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Course title:	Sustainable Business: Strategy & Innovation
Language of instruction:	English
Contact hours:	48 (6 per day)
ECTS-Credits:	5

Course description

Flooding, drought, forest fires, famine, conflict and displacement and resulting public awareness of and growing action on the underlying current and future global challenges like climate change, social inequality and global economic development mean, that sustainability is more than a buzzword: The concept is being operationalized by companies, NGOs and policy makers. On a policy level, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris climate agreement and the Green New Deal are setting the stage, on a business level, standards like Environmental Social and Governance (ESG) reporting or ecovadis, supply chain integrity and voluntary certification as well as diversity crucial to long-term economic success.

How are companies innovating towards more sustainability today? What are the criteria, the success factors and the strategic approaches to tackle consumer, policy, employee and societal demand for more sustainability?

In this course, we will look at current sustainability frameworks, sustainable companies and sustainable innovation. The participants will get to know and to apply collaborative online tools to be better prepared for a more and more digitalised working environment and to efficiently work together to evaluate existing company sustainability approaches and to create their own business-related sustainability strategies.

The course will include at least two executives as guest speakers who will evaluate the strategies you create in your group projects and to provide insights into their own approaches.

Student profile

Students interested in evaluating and creating business-related sustainability strategies that are relevant for future business development and leadership positions, entrepreneurs, sustainability consultants as well as NGO- and policy-related careers as well as to policy in general and public debates.

Prerequisites

Basic interest & curiosity in sustainability and in getting to know or working with businesses to make the world a better place.

Course Requirements

Attendance; active participation in the seminar's discussions; careful reading of the assigned course materials, engagement in the learning group's activities and discussions; oral and written presentation of a certain subject.

Required language skills

The language of instruction is English. Language proficiency on an advanced Intermediate level (Mittelstufe II) is a prerequisite for participation. For orientation purposes, you can assess your language skills here (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR):

<https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=090000168045bb52>

Grading

Participation: 30%

Online presentation: 40% (learning groups)

Exam: 30% (individual)

'Class Participation' means active and regular participation in class discussion.

'Online Presentation' will be a presentation on a topic of the course students will prepare asynchronously in a small learning group. It will provide a useful opportunity for cooperation within the cohort and for feedback.

The final exam will include questions on the course project and on the course contents.

Reading

A course reader will be provided online as PDF file. Some examples of relevant literature:

Steffen, W., Richardson, K., Rockström, J., et al. (2015). Planetary boundaries: Guiding human development on a changing planet. *Science*, 347(6223), 736–746.

Raworth, K. (2012). A safe and just space for humanity: Can we live within the doughnut? *Oxfam Discussion Papers*. Oxford: Oxfam.

Schoneveld, G. (2020) Sustainable business models for inclusive growth: Towards a conceptual foundation of inclusive business, *Journal of Cleaner Production* Volume 277, 20 December 2020, 124062

Geissdoerfer M et al., (2020), Circular business models: A review, *Journal of Cleaner Production* Volume 277, 20 December 2020, 123741

Barbier, E. & Burgess, J. (2020). Sustainability and development after COVID-19, *World Development* Volume 135, November 2020, 105082

Speakers:

Representative, Rainforest Alliance/sustainability label

Representative, BASF/major corporation

Representative, Soulbottles/Green Startup Berlin

Representative, BNW/sustainable business association

Course schedule

Date	Program*
Thursday, January 6, 2022	Course basics Introduction to sustainability, green & circular economy Sustainability frameworks and operationalization
Tuesday, January 11, 2022	Materiality principle and its limits Corporate Social Responsibility & business sustainability strategy
Thursday, January 13, 2022	Social entrepreneurship Sustainability-oriented Business Model Development
Friday, January 14, 2022	Sustainable finances & venture capital
Tuesday, January 18, 2022	Carbon footprinting & emission reduction Sustainable supply chain
Thursday, January 20, 2022	Assessing best & worst practice examples
Friday, January 21, 2022	Online presentation of sustainable business strategies
Tuesday, January 25, 2022	Final Exam

*Topics may be subject to change depending on the availability speakers.