

## Syllabus – Elective Course

Course title:

**Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainable Development**

Credits:

3 ECTS credits

Teaching language:

English

Target students:

Students in Business, Economics, Finance, Social Science, Science, Engineering, and Sustainability, and any student interested in Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainable Development

Teacher in charge of the course:

Benoît Guyot, MSc (FGES – Faculty of Economics, Management, Sciences, and Accounting, *Université Catholique de Lille*)

### **COURSE PRESENTATION**

Prerequisite:

This program is designed mainly for undergraduate students and is open to students from all study areas. Students undertaking this course should have successfully completed at least one semester at a university, or have equivalent experience, and should be capable of understanding and speaking academic level English. They must also have some ability to work as a group. The course is intended to serve a mix of profiles and learning backgrounds for a diverse international learning experience.

Content:

Evidence of current global threats such as climate change, resource scarcity, loss of biodiversity, social inequalities, and the impact of pollution on human health have forced governments, companies, and groups of citizens to reconsider our current paths to development. Linear industrial systems based on a take-make-dispose approach, the use of non-renewable energy sources, and the impact of urban sprawl over vast areas of fertile land, are examples of present-day phenomena that are currently being questioned across society.

Though alarming, these contemporary trends have resulted in the stimulation of human creativity. The promise of a better world presents not only the greatest challenge of our time, but also an enormous opportunity for those who want to reinvent the means by which we live as a society. Challenges include exploring new ways to produce the things necessary to satisfy our needs, how we organize ourselves, and how we decide collectively. This is the promise of sustainable development.

The purpose of this class is to become familiar with the key issues related to Corporate Social Responsibility and to practice a concrete planning approach to move towards sustainable societies. Most sessions are based around specific business case studies, and are intended to be as practical and interactive as possible. Class sessions will cover the following topics:

- Prior to engaging in strategic planning, we ask a few questions, drawing answers from nearly three decades of social and scientific research and the contribution of thousands of businesses from around the world:
  - Why are we unsustainable? What are the basic problems that make our global society unsustainable?
  - How are we contributing to these problems?
  - What can we do today and tomorrow to stop contributing to these problems?
- Definition of sustainable development. The most common and widely accepted definition of sustainable development remains that of the Brundtland Commission's report to the United Nations: "Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." This definition has sparked debate about how we live, but it also encourages deeper questioning: what do we need to change in order to become sustainable?

#### **Learning experience**

- Visits to local companies/institutions involved in sustainable development
- Corporate Social Responsibility: issues and cases studies
  - Shareholder capitalism vs Stakeholder capitalism
  - Multinational corporations: main challenges
  - Social responsibility in developing countries: the UN Global Compact
- Exploration of new business opportunities related to the socio-ecological transition along with local businesses and socio-entrepreneurs.
- Presentations by students of a company and its policy for Corporate Social Responsibility and/or Sustainable Development
- Case studies to work on as a group
- Evaluation and wrap-up

#### **Learning Outcomes:**

By the end of the course, the students should be able to:

- Identify problems facing companies under the umbrella of social responsibility
- Forecast the positive and negative impact of policies and actions in a manner that reduces corporate risk
- Demonstrate the value of CSR in order to better inform decision-making
- Understand the critical elements of a CSR initiative
- Audit an existing CSR initiative
- Explain why and how the development trajectory of our societies is not currently sustainable, and understand the challenge of transitioning to a sustainable model

- Describe the four “Conditions for Sustainability” and how they can be considered as a definition of Sustainability
- Define “backcasting” and describe how it can be used for planning towards sustainability
- Describe and apply a four-step strategic planning process in various contexts (product/service development, business strategy, urban planning, etc.)
- Identify the socio-ecological impacts of current development, and create a list of potential measures, set priorities, and create an action plan
- Identify and understand specific European cases through case studies and site visits

## WORKLOAD

French contact hours = 60 minutes (in some countries/institutions, 1 contact hour = 45-50 minutes)

Form:	Number of hours	Comments
Face-to-face, In-class, Off-site training	21 hours	
Additional fieldtrips	8 hours minimum	
Approximate personal work/Homework	10 hours	
Student total workload	40 hours +	

## EDUCATIONAL METHODS

Presentations, case studies, share of experiences, group work, debates, presentations

## RESOURCES

All course materials will be supplied in class. References may be made to the following resources:

Anderson, R. 1999. *Mid-Course Correction: Towards a Sustainable Enterprise, The Interface Model*. Atlanta: Peregrin Press.

Benyus, Janine 1998. *Biomimicry: Innovation Inspired By Nature*.

Hardin, Garrett 1968. “The Tragedy of the Commons.” *Science*, New Series, Vol. 162, No. 3859 (Dec. 13, 1968), pp. 1243-1248. Published by: American Association for the Advancement of Science.

McDonough, William and Braungart M. 2002. *Cradle to Cradle*. New York: North Point Press.

Rifkin, Jeremy 2012. *The Third Industrial Revolution: How the Internet, Green Electricity, and 3-D Printing are Ushering in a Sustainable Era of Distributed Capitalism*.

Rifkin, Jeremy 2014. *The Zero Marginal Cost Society: The Internet of Things, the Collaborative Commons, and the Eclipse of Capitalism*. Palgrave Macmillan Trade.

Scharmer, C Otto and Kaeufer, K. 2010. “In front of the blank canvas: sensing emerging futures.” In *Journal of Business Strategy* Vol. 31 No. 4, pp. 21-29, Emerald Group Publishing Limited

Schumacher, E. 1973. *Small Is Beautiful*. London: Blond & Briggs Ltd.

Senge, PM and Carstedt, G. 2001. *Innovating our way to the next industrial revolution*. MIT Sloan Management Review 42(2): 24-38.

Sustainability Illustrated 2014. *Cats in Borneo* (article and video) <https://goo.gl/sN9SwA>

*Sustainability Primer* - by The Natural Step Canada (24 pages, in English) <http://goo.gl/99ite9>

Willard, B. 2002. *The Sustainability Advantage: Seven Business Case Benefits of a Triple Bottom Line*. Gabriola Island BC: New Society Publishers.

## ASSESSMENT

Form	Number	Duration	Comments
<b>Continuous assessment</b> (40%)	2	2 x 20 minutes	Quizzes
	1	20 minutes	Presentation of a of a topic related to sustainability or of a company involved in sustainable development/corporate social responsibility
<b>Final exam</b> (45%)	2	n/a	Group project: case study Field trip summary evaluation
<b>Others (student participation...)</b> (15%)			Attendance, participation, and contribution to group discussion

*This syllabus is based on information available at the time of publication (November 2018). Changes may occur. For updated information about course content, please contact us: [lsp@univ-catholille.fr](mailto:lsp@univ-catholille.fr)*