Syllabus 2016
SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGIES FOR SMEs

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[UNSAM]

Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday
Total Load: 96 hours

Course Description

The spotlight of the corporate sustainability debate has primarily been focused on large multinational corporations (MNCs). Practical sustainability initiatives are designed mainly for these large firms that have the human and financial resources to implement the required procedures into their business operations. Comparative little, however, is known about corporate sustainability in small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), despite the fact that in both developed and developing countries SMEs provide more than half of the employment and thus contribute to a significant share of the overall economic and social value creation.

The course explores how small companies can organize and implement sustainability strategies in their core operations and explain the main differences between MNCs and SMEs. The course offers students an opportunity to explore practical ways by which environmental and social responsibility can benefit the economic success of SMEs.

Through faculty presentations, small group discussions, real-world exercises, field trips and recent case studies, students will examine the practical ways small and medium size companies have created business and social value through their sustainability strategies.

*Sustainability Strategies for SMEs* corresponds to a second year on a bachelor degree of Argentina and can be included as part of any bachelor degree in the School of Business and Economics at the University of San Martin.

Objectives

KNOWLEDGE

- The students will learn about processes that can develop feasible and long-term sustainable business systems that will benefit small and medium size companies economically while having a positive impact on the environment and society.

SKILLS

- Incorporate a strategic model suitable for the deployment of sustainability strategies and initiatives within small and medium size business
- Prioritize investments that will incrementally improve SME’s ability to deliver shared social and business value.
Will help present and future sustainability leaders to develop skills to drive the sustainability agenda through their business and beyond.

Students will learn how to set and achieve goals and how to communicate them with greater clarity.

Incorporate processes, products and projects for corporate sustainability.

Understand the sustainability challenges for SMEs, especially in an Argentinean context.

Create positive, productive relationships with internal and external stakeholders

**Required Textbooks:**

No textbook required. All material for lectures and workshops will be provided in class.

**CONTENT & COURSE CALENDAR**

The course consists of these main components:

- **Sustainability for SME’s: concepts and frameworks. Why is sustainability relevant for SMEs?**
- **Ethical Leadership. The Role of Business Leaders in Sustainability.**
- **Sustainability challenges for SMEs: the Argentinean context.**
- **Small Business Strategy: Developing Effective Mission, Vision and Values Statements. The Role of Key Stakeholders.**
- **Government & Sustainability. Promoting SMEs Sustainable Development.**
- **How to measure, report and communicate sustainability in SME’s. Balance Score Card (BSC).**
- **The Business Advantage of Transparency for SME’s. The State of Sustainability reporting.**
- **Benefit Corporations: A new way to bring together business success?**

**WEEK I – Introduction to Corporate Social Responsibility.**

**Readings**


WEEK II – STRATEGIC THINKING . WORKSHOP 1 “VISION, MISSION & VALUES. FOUNDATIONS FOR SUSTAINABILITY”

Readings

WEEK III – RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS LEADERSHIP. SUSTAINABILITY CHALLENGES FOR SMES.

Readings
http://www.corporate-ethics.org/pdf/ethical_leadership.pdf

Material to be delivered in Buenos Aires

WEEK IV – WORKSHOP 2 “Stakeholder Management”. The United Nations Global Compact (The Argentinean case)

Readings

WEEK V – DEVELOPING A CSR STRATEGY. CREATING SHARED VALUE.

Readings


**WEEK VI – WORKSHOP 3 “Sustainability Scorecard”**

Readings

**WEEK VII – READING WEEK**

**WEEK VIII – BENEFIT CORPORATIONS. CORPORATE VOLUNTEER PROGRAM.**

Readings


**WEEK IX –CSR & COMMUNICATION. WORKSHOP 4 “HOW TO COMMUNICATE YOUR CSR STRATEGY”**

Readings


Readings


Readings


WEEK XI – PRESENTATION GROUP PAPER EXAM
Evaluation & Grading

A) Examinations, Evaluation Criteria and Requirements:

As part of the learning activity of the CSR Management course, students have to write one group assignment; (i) “The Group Paper Exam”

The Group Paper Exam ties together the topics of the course as a whole. The main objective of the group paper exam is to develop a sustainability strategy of a given SME. Students will combine perspectives from the literature, case studies and lectures and link them with empirical cases from Argentina.

The Group Paper Exam will be orally presented by the group to the class at the end of the course.

It is expected that students read the assigned texts for each class and discuss them with their fellow classmates. Student participation throughout the course is very important and highly encouraged.

Group work is central to the course. In addition to studying the curriculum through lectures and individual reading, students are also expected to participate in workshops (the “Workshops”). Here you will have the opportunity to work in small groups to develop your Group Semester Exam. The groups will consist of 3-6 members, and will be formed at the beginning of the course.

Grades for the course will be assigned as follows:

40% Workshop participation
60% Group Paper Exam.

B) Attendance Policy:

The university policy is that more than six absences (equivalent to nine hours) implies an automatic “F.” In this class, 0.5 points will be deducted from your Attendance grade for every unexcused absence. Students are responsible for getting all the material and work handed out during a class they missed. Unexcused absence on a workshop day will result in the deduction of 0.5 points on the next essay due.

Missed Exams: “Make-up” exams are a privilege, one to be extended only to students who have missed an exam with prior arrangement (one week notice) with the instructor or due to extenuating circumstances.

Participation: A high weight is placed on participation as a learning experience. A student’s grade will suffer due to actions which disrupt the group experience. For this reason all cell phones must be turned off before class begins. If you have a unique circumstance for which you must leave the phone on, consent from the instructor is required beforehand. Students will have a significant point total deducted from their class grade if they do not adhere to this regulation.
C) Grading Scale

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<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>10 (A) Excellent</td>
<td>100-95</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 (A-) Very Good</td>
<td>94-89</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 (B) Good</td>
<td>88-83</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 (B-) Above Average</td>
<td>82-77</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 (C) Average</td>
<td>76-71</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 (C) Below Average</td>
<td>70-65</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 (D) Lowest Passing Grade</td>
<td>64-60</td>
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<tr>
<td>F Failure</td>
<td>59-0</td>
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<tr>
<td>W Officially withdrawn</td>
<td>Academic Advisor’s approval</td>
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<tr>
<td>I Incomplete</td>
<td>Only with Academic Advisor’s approval</td>
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Plagiarism: An important objective of this course is to get students to learn how to write essays. Students are expected to do their own written work. Plagiarism not only undermines this learning process but also represents a serious breach of College policy and of academic honesty. Outside sources should always be referenced in the essay’s bibliography. Plagiarized work will receive an automatic F. If you have any doubts on what constitutes plagiarism, do not hesitate to ask the Instructor.

PREREQUISITE KNOWLEDGE

One year of prior studies (60 ECTS) or Corporate Social Responsibility Management (CSR2).