

## Syllabus – Elective Course

Course title:

**Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainable Development**

Credits:

6 ECTS credits

Teaching language:

English

Target students:

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

Teacher in charge of the course:

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### **COURSE PRESENTATION**

Prerequisite:

Students undertaking this course should normally have successfully completed at least one semester at university, or have equivalent experience. They must have some ability to work as a group and be able to communicate easily in English at a standard university level. In other respects, the course is intended to serve a mix of profiles and learning backgrounds for a more 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.

This course will provide students with 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.

Course sessions will include:

### **Part I: Corporate social responsibility: Background and core issues**

#### **1) Introduction and History of CSR**

Defining CSR, understanding its relation to sustainability  
History and evolution of CSR

#### **2) Latest trends in CSR**

The UN's and the EU's treatment of CSR  
Social responsibility in developing countries: the UN Global Compact

#### **3) Reporting standards**

ISO 26000, Integrated Reporting, Global Reporting Initiative  
Case Study Examples of Sustainability Reporting  
Activity: 1 Group presentation and Report

#### **4) CSR and stakeholders**

Stakeholder Mapping: relevant stakeholders and their expectations  
Shareholder capitalism vs. stakeholder capitalism, the triple bottom line  
Activity: 2 Group Presentations

### **Part II: Ethics and economics of sustainability**

#### **1) Multinational corporations: main challenges**

The purpose of a company, The polluter's dilemma  
Conceptual frameworks to enhance understanding about the impacts of policies  
Activity: Group report 2

#### **2) Sustainability: main concepts and issues**

CSR and shared value creation, Greening the value chain, Greenwashing, Life cycle thinking  
Activity: Group report 3

### **Part III: Strategic Planning for Sustainable development**

*The socio-ecological transition at the local level with local businesses and socio-entrepreneurs*

The Third Industrial Revolution from a systems perspective : from a linear industrial process to the circular economy (field trip 1)

Exploring innovative business models (Circular Economy, Product-Service Systems and the Sharing Economy, Social entrepreneurship) (field trip 2)

The regenerative economy (field trip 3)

### 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
- Describe and apply a four-step strategic planning process in various contexts (product/service development, business strategy, urban planning, etc.):
  - identify socio-ecological impacts,
  - create a list of potential measures (recommendations and strategic guidelines, good practices, eco-innovations, new business models, etc.),
  - 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)*

<b>Form:</b>	<b>Number of hours</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Face-to-face, in-class, on-site learning	<b>39 hours</b>	13 sessions of 3 hours (including visits to local companies and institutions involved in Corporate Social Responsibility and/or Sustainability)
Approximate personal work / homework	15 hours	
Student total workload	53 hours	

### **EDUCATIONAL METHODS**

Students are encouraged to become familiar with CSR through their own reading and research. They will fully prepare in advance for the classes, thereby maximising classroom time. Active student involvement of the learning of the themes studied is expected. Common features of the classes will include:

- Reading of prescribed articles
- Discussions/debates
- Short presentations
- Review of case studies
- Research on internet to further knowledge of the topics
- Creativity sessions

## 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	Comments
Continuous assessment (20%)	4	Exercises and group assignments
Final exam (60%)	1	Examination covering all aspects of the course
Others (student participation...) (20%)		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: [esp@univ-catholille.fr](mailto:esp@univ-catholille.fr)*