

COURSE SYLLABUS

ENRGYENV 629

EDGE Seminar Series on Energy & Environment

Spring 1 & 2 2025: January 29-April 23, 2025

Select Wednesdays, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

2008 MBA Classroom, Fuqua School of Business

<p>Professor : Dan Vermeer Email: dv24@duke.edu Office: Fuqua A235 Cell Phone: (919) 448-5555</p> <p>Office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:45-2:30 PM; Check Dan's Outlook calendar to schedule a 30-minute block</p>	<p>Teaching Assistants: Ben Jackson ben.jackson@duke.edu</p> <p>Prisha Tiwari prisha.tiwari@duke.edu</p>
---	---

Course Description

The EDGE Seminar Series on Energy & Environment brings business decision makers and thought leaders to Duke to share their insights on the key issues and trends driving business strategy at the intersection of energy, development, and environment.

The market environment for businesses in the 21st century is profoundly shaped by the convergence of three inter-related megatrends: 1) A rapidly-growing global human population of over 7 billion, projected to reach 10 billion in coming decades, all of whom aspire to a middle class quality of life; 2) A radical expansion and transformation of global resource, energy, and infrastructure systems needed to accommodate global society's needs; and 3) Growing stress on the ecosystems that support both #1 and #2. The interaction of these forces has critical implications for every aspect of business decision-making. The purpose of this seminar to explore how these trends are evolving, and how business leaders are creatively responding to protect and grow their businesses.

This seminar will highlight efforts of leading companies as they reduce risks and negative impacts while enhancing profits and positive outcomes. In this seminar series, we will highlight emerging "next practices" in energy management and sustainable development, focusing especially on high impact sectors such as energy, agriculture, mining, manufacturing, and the industries that support them.

The information below describes the objectives, mechanics and requirements of the EDGE Seminar Series.

COURSE SYLLABUS

Objectives

- Expand the breadth and depth of students’ understanding of energy, environment, and sustainable development issues and trends, and their relevance to business strategy and practice.
- Complement the MBA general management courses by demonstrating applications to energy and environment-related industry sectors.
- Facilitate interaction between E&E-related students, alumni, thought leaders, and prospective employers.
- Apply analytic skills to develop an informed point of view on current trends, challenges, and controversies related to the business of energy and environment.

Schedule

The seminar series will meet on select Wednesdays from 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM. The EDGE Seminar Series will be coordinated with the MBAA and campus-wide calendars to minimize conflicts.

A typical seminar will be organized as follows:

- Seminar speakers, titles, dates/times, readings, and topics will be posted on the class Canvas site, where students will access readings and other preparatory materials. Some details of the seminar may shift as seminar speakers prepare and logistics change – so check the details on Canvas in the week leading up to the seminar for final plans and resources.
- A typical seminar will include a 30-minute debrief discussion on the previous seminar speaker, 45-minute presentation by the speaker, followed by 10-minute break and 35-minute Q&A session. Occasionally, a seminar may include a more targeted discussion, interactive activity, breakout sessions, or other format.
- Students submit blog posts to Canvas by 11:59 PM on Sunday after the seminar.
- In addition to the seminar, students will have the opportunity to sign up for a lunch with the speaker, paid for by EDGE. You can sign up for a lunch with your preferred speaker [here](#). Please sign up for only one lunch during the term. If there are additional seats open for a particular speaker, those slots will be offered on day of the seminar.

Spring 2025 sessions include:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Speaker</u>
1/29	Andrea Goldman - Senior Manager, Climate Change and Sustainability Services
2/5	Reese Pacheco – Investor, Propeller
2/12	Matt Rising – Managing Partner, Emergent Strategic Partners
3/19	Travis Peoples - Sustainability + Circularity Leader at the LEGO Group
3/26	Gaukhar Nazarova - VC Investor, Amazon Climate Pledge Fund, Amazon
4/2	tbd
4/16	Paul Polman (by zoom) – Former Chief Executive Officer, Unilever
4/23	Final synthesis session

COURSE SYLLABUS

Attendance & Absence Policy

Participating students must attend the **mandatory** kickoff and concluding sessions, **plus 5 of the remaining 6 scheduled seminars** each semester. For each seminar, students will student confirm their attendance through Fuqua Check In, and commit to participating in the entire session. Doing otherwise is a violation of the honor code. Absences will be tracked, and students are responsible to track their own absences and follow the policy. Students who exceed the absence policy must contact the instructor beforehand to make alternative arrangements, or will see a significant negative impact on their grade.

Course Credit and Requirements

The course is offered at 1.5 credits, and will be graded by the Fuqua rating system (e.g. SP, HP, P, etc.) for Fuqua students, and letter grades for non-Fuqua participants.

Class Materials

Course web site: Access through Canvas (details provided in class)

Course Requirements

Seminar Participation (25%)

Active participation is an important part of the learning process in this course. You will learn a great deal from the ideas of others in the class. It is essential that you come to the seminars prepared to ask insightful questions of the speaker, and share your insights with others. You will be evaluated on the quality of your contributions and insights. A contribution to class discussions builds on the preceding discussion, and moves it forward to generate new insights. To ensure that your contributions are recorded, please display a clearly visible, legible nameplate.

Good inputs, both in class and in writing, are insightful and relevant. They should use logic and evidence (e.g. specific topics from the presentation), and should do more than just summarize the speaker's points, or express an opinion without evidence. Quality of comments is as important as quantity, and dominating class discussions can negatively affect your participation grade. For each class, we will record your active participation in the discussion, questions raised either in person or on the board, and general level of engagement. These factors will often affect a final class score by at least 1 grade level (up or down).

Blog posts (40% total - 20 points for each blog post)

Students must submit a minimum of **2 blog posts** addressing key themes from the seminars, suitable for publishing on the EDGE Notes blog. These articles should be ~750-1,000 words depending on the topic and your argument; shorter posts often have insufficient analysis, and may be penalized. Each blog post should explicitly address the seminar speaker (by name), identify a key position or argument from the seminar, and advance your own point of view about the topic.

COURSE SYLLABUS

You must submit a total of 2 blog posts over the course of the semester – to make sure these are distributed over the semester, ***you must complete 1 blog post for one of the first three seminar speakers (#1-3), and a second blog for one of the final 4 speakers (#4-7).*** Failure to submit according to this guideline will negatively affect your grade. You do not need approval from the professor for which seminars you write about. However, you are responsible for ensuring that two blogs are submitted by the end of the semester.

Your post can disagree with a speaker's position, apply an insight to a new question or domain, or identify the limits of the speaker's argument. It may briefly summarize some of the speaker's main points (no need for a comprehensive summary), but should primarily focus on your reflection or argument. It should use and cite external references where appropriate, either from class readings or other sources. The posts will be evaluated based on their clarity, insight, creativity, persuasiveness, and quality of writing.

All blog posts must be submitted to the Canvas site by **11:59 PM on the Sunday following the seminar**. Further guidance on blog posts will be provided in the orientation session in the first class. After each seminar, one or two of the best posts will be published to the *EDGE Notes* blog (with student permission).

Guidance for blog posts

- Please include a title for your post, and put your name and date on the document (in the header or elsewhere).
- Ensure that your post has correct spelling and grammar.
- Please be sure to identify which seminar you are commenting on in the text, including the name and organization of the speaker.
- You may ask a peer to read your post before submitting – as long as the peer either 1) is not taking the EDGE Seminar this term, 2) has already submitted their post, or 3) will not submit a post for this seminar.

Citations – please see “Citations” guidance document on Canvas/Admin. You are responsible to ensure proper citations in your posts and paper.

Final Essay and Presentation (35%)

At the end of the semester, the instructor will provide a small number of core questions raised by the speakers in the seminar series, and students will complete a 1,000-word essay responding to **one** of these questions. The essay should clearly answer the question, and provide support for their argument using insights from the speakers or other sources. Don't forget to provide appropriate citations! In addition, students will summarize the highlights of their argument on 1 slide to share in the last class session.

Late Assignments: If you have a very good reason for not being able to turn in an assignment on time, *please email the professor beforehand* to make other

COURSE SYLLABUS

arrangements. Otherwise, your grade will be adjusted downward as appropriate to the assignment.

AI in the Classroom

The rapid development and adoption of artificial intelligence tools (e.g. ChatGPT, Bard, Workspace) has dramatic implications for almost every human endeavor, including education. In recent months, I have been studying these tools and experimenting with the full range of possible uses in research, writing, and communication. I expect that most of you are also trying to master these powerful new assets in your work. In general, I encourage you to learn about these tools, experiment with them, and integrate them into your routines. Below, I provide my guidance on acceptable use, and the policy I will enforce in this course.

Acceptable use

AI tools can be used for the following purposes:

- **Research:** You can use AI tools to gather information about a topic of interest. This may be particularly helpful in the early stages of research but should not be considered a reliable source of information. Once you have identified relevant information, I strongly encourage you to confirm this information from a trusted source. Treat the tool as an interested peer research partner, but one that is prone to share false or distorting information. Seek its input, but be sure to confirm factual details, challenge conclusions, and own the narrative.
- **Writing:** Be careful in using AI to generate text for your deliverables. You may query your topic to get ideas and flesh out themes, but I recommend putting it away when you actually start to write your post. This has a few benefits; for example, it can reduce the likelihood of plagiarism. It can also enable your real voice to come through in the writing. Even though AI-generated text is smooth and grammatical, it tends to be too flat and generic for an opinion-oriented writing assignment. With this in mind, I plan to more highly rate written products that have a clear “voice”. The more you sound like a person with values and opinions, the less likely it will be mistaken for AI product.
- **Editing:** AI tools also have the ability to provide revision advice to your written content. This is another area where you should proceed cautiously. You can seek the AI tool’s feedback to improve your writing (sentence structure, grammar, succinct points, etc.), but don’t rely heavily on this functionality. As in the above cases, you will need to make value judgments constantly to make the best use of the tools without sacrificing your integrity as a scholar and thinker.

Policy: In general, I permit and encourage you to use AI tools for this class, given the listed considerations. Regarding all work in this course or others, the submission must be your own. Any time that you copy, quote, summarize, or paraphrase materials for other people or other sources – including AI tools – you must be

COURSE SYLLABUS

properly quote or cite the source. Failure to document your sources will be considered plagiarism, which can result in a failed assignment grade, a fail for the course, and/or disciplinary action by the School. For more information on Duke's plagiarism policies, see [Duke Library's resource page](#). Note that this policy is consistent with the Fuqua Honor Code (included below) which provides further guidance on expectations.

If you use material from an AI tool, you can cite it with language like "Generated with Chat GPT". If necessary, you may also track and cite your use of AI using the guidelines provided in Monash University's [Acknowledging the Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence](#). The one exception I make is that you are not required to cite use of Grammarly (or similar tools) which help refine your writing style, but do not contribute to the content. Therefore, I consider these tools in a different category, like a dictionary or thesaurus.

AI creates almost unimaginable possibilities for improving our societies, economic systems, and educational experiences. It also threatens to undermine many of the institutions, capabilities, and certainties we trust about the world we live in. At this early stage of evolution, I invite you to be partners in developing wise policies and practices around these tools. Please don't hesitate to share your insights and experiences with AI as the course unfolds.

Fuqua Honor Code: Duke University is a community of scholars and learners, committed to the principles of honesty, trustworthiness, fairness, and respect for others. Students share with faculty and staff the responsibility for promoting a climate of integrity. As citizens of this community, students are expected to adhere to these fundamental values at all times, in both their academic and non-academic endeavors. The Fuqua Honor Code and the Honor Code Bylaws address violations or actions committed by students of The Fuqua School of Business or others taking MBA classes at Fuqua. Details on the Fuqua Honor Code can be found [HERE](#). Please review the code before the first class.

In addition, Fuqua classroom norms will be described and enforced in EDGE seminar sessions. Specifically, entering class after the official start time or leaving early is disruptive to the class and rude to the speaker. This behavior will be tracked, and may impact your course grade. Additionally, no technology (laptops, iPads, cell phones) should be visible or used during the class or seminars. The professor may ask you to leave the classroom if you are using technology during class.