

Paper #1 (individual)
Due Monday April 11, 2:30 pm

Submit as a .doc or .pdf file to the "Individual Paper #1" folder at this Catalyst dropbox:

<https://catalyst.uw.edu/collectit/dropbox/laverty/38078>

There is to some extent a "received view" that the business pursuit of profit inevitably leads to environmental harm. The purpose of this assignment is for you to organize and express your current thoughts on the relationship between business and the natural environment. You should address, but not necessarily be limited by, the "great question" I have posed: Can (or how can) a business firm be both profitable and environmentally sustainable?

Please submit an essay of approximately 1,000 words. I realize you could write MUCH more than this, and the subject deserves that extensive treatment. But I am looking not only for succinctness but also your ability to distill the essence of concepts and express the most important ones.

I will evaluate the assignment using two main criteria:

1. The logic of your ideas at three levels: sentence, paragraph, and throughout the essay.
2. The application of assigned readings and ideas discussed in class (through Wednesday April 6).

What the paper should not be: A review of the articles that we have read and discussed.

I suggest that you incorporate basic ideas about business profitability, such as the ideas that a business increases its profit by increasing revenue and/or decreasing costs. The notion of externalities captures the idea that social costs may be greater than private costs, and thus there may be conflict a conflict between what is good for the firm (or for its customers) and what is good for society as a whole.

I think it would also be good for you to identify your ideas about business upon beginning the course: e.g., business is about profit, business is about trade, business is about short-term considerations. It is still very early in the course, and these ideas should inform how you have developed your current ideas.

"There is no great writing, only great rewriting. – Justice Louis Brandeis

"I would have written a shorter letter; but I didn't have time." -- Blaise Pascal

Elegance = power + parsimony – William G. Ouchi