

# Teaching Philosophy

## *Navigating Sustainability in Asia*

This book is designed to be taught as a decision-making guide, not as a normative ESG manual or a catalogue of best practices. Its core pedagogical objective is to help students and executives develop contextual judgement — the ability to assess sustainability challenges within real institutional, political, and governance constraints.

### **1. Sustainability as a Leadership and Governance Challenge**

The teaching philosophy underlying this book starts from a simple premise: sustainability outcomes are determined less by stated ambition and more by governance, incentives and execution capability.

Students are encouraged to move beyond:

- ESG scores and rankings,
- disclosure-centric analysis,
- and abstract global frameworks,

and instead focus on how decisions are actually made by:

- boards,
- controlling shareholders,
- regulators,
- investors,
- and senior management teams.

The goal is not to identify ideal solutions, but to evaluate feasible and credible choices under constraint.

## **2. Context Before Prescription**

The book deliberately resists one-size-fits-all answers. Asia-Pacific markets differ widely in:

- ownership structures,
- regulatory capacity,
- state–market relationships,
- enforcement mechanisms,
- and cultural norms.

Accordingly, the teaching approach prioritises:

- institutional analysis,
- power dynamics,
- and comparative reasoning,

before introducing prescriptions or recommendations.

Students are repeatedly asked not “What should companies do?” but rather:

*“Given these constraints, what actions are realistically available — and what trade-offs do they entail?”*

## **3. Trade-Offs, Not Moral Absolutes**

This book is not designed to promote moralised debates about “good” or “bad” companies, countries, or systems. Instead, it treats sustainability controversies as stress tests of systems.

Instructors are encouraged to frame discussions around:

- risk management,
- sequencing of decisions,
- stakeholder incentives,
- and unintended consequences.

The pedagogical emphasis is on reasoned judgement, not advocacy.

#### **4. Learning Through Application**

The teaching philosophy places strong weight on:

- case analysis,
- simulations,
- role-play,
- and applied assignments.

These methods help students internalise the reality that:

- sustainability decisions are rarely made with perfect information,
- power is unevenly distributed,
- and timing and communication matter as much as technical solutions.

Practical tools and templates are included to support learning by doing, particularly in executive and professional settings.

#### **5. Inclusive and Multicultural Classrooms**

Given the diversity of student cohorts, the book is designed to be taught in a way that:

- respects different cultural communication styles,
- avoids public confrontation framed as personal critique,
- and encourages structured, role-based debate.

The teaching philosophy emphasises psychological safety, especially when discussing geopolitics, regulation, and ESG controversies.

## **6. What Success Looks Like**

A successful course using this book does not produce students who can recite ESG frameworks. Instead, it produces students and executives who can:

- identify the real sources of sustainability risk,
- ask better questions of boards and management,
- engage investors and regulators credibly,
- and make more informed decisions under uncertainty.

In short, the aim is to cultivate better judgement, not perfect answers.