Massachusetts Institute of Technology

15.569 Leadership Lab: Leading Sustainable Systems (L-Lab)

L-Lab tackles the critical issues of global business sustainability. The course combines an overarching way to think about systemic change, an on-site field project experience with leading-edge sustainability initiatives, and personal work in students’ own leadership capacities. It provides the opportunity to influence complex global sustainability efforts that require both new ways of leading and sensemaking, as well as new ways of collaborating across boundaries.

The course will comprise a series of different activities — workshops, class sessions, simulations, cases, guest speakers, and field projects. These will enable hands-on exploration and analysis of the practical challenges and complex systemic issues, which companies face while dealing with deeply taken-for-granted mental models and practices that keep them stuck in unproductive system dynamics.

Field projects will involve organizations at the forefront of today’s thinking about systemic change and sustainable systems. They will be located locally, nationally, and internationally, and include large and small corporations, public-private partnerships, and NGOs. Previous years’ projects have included Nike, BP India, Oxfam, IBM, Green Mountain Coffee Roasters, Icebreaker, Seventh Generation, PepsiCo, Natura, Assintecal, Cambridge Energy Alliance, WWF, Starbucks, and the US Navy. Posters of prior projects are posted on the L-Lab Action Learning website, http://actionlearning.mit.edu/l-lab/Projects.html

Course Instructors: Wanda Orlikowski, Peter Senge

Project Coordinator: Sinead O’Flanagan

Class sessions:
Mondays 2:30-5:30 during Fall 2013; 3-week field project during January 2014; and two workshops: 1.5 days on September 20-21, 2013, and 1 day on February 3, 2014.

Course units: 15
Course units are allocated as follows: 9 units for Fall 2013; 6 units for IAP 2014. This course counts as a leadership elective.

For more information please contact Wanda Orlikowski at wanda@mit.edu or Sinead O’Flanagan at sinead@sloan.mit.edu