



Sustainability Challenges: Business in Society

Course Instructors

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Course Description

This direct enrollment course explores how sustainable development, as set out by the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, broadened the understanding of companies' roles and social responsibilities. The course takes a sociological lens examining the role of business in society focusing on the interdependence between policy makers, civil society, and business. Meeting the UN's Sustainable Developmental Goals requires understanding the intersection of environmental sustainability, social sustainability, and economic sustainability. By integrating sustainability into core business strategies, organizations can simultaneously create social and corporate value on a sustainable basis — they can create what has been dubbed “shared value” to business and society. This interdisciplinary course draws upon research across the social sciences.

The course has four major parts:

Part I (Weeks 1 and 2) covers the overall theme of business in society, focusing on the role of business and other stakeholders in society, ethics and social justice, frameworks and governance of sustainability across national borders;

Part II (Week 3) covers approaches to sustainable consumption and production focusing on consumer behavior, supply chains, and circular economy. Literature exam on Part 1 and 2. Students choose project ideas by the end of the period.

Part III (Week 4) covers strategies and governance for sustainability, corruption, sustainability accounting and reporting, sustainability in finance and, corporate strategies and business models;

Part IV (Weeks 5-8) will involve project presentations – application of acquired knowledge in the form of a sustainability group project where students will select a challenge they would like to address, conduct research on the topic, analyze and present a solution/approach to addressing the challenge.

Intended Learning Outcomes

- 1: be able to master and explain the intersection of environmental, social, and economic sustainability
- 2: be able to identify critical inter-dependencies in sustainable development
- 3: be able to critically assess the main sustainability strategies and frameworks
- 4: be able to apply central theories and concepts from sociology and other social sciences to critically assess various business models for sustainable development.

Prerequisites

One course in Sociology and in Economics

Literature

Core course book: Borglund, Tommy, Hans De Geer and Susanne Sweet (eds) (2021): CSR and Sustainable Business. 2nd edn, Sanoma, Stockholm. ISBN 978-91-523-6046-0. SEK 430. Approx. 300 pages to read

Research articles (open access or provided through library) supplementing and complementing course textbook. Approx. 15 articles

Links to reference material provided for use if needed for projects.



Examination

The course will be examined in three different ways:

- 1) Individual examination; covering 33 % of the grade.
- 2) Individual assignments relating to course literature and discussion; covering 33 % of the grade.
- 3) Project presentation & discussion; covering 33% of the grade.