the urban core.</p> <p>Themes will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revitalization of the urban core • How real estate and sustainability go hand in hand • How continued investment in the neighborhoods can help reverse climate injustices.
<p>1:30 - 2:00 pm</p>	<p>Bedrock Detroit 1048 Woodward Ave, Detroit MI 48226</p>		<p>Travel from Bedrock to University of Michigan Detroit Center</p>
<p>2:00 - 2:30 pm</p>	<p>University of Michigan Detroit Center</p>		<p>Break</p>

	3663 Woodward Ave #150, Detroit, MI 48201		
2:30 - 3:15 pm	University of Michigan Detroit Center 3663 Woodward Ave #150, Detroit, MI 48201	Joe Tate , Erb Alumni and State Representative	Themes include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do the issues we've discussed throughout the course play out in the government? • Joe's pathway to politics and link to sustainability
3:15 - 4:00 pm	University of Michigan Detroit Center 3663 Woodward Ave #150, Detroit, MI 48201	Erb Institute	Debrief and discussion
4:00 - 5:00 pm	University of Michigan Detroit Center 3663 Woodward Ave #150, Detroit, MI 48201	Laprisha Berry Daniels, Detroiter's Working for Environmental Justice	DWEJ - Advocating for a healthy environment through innovative community policy action that values all people. Themes include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of DWEJ's mission • Examples of initiatives in Detroit • Challenges and opportunities for the future
5:00 – 6:00 pm	University of Michigan Detroit Center 3663 Woodward Ave #150, Detroit, MI 48201		Travel from U-M Detroit Center back to Ross

5:30 - 7:00 pm	Andiamo Detroit Riverfront CANCELLED 400 Renaissance Center A-03, Detroit, MI 48243		Dinner and Erb Community Celebration, reflection of the course
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Assignment 1 | Erb on the Road synthesis (individual)

Audience Erb Seminar

Due Date Thursday, December 2, (11:59 pm)

Author Individual

Deliverable Submit your synthesis of your key learnings from the Erb on the Road experience to Canvas by **December 2**, answering the following questions:

- Considering what you have already learned in your Ross/SEAS courses combined with your prior educational or professional experiences before joining Erb, what were two viewpoints from the “Erb on the Road” experience that challenged your assumptions about business/sustainability strategies?
- What are your key takeaways about the intersection of social justice and sustainability? We will define social justice as the viewpoint that everyone deserves equal economic, political and social rights and opportunities.
- What should be the role of business in responding to inequality? We will define inequality as the unequal/unjust distribution of resources and opportunities among members of a given society.

Written report 1,000 words (approx. 4 pages).

*This does not include appendices and footnotes.

Evaluation The assignment will be evaluated on the following criteria:



- 1) Content: Strength of essay which should include strong analysis of key takeaways from the Erb on the Road experience and demonstrated application of speaker content to building student capacity for knowledge (70%)
- 2) Written Style: Clarity, conciseness and grammar. (30%)

More information to be provided on Canvas after the 19th.

Resources:

Review websites for each site visit

- [Walker Miller Energy](#)
- [Rebel Nell](#)
- [We the People of Detroit](#)
- [ISAIC](#)
- [Bedrock](#)
- [Michigan Minority Supplier Development Council](#)
- [Detroitters Working for Environmental Justice](#)

Additional Articles:

[A message to the CEO's: Make the Change](#)

[Water Insecurity and Psychosocial Distress: Effects of the Detroit Water Shutdown](#)

[Detroit Office of Sustainability](#)

[Detroit Segregation Wall](#)

[Bedrock says clean energy initiative to supply 15% of its power in 2023](#)

[The blackest city in the US is facing an environmental justice nightmare](#)

[Who were the Natives in Detroit?](#)

[The Detroit Riverfront Conservancy](#)

[Foreclosure Outreach](#)



