# AEM 3000: Working Together: Project Development and High-Performing Teams – Spring 2024

| Section | Meeting Time | Meeting Location | Professors |
|---------|-------------|------------------|------------|
| 001 | Tu/Th 10:10AM - 11:25AM | Bradfield Hall 101 | Sauer & Wolfolds |
| 002 | Tu/Th 11:40AM - 12:55PM | Bradfield Hall 101 | Sauer & Wolfolds |

*1.5 Credits, Graded*

| Instructor | Contact | Office Hours |
|------------|---------|--------------|
| Stephen Sauer | 362 Sage Hall<br>sjs46@cornell.edu | MW 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm, or by appointment<br><br>Book on Calendly:<br>https://calendly.com/sjs46/office-hours |
| Sarah Wolfolds | 375C Warren Hall<br>sew276@cornell.edu | M 10:00 am – 12:00 pm; or by appointment<br><br>Book on Calendly:<br>https://calendly.com/sew276/office-hours |

## Course Description:

The Charles H. Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management at Cornell University established the Grand Challenges Program to provide experiential learning opportunities for undergraduates to apply their business skills to the most pressing societal challenges of our time using the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) as a framework. The program seeks to build awareness among students of the broader impacts of business on society and, through the process of public engagement, to strengthen their leadership and professional skills. Our goal is to have every student complete a community-engaged learning business experience where the goals and impacts of a hands-on project are critically assessed for its opportunity to build a better world.

This course develops both the theory and skills to allow you to go into your Grand Challenges Projects, and your internships and careers, with a set of professional and relational skills that will allow you to thrive in these environments. Because this course is built to help you take these concepts into the workplace, engagement is incorporated throughout to allow you to "see" and practice these ideas. Through guest speakers, group projects, case studies, in-class exercises, and reflection assessments, you will iterate and come to your own way of practicing how to lead and work in an organization that harnesses the key human factors while addressing Grand Challenges.

A detailed class calendar is provided in **Appendix A.**

# Learning Goals:

1. Acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to build and manage high-performing teams.
2. Translate knowledge of stakeholders and SDGs to identify and scope projects.
3. Build and maintain relationships by effectively resolving disputes and managing conflict in professional settings.
4. Practice persuasion and getting buy-in with pitch presentations.
5. Demonstrate proficiency in project management and client interaction skills, including agenda setting, running effective meetings, and establishing valuable contacts.
6. Critically reflect on the impact and experience of community engaged learning.

# Course Evaluation

**Assignment Points**

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. **Topic Proposal (Individual)** | 25 points |
| 2. **Team Charter and Topic (Group)** | 25 points |
| 3. **Stakeholder Map and Research Plan (Group)** | 50 points |
| 4. **Pitch Video and Proposal Form (Group)** | 100 points |
| 5. **Critical Reflection (Individual)** | 50 points |
| 6. **Participation (Individual)** | 50 points |
| *Total* | *300 points* |

## 1. Topic Proposal (Individual) – 25 points

DUE February 6th at 10 am on Canvas

This assignment tasks you with investigating how Sustainable Development Goals are playing into today's current events. For this assignment, find a news article from the past year (published at or after January 2023) that pertains to a UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) at a local, regional, national, or global scale. Discuss this article and your perspective on the UN SDGs with another human being (can be a peer, friend, parent, dining hall clerk, anyone).

After doing so, write a 1 page single-spaced reflection. This reflection should include two pieces:

1. Compare and contrast your SDG perspectives and opinions on the article based on your conversation with said human being.
   a. Consider – why did you choose that conversation partner?
   b. Critically reflect on your conversation: What insights did you have from talking with someone about the article? Did you update any views?
2. Write about why this is an important topic and how/whether there is a relevant organization you could partner with for a project.
   a. Identify a company and an explanation of why that might be a relevant organization.
   b. Identify which specific UN SDG(s) is(/are) relevant for this article.

## 2.  Team Charter and Topic (Group) – 25 points

Please download and complete the following [team charter](#) and discuss amongst your group to determine the topic for your Pitch Video and Proposal Project.

The assignment requires you to download and fill out the team charter template as well as briefly describe the one topic your group wishes to work on for the rest of the class.  The team charter has everyone pick a role and then describes the team's mission, goals, and norms and processes around meetings, participation, assignments, communication, etc.

Only one submission is necessary per group.

## 3.  Stakeholder Map and Research Plan (Group) – 50 points

For this assignment, use two Powerpoint slides to map the relevant stakeholders for your project and provide highlights of your research plan.

On the first slide, map your Stakeholders.  For each stakeholder, list specific people within the organization that you might be able to contact (and their information).  You can use the documents within the Stakeholder Map Tools Module for inspiration. Specifically, you should:
-   Include the most relevant key stakeholders;
-   List specific stakeholders and/or categories of stakeholders (e.g. food banks) with multiple specific relevant institutions/organizations/individuals within each;
-   Include a description of the role that stakeholder has in addressing the topic (either as a specific company or category wide).

On the second slide, use bullet points or another format to identify:
- What qualitative research will you do? Who will you talk to? What questions will you ask?
- What quantitative research will you do? List specific databases and information.

In general, we are looking for:
-   Clear and direct descriptions of the planned research/data;
-   Specific qualitative questions and quantitative data to be investigated;
-   Reflection or (brief) description as to why these qualitative questions and qualitative data are being investigated / what the answers will be used for;
-   And inclusion of the key sources of data for the topic.

Points will be awarded for effectiveness, attractiveness, and accessibility/readability, as these are important values that clients seek in their consulting partners. Pretend that the grader is your client. They should be able to understand and receive value from your map without guidance.

Only one submission is necessary per group.

## 4. Pitch Video and Proposal Form (Group) – 100 points

This assignment is two-fold:
1. Record and submit a two minute (+/- 15 second) pitch video. Why is this project worth pursuing? Be sure to describe its connection to current events and the SDGs. You will not be graded on the technical editing of your video but you will be graded for creativity, storytelling, and fluidity, so let your artistic juices flow!

2. Fill out and submit a proposal form as if you were submitting this as a student developed project, linked here: https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/2b766948144b483b9ad4b33ffc3edb8f The general client project guidelines for Grand Challenges are a useful resource.

In general, for the pitch content, we are looking for:

- Clear connection between background information and proposed project;
- Clear message around the proposed project and feasibility of the recommendation.
    - If you say "our" do you mean the partner organization? The student team?
    - Important to describe both the current state of work in that part of the SDG category and what the specific solution or KPIs of success are.
- Discussion of what stakeholders your group talked to, and how it might have influenced your proposal; for example, you might want to consider touching on some of the below:
    - *What is the problem?*
    - *Who did you talk to? What did you learn?*
    - *What did they tell you the problem is? What do you think about the problem now?*
    - *What needs to change so the problem no longer exists?*
    - *Paint a picture of what the end state looks like if you're successful.*

Only one submission is necessary per group.

## 5. Critical Reflection (Individual) – 50 points

For this assignment, write a 2-3 page double-spaced critical reflection reflecting on the experience of this group project and goals for entering the AEM 4000 Grand Challenges Capstone Course. Within this reflection:

1. Identify a characteristic of your teamwork within AEM 3000 that you would like to build upon or grow.
2. Explain how your learning experience and project connected with the UN SDGs.
3. What were the strengths and weaknesses of both your AEM 3000 pitch team overall and your contributions to the team?
4. Describe any takeaways you'll take into your next year at Cornell and your AEM 4000 capstone projects.

In general, reflections should:
- Consider how the engaged learning activity benefits, or alternatively could benefit, stakeholders beyond shareholders.
    - What is the direct impact on stakeholders in their project? What about larger, indirect benefits beyond the scope of your project?
    - Who are the pertinent stakeholders?
- How has the learning experience advanced your thinking on furthering sustainability, improving diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging, and/or advancing shared prosperity in the present and across generations?
    - What are your takeaways upon reflection from the course content or project?
    - What broader SDGs were most relevant to your experience?
- Reflect upon how you can apply this learning in future endeavors.
    - Are there next steps from your project?
    - Are there other ways you apply the learning in AEM 4000 and in your future career?

## 6. **Participation (Individual) – 50 points**

Part of your grade will be based on active participation in in-class exercises and discussions. A critical component of this course is engaged discussion, and it is your responsibility to come to class prepared to share your insights and to listen to and interpret the ideas presented by others.

A note on preparation: in some discussions, all you need to be a good contributor is a willingness to honestly share your own experiences and opinions. In most others, though, your contribution to the class will depend on your pre-class preparation, and we expect you to arrive ready to participate. In addition to preparation, it is critical to listen to your classmates during our discussions. Some of the best participation involves building upon or making counter-arguments to previous statements. While we will facilitate class participation, you are ultimately responsible for your performance. Ways in which you can contribute to class participation include:

- Frame the problem – what is the core of the issue?
- Succinctly answer the question on the floor, using evidence to support your argument;
- Ask a thoughtful question;
- Ask a classmate a respectful question about their argument;
- Provide a counter-argument to a classmate's argument;
- Provide an insight or integrative comment across topics, cases or readings.

Students will earn participation points whenever they engage in a discussion or contribute to a conversation that helps move the class forward in whatever lesson we are trying to learn. Especially insightful comments or answers to meaningful questions might earn multiple points. At the end of the course, points are tallied up and participation grades are assigned accordingly. We will adjust the participation grading formula as needed, depending on the mean and median number of participation points overall. Please see me if you are showing up to class prepared but are having trouble participating.

# Teaching Methodology

This course relies on the case method and discussion of real-world events, along with role-plays which gives you the opportunity to learn by doing. By actively participating in class discussions, you will sharpen your own insights, and those of your classmates. You will not only become familiar with the content of the course, but perhaps more importantly, you will also learn to apply and practice ideas around leadership and harnessing human factors in organizations, as well as communication of those ideas.

Please bear in mind as you prepare for class that leadership and managing human factors rely on no straightforward formula. There are no easy and obvious answers to the human-centered problems and concerns facing firms. There are, however, some time-proven theories, frameworks, and techniques that can be applied so that organizations and leaders can better employ human factors.

To help us maintain a vibrant and respectful community in this class, we will be observing the following class norms that are based on common workplace policies:

1. **Be courteous and professional**. Attend class regularly and come on time. Please refrain from engaging in side conversations while others are speaking.

2. **Form opinions, express them, and respect others' differing opinions.** Soliciting different opinions will allow us to gain a deeper understanding of the course materials and will help us to come up with better ideas.

3. **Allow everyone a chance to talk.** If you have a lot to say, try to hold back a bit and listen attentively to others.  If you are hesitant to speak, come see me but also look for opportunities to contribute to the discussion.

# Course Readings

- Your course packet will be made available through CAMP.  Other readings are available through the library or will be posted on Canvas.  Please reach out to the TAs or instructors if you have difficulty accessing them.
- Canvas will be used to update your grades and share other course materials.

# University Policies

1. **Academic Integrity**: Each student in this course is expected to abide by the Cornell University Code of Academic Integrity. Any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit will be the student's own work. You are encouraged to study together and to discuss information and concepts covered in this course and the sections with other students. However, this permissible cooperation should never involve one student having possession of a copy of all or part of work done by someone else, in the form of an

electronic or hard copy. Should copying occur, both the student who copied work from another student and the student who gave material to be copied will both automatically receive a zero for the assignment/exam. Penalty for violation of this Code can also be extended to include failure of the course and University disciplinary action. Please see the essential guide[1] to Academic Integrity at Cornell for additional information.

2. **Accommodations for students with disabilities**: Your access in this course is important. Please give me your Student Disability Services (SDS) accommodation letter early in the semester so that we have adequate time to arrange your approved academic accommodations. If you need an immediate accommodation for equal access, please speak with me after class or send an email message to me and/or SDS at sds_cu@cornell.edu. If the need arises for additional accommodations during the semester, please contact SDS.[2]

3. **Inclusivity:** We understand that our members represent a rich variety of backgrounds and perspectives. Dyson is committed to providing an atmosphere for learning that respects diversity. While working together to build this community we ask everyone to:
   a. share their unique experiences, values and beliefs
   b. be open to the views of others
   c. honor the uniqueness of their colleagues
   d. appreciate the opportunity that we have to learn from each other
   e. value each other's opinions and communicate in a respectful manner
   f. keep confidential discussions that the community has of a personal nature
   g. use this opportunity together to discuss ways in which we can create an inclusive environment in this course and across the Cornell community

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[1] See: https://provost.cornell.edu/_files/faculty-resources/essential-guide-academic-integrity.pdf

[2] SDS is located on level 5 of Cornell Health, 110 Ho Plaza, 607-254-4545, sds.cornell.edu.

# Appendix A: Class Meetings – by Week

| No. | Date | Topic | Assignments/Readings Due |
|-----|------|-------|--------------------------|
| 1 | 1/23<br><br>SW1 | **Grand Challenges Introduction**<br><br>Content: Grand Challenges, UN SDGs, Community Engaged Learning<br><br>Skills: What, So What, Now What Framework; Ikigai Tool | In-Class: Syllabus<br><br>In-Class: What, So What, Now What<br><br>In-Class: UN SDGs<br><br>In-Class: Ikigai |
| 2 | 1/25<br><br>SW2 | **Defining the "What": Identifying a Challenge**<br><br>Content/Guest: Stakeholders, Grand Challenges Client Relationships<br><br>Skills: Research tactics | Watch: Ready, Set, Engage! Principles and Practice of Community Engagement<br><br>Read: Carla Ann Harris at Morgan Stanley, *Harvard Business School Case,* 2014.<br><br>In-Class: Empathy + Unconscious Bias<br><br>In-Class: Project Partner Guest Discussion |
| 3 | 1/30<br><br>SS1 | **Building High-Performing Teams**<br><br>Content: Team development<br><br>Skills: Understanding influence, working as a team | DUE: Team Selection<br><br>Read: Using the Stages of Team Development, Judith Stein, MIT<br><br>In-Class: Survival! |
| 4 | 2/1<br><br>SS2 | **Functioning as a High-Performing Team**<br><br>Content: Biases and pitfalls in group decision-making<br><br>Skills: Team Charter | Watch: Marshmallow Challenge<br><br>Watch: Build a Tower, Build a Team<br><br>Read: What Google Learned from Its Quest to Build the Perfect Team, *New York Times Magazine*, 2016<br><br>In-Class: Logo Branding Opportunity |
| 5 | 2/6<br><br>SW3 | **Understanding So What: Stakeholder Analysis**<br><br>Content: Stakeholders; macro view of the issue (data etc.)<br><br>Skills: Collective capacity building, Asset Map | DUE: Individual Topic Proposals<br><br>Watch: Asset-Based Community Development Video – CETR (northeastern.edu)<br><br>Read: Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD): core principles by Ivis Garcia<br><br>In-Class: Stakeholder analysis (pmi.org), Organizational Scan (ecornell.s3.amazonaws.com) |

| 6 | 2/8 SW4 | **Understanding So What: Quantitative + Qualitative Data**<br><br>Content: Importance of data; balancing stakeholders needs<br><br>Skills: where to look for data; quantitative and qualitative data | Read: The #BlackLivesMatter Movement: Balancing Stakeholders at TechTeen<br><br>OR<br><br>Read: The Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program: Impact on Stakeholders<br><br>In-Class: Identifying relevant sources of quantitative data; finding information on qualitative data |
|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | 2/13 SS3 | **Stakeholder Discovery**<br><br>Content: Engaging with stakeholders to understand the problem<br><br>Skills: Finding and conducting interviews; cold calls and connections | DUE: Team Charters and Topic (team)<br><br>Read: Talking to Humans, pages 31-51, 67-68<br><br>In-Class: Developing testable hypotheses; making a connection |
| 8 | 2/15 SS4 | **Stakeholder Discovery – Part 2**<br><br>Content: Engaging with stakeholders<br><br>Skills: Asking the right questions; listening | Read: Talking to Humans, pages 52-65, 76-79<br><br>In-Class: Interviewing practice |
| 9 | 2/20 SS5 | **Now What – Conflict Management and Teamwork**<br><br>Content: Dispute resolution<br><br>Skills: Working in a team – conflict management | Read: How to Handle a Disagreement on Your Team *Harvard Business Review*, 2017<br><br>In-Class: Quickstop Mall |
| 10 | 2/22 SW5 | **Now What – Getting the Work Done**<br><br>Content/Guest: Lisa Gerber and Grand Challenges Project Teams<br><br>Skills: Project Management/Prioritization | DUE: Stakeholder Map and Research Plan (team)<br><br>Read: What Leaders Really Do<br><br>In-Class: Project Management tools and approaches and best-practices for projects |
|  | 2/27 | *No Class – February Break* |  |
| 11 | 2/29 SW6 | **Now What - Scoping a Project and Critical Reflection**<br><br>**Skills:** Project Scope; Critical Reflection | Read: Lummi (stanford.edu)<br><br>In-Class: Critical Reflections Definitions and Characteristics (ecornell.s3.amazonaws.com)<br><br>In-Class: Crafting your Life Simulation |

| 12 | 3/5  SS6 | **Presenting and Making a Persuasive Case**  Presenting/pitch deck/how to rehearse/story-telling | Read: Cialdini, R. B. (2001). Harnessing the Science of Persuasion. *Harvard Business Review*, 79(9), 72-79. |
|----|----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 13 | 3/7  SS+ SW | **Work Session**  TAs and Professors will be available to give feedback/answer questions | |
| 14 | 3/12  SS+ SW | **Pitches and Conclusion** | DUE: Pitch Video + Proposal Form (team)  *(DUE March 22nd: Critical Reflections (individual))* |