

Montréal, Québec

May 2009

Dear Graduate Student:

Welcome to the on-line course MBA 610N700, Global Environment of Business, for Summer 2009. This course begins on Tuesday, May 26. I will be teaching this course with the assistance of Ralph Van de Plasse, MBA and possibly one other person, depending on registration.

There are several elements to the course that you must be aware of. First, it is a heavy reading and writing course. And because it is only ten weeks long, it is very fast-paced.

The elements that you must keep up with each week are:

- Readings, including Lecture Notes
- Written assignments and
- Discussion Groups

We will try to replicate, in part, the classroom setting through the Discussion Groups, and the Lecture Notes. We will assist you as much as we can. It will be important for you to participate often and well in the Discussion Groups. And never hesitate to email me or the other instructor(s) with your questions.

In order to make sure that you spend quality time digesting and assimilating the reading materials, and doing the assignments, I normally do not make assignments available in advance of the week in which they are due. I want you to focus on the work for the week we are currently in, rather than trying to work ahead. However, if you have to be away on a BUSINESS trip for more than 3 or 4 days, please let me know, and it may be possible to let you work ahead in preparation for that absence.

First, please read the Syllabus. There is important information there, including grading information. Also, make sure that you are able to get access to the Marist library on line as well as the Ebrary. You will need these resources a lot during the course.

Second, let me underline this: You will be graded individually on your essays, not only on content but also on presentation. By presentation I mean you should be logical, concise and use accurate and proper English.

You will also be graded on the quality and quantity of participation in the Discussion Groups each week. We will only do the grading on this portion of your performance at the end of the course, so there will not be grades for the individual weeks' discussions themselves.

With respect to grades, please be aware that grading is a subjective process in which we the instructors undertake to give you our impression of your overall achievement in the course. It is not done with mathematical precision; it involves plus and minus factors, which I in consultation with the assisting instructor(s) feed in at the end of the course. Therefore you will not be able to "compute" your grade as you go along. The best way to

get a good grade is to spend less time thinking about your grade and more time reading, thinking, writing, and participating.

Each week I will open a new Packet of materials. I will usually do this on Saturday evening, just as you are getting ready to hand in your essay for the week. You should check Assignments and Course Materials/Packets every week. With respect to the Discussion Groups, I will usually allow a day or two for you to read the material and then I will post a question in the Discussion Groups. Beware! I can always post another question or follow-up questions, so **YOU SHOULD LOG IN TO THE COURSE SITE EVERY DAY** to see what is new. I will also communicate frequently to the entire class by email, another reason to stay closely connected.

So the Weekly Cycle will usually look like this:

Saturday: Packets and Assignments posted

Monday: New Discussion questions posted (keep an eye on this because there might be secondary ones during the week)

Wednesday: Discussion Groups for the previous week **WILL BE LOCKED** and no more posts allowed.

Sunday Midnight: Essays due

In the first week there is another brief assignment due that will not be graded but read with great interest by the instructors.

If you have taken other courses in eLearning, you will know the drill, but you should write your essays in Word and upload them in the Assignment areas available. You only get to upload one version. I am using the latest version of Word (it uses the extension .docx) so I can open regular .doc documents or the more recent version. Your choice.

In the last week there will be Discussion Groups and the **FINAL EXAM**. The final will be almost like another essay assignment with, likely, two questions (don't hold me to this, though). It will be due on July 19. The final will require you to integrate all the concepts and skills you have worked on during the course.

The text you should buy is Walking the Talk: The Business Case for Sustainable Development, by Holliday, Schmidheiny, and Watts, ISBN 187 47 19500. You should read the first two chapters, even though the actual assignments for Week One will be on the structure of corporations. They are interrelated, and it will be helpful for the first two chapters of WTT to be “percolating” in your head while we do the background work. I will also probably be assigning some chapters from another book. It is available in the Marist Ebrary. This book is called A Short Course in International Business Ethics by Charles Mitchell (World Trade Press, 2003. ISBN 1-885073-63-1. You can buy it if you prefer to read from a hard copy. I got mine from Amazon.com quite quickly, and they have used ones available.

If you have technical questions, you may email Jean.Theobald@marist.edu. I will not be available until the course actually starts, so questions about the coursework itself will need to wait until the 26th. But don't worry! You have lots of reading to do, so you can get a good start on that.

As soon as the site is available to you, please DO go to the Discussion Group called The Lounge and post a short introduction of yourself. It's nice to get acquainted, find out what sorts of background people bring to the course, and so on. The instructors will all do one on themselves, as well, so you can have an idea of who we are. See you online!

Sincerely,

Jill de Villafranca, MBA