

Syllabus of Record

Program: CET Brazil: Business in Sao Paulo at FGV

Course Code / Title: (SP/BUSN 300) Socially Sustainable Business in Brazil

Total Hours: 45

Recommended Credits: 3

Primary Discipline / Suggested Cross Listings: Business / Economics, Development Studies

Language of Instruction: English

Prerequisites/Requirements: None

Description

The notion of social sustainability—the idea that businesses should identify and prioritize the human dimensions of their work, promoting equity, healthy and livable communities, and democratic engagement—is rapidly gaining currency worldwide in the business sector. Brazil is a country that, on some levels, has embraced this concept and is pioneering the ideals of Socially Sustainable Business. At the same time, however, the country also faces daunting, systemic obstacles to achieving its standards.

This course explores the theory behind the notion of Socially Sustainable Business, and uses Brazil as a case study in understanding both the possibilities and challenges in developing socially sustainable business models. In particular, the course closely examines the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) framework that places environmental and social sustainability alongside financial profit as the three pillars of evaluating business performance. From this perspective, profitability and sustainability are intertwined, and the relationship between a business and its social and environmental context and impacts assumes equal importance alongside more traditional financial motives.

Objectives

Through their participation in this course, students:

- Gain a thorough understanding of the ideas behind Socially Sustainable Business and the Triple Bottom Line approach.
- Learn about Brazil's successes and challenges in pursuing socially sustainable business initiatives, with a focus on Brazil's socio-economic and environmental diversity, as well as business culture and behavior.
- Develop their own substantive, well-documented analyses about the possibilities and limits of Socially Sustainable Business in Brazil.

Course Requirements

Course methodology consists of class lectures and open discussions on assigned content. Some discussions may be based on assignments students submit individually or as a group. Weekly readings average around 30-40 pages. Students are expected to complete the assigned reading and come to class prepared to discuss it.

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News articles are also assigned as homework, with required short responses to questions or prompts. At the end of the semester students may submit their best three responses for grading. The final project consists of a 10-page socially sustainable business proposal, with a literature review and in-depth research addressing the social, environmental and financial aspects of the business proposal. This work must be presented in class.

Attendance is required as outlined in the CET Attendance Policy.

Grading

The final grade is determined as follows:

- Participation: 20%
- Short responses to news articles (3): 30%
- Final project: 50% (Research proposal: 10%, Actual research: 40%)

Readings

Elkington, J. "Cannibals with Forks: The Triple Bottom Line of the 21st Century Business", *New Society*, Stony Creek, CT, 1997.

Jakšić M., Rakićević J. and Jovanović M. *Sustainable Technology and Business Innovation Framework – A Comprehensive Approach*, University of Belgrade, Serbia, 2018.

Maasen, M. "Sustainable Business Models: An Imperative in the Strategic Management of Companies and Organizations", *Management Dynamics in the Knowledge Economy*, Vol. 6 No.2, 323-335, 2018.

Murcia, FM.; K. Dib, K.; Baruque, JR. "The Conjuncture of the Brazilian Textile and Apparel Industry for the World and the Relevance of Triple Bottom Line". *International Journal of Economics and Statistics*, vol. 3, 141-147, 2015.

NATURA. "Pense Impacto Positivo: visão de sustentabilidade 2050".
https://natu.infoinvest.com.br/fck_temp/1002_8/file/natura_visao_sustentabilidade_2050.pdf

Oliveira, LR. "Sustentabilidade: da evolução dos conceitos à implementação como estratégia nas organizações". *Produção*, v. 22, n. 1, jan./fev., 70-82, 2012.

Pal R. "Extended Responsibility through Servitization in PSS: An Exploratory Study of Used-Clothing Sector", *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management: An International Journal*, Vol 20, No. 4, 453-470, 2016.

Petrini, M; Pozzebon, M. "Integrating Sustainability into Business Practices: Learning from Brazilian Firms". *BAR*, Curitiba, v. 7, n. 4, art. 3, Oct./Dec., 362-378, 2010.

Porter, ME; Kramer, MR. "Strategy and Society: The Link Between Competitive Advantage and Corporate Social Responsibility", *Harvard Business Review*, Dec., 76-92, 2006.

Smith, A. "The Theory of Moral Sentiments". 6th edition, 1759: 1790.

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Stehr, C.; Dziatzko, N.; Struve, F. (ed). *Corporate Social Responsibility in Brazil: The Future is Now*. Springer International Publishing AG, 2018.

Svensson, G., Eriksson, D. and Padin C. "Triple Bottom Line Extended (TBLx2) – A Bipolar Approach of Implementation, Assessment and Reporting of Sustainable Business Models and Sustainable Business Practices", *International Journal of Business Excellence*, Vol. 10 No.2, 139-151, 2016.

United Nations. "Brazil: Making Sustainable Development Happen". *Case Studies of Sustainable Development in Practice: Triple Wins for Sustainable Development*, 30-37, 2012
<http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/Cross-Practice%20generic%20theme/Triple-Wins-for-Sustainable-Development-web.pdf>

Outline of Course Content

In addition to the topics listed below, two full weeks are dedicated to class presentations and open discussions at the middle and at the end of the semester.

Topic 1 – Adam Smith's *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*.

- Using its insights to think through the benefits of moving away from predatory business models in favor of those that privilege the centrality of social sustainability as a guiding principle.

Topic 2 – Triple Bottom Line (TBL) Framework and New Business Models.

- Social/environmental context and market trends
- The Triple Bottom Line approach for sustainability
- Practical application: new business models originated in such scenario

Topic 3 – Socially Sustainable Business: Finance

- Profitability and economic value as pillars to long term sustainability
- Company visit: financial sector company or community bank

Topic 4 – Socially Sustainable Business: Environmental

- Environmental challenges to corporations; use of limited resources; product innovation
- Company visit: Natura (cosmetics industry)

Topic 5 – Socially Sustainable Business: Community

- Corporate impact on local communities and interface possibilities

Topic 6 – Socially Sustainable Business: Governance

- Ethics, transparency, and accountability in the corporation
- Mission and sustainability-related goals
- Stakeholders' engagement to achieve sustainability-related goals

Topic 7 – Socially Sustainable Business: Suppliers

- Supply chain selection and audit according to environmental and social criteria

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- Balanced supplier-buyer relation and mutual accountability for financial results
- Company visit: Instituto Chão (food sector) or Flavia Aranha (textile sector)

Topic 8 – Socially Sustainable Business: Workers

- Work environment
- Employee diversity, equal pay, and hiring policies
- Labor outsourcing impacts

Topic 9 – Socially Sustainable Business: Consumers

- Product impact on consumers and unsustainable product/markets
- Products and services that improve or solve social issues, improving consumers' lives

Topic 10 – Socially Sustainable Business: The 4.0 industry and New Challenges

- The new industry arrangement and how it relates to the current global economic and social scenario
- Consequent challenges for growth and sustainability.