Low-income economies face deep challenges of poverty and unemployment that require them to employ innovative approaches and instruments to achieve sustainable growth without further stressing and degrading natural resources. In the past, the public sector has played a major role in development but increasingly the private sector is recognizing its important role in addressing these challenges by investigating and implementing alternative methods and technologies to avoid unnecessary depletion of natural resources and preserve environmental assets and by introducing market-based solutions to persistent and pervasive socioeconomic problems. In this global field course we hope to apply business and sustainability principles and holistic and participatory approaches to solve these economic and environmental problems.

The principal objective of this course is to identify the urgent sustainable development challenges of rural villages and begin to effect specific approaches and solutions to address them. The key tasks are researching and gathering information to define and understand the problems and conditions—including demographic and economic trends—in the barangay (village) and surrounding communities; stocktaking of resources/assets; and gauging community capacities and institutional strengths.

Anticipated topics of discussions include sustainable livelihoods, microenterprise, environmental standards and policy, food systems, energy and water infrastructure, ecotourism, water & sanitation management, disaster response, and private-public accountability and partnerships.

This course capitalizes on Darden business training as well as pre-MBA knowledge and expertise in engineering, education, health, environmental science, law, public policy and other areas. This is a platform for those who want to explore and pursue innovative and financially sustainable solutions to poverty and the many aspects of sustainable development.

ACADEMIC OBJECTIVES
- To extend the scope of applications of business skills and tools to the area of sustainability
- To acquire and develop ethnographic skills and techniques
- To deepen the understanding of debates intersecting business, environment and ethics
- To explore business, economic and institutional approaches to sustainable economic growth
- To develop leadership, communication and design thinking skills through practical global experience

COURSE FORMAT
This course consists of pre-field meetings; 9-day field study and visits; and post-field team discussions. Students will co-design the field study that will include time in the province. The company visits in Manila supplement the field survey to help students understand the larger context and complex issues surrounding rural to urban migration, environmental management, institutional capacity and economic prosperity.

REQUIREMENTS
We are looking for students with (a) deep interest and desire in solving urgent problems in emerging markets and (b) competence in tools and models applied in sectors such as water, waste management, energy, agriculture, small business development, finance & investment, health, hospitality & tourism, geology, marine science, green design & technology, community planning, urban and real estate development, education, charitable & other nongovernmental organizations and public policy. We require that students have both the willingness and ability to lead and collaborate.