

Corporate Responsibility and Sustainability: Defining Roles and Responsibilities of Business in the Global Economy

Paris, 18/19/21/22 July 2011
16 contact hours / 2 ECTS credits

Over the past decade, corporate responsibility has emerged as a ubiquitous buzzword in the global economy. Highlighted again by the 2010 oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico or widely publicized corporate corruption scandals, the environmental and social performance of corporations around the world has for years been subject of public scrutiny, not only driven by pressure groups and activists, but increasingly by market forces – from institutional investors to consumers. Arguably, the moral/ethical case for responsible business practices has been complemented by a compelling business case, stressing not only the potentially devastating costs of failure, but also the tangible benefits and business opportunities of a sound approach to corporate sustainability.

Following an introduction to evolution of globalization and the historical foundations of business ethics, this course will discuss and analyze the emergence of corporate responsibility as an economic imperative for businesses around the world, identifying key drivers and trends that have shaped the debate. Through interactive sessions and case studies, students will be given a comprehensive overview of the sustainability movement, its evolution in the context of globalization, and the ways in which corporations are integrating environmental and social issues into strategy and operations.

Course Schedule

Monday, 18 July (9:30 – 11:00, 11:30 – 13:00)

Introduction: *From slums to sweatshops: A brief history of globalization and the concept of business ethics*

Tuesday, 19 July (9:30 – 11:00, 11:30 – 13:00)

Confrontation or cooperation? The emergence of the corporate responsibility movement

Thursday, 21 July (9:30 – 11:00, 11:30 – 13:00)

Drawing a better bottom line: Drivers and incentives for sustainability. Lessons in Implementation: Putting Principles to Practice (Case Studies and group work)

Friday, 22 July (9:30 – 11:00, 11:30 – 13:00)

The future of sustainability: Trends and developments in corporate responsibility
Concluding discussion and essay topic presentations

Course Design

The one-week course will feature a combination of in-class lectures, case presentations, interactive group work and guest briefings on key issues related to the corporate responsibility agenda. Ample time will be given to discussion and interaction.

Course Assessment

Students are expected to attend all class sessions and complete reading assignments (as per syllabus and reading list) prior to each session.

While there will be no final exam, each student is expected to submit a **2000-word** essay addressing a critical question in the context of the current corporate sustainability debate. The essay should focus on one thesis/research

question alone and present a concise discussion with conclusions. Any sources consulted must be footnoted and also listed in a bibliography. (Please note that the bibliography does not count towards the 2000-word requirement).

Students are expected to present their thesis in class during the final session of the course. Final essays are due two weeks after conclusion of the course (to be sent via email to matthias.stausberg@web.de).

Essays are graded taking into consideration the originality of the research question or thesis, its relevance to the CSR debate, and the quality and comprehensiveness of the arguments presented.

The final grade will be a composite grade incorporating class attendance (30 percent), participation (20 percent) and the final essay (50 percent).