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| Course title: Principles and Concepts of Sustainability | | | | |
| Course code: MPP 163 | No. of credits: 2 | L-T-P distribution: 20-08-0 | Learning hours: 28 | |
| Pre-requisite course code and title (if any): | | | | |
| Department: Department of Business & Sustainability | | | | |
| Course coordinator(s): Dr. Sapna Narula | | Course instructor(s): Dr. Zinaida Fadeeva | | |
| Contact details: | | | | |
| Course type: Core | | Course offered in: | | |
| Course description On successful completion of the course, students should be able to discuss the concept of sustainability and able to see how it translates into realities of organizations and communities. The ambition of the course is to empower students to critically analyse different, often competing, definitions of sustainability driven by perspectives and interests of societal stakeholders. It will introduce sustainability visions and practices relevant for the business community. | | | | |
| Course objectives The learning process will be highly participatory with students encouraged to take different positions with regards to sustainability principles and practices. A special emphasis would be put to providing historical perspective to the concepts, and strategies employs by businesses and their stakeholders as well as various ideological interpretations of these concepts and strategies in individual contexts. Finally, the students will be encouraged to work with discussion of multiple solutions for sustainability challenges. - The course consists of combination of the in-class lectures, seminars and course assignments. The feedback on the assignment will be given during the in-class group reporting. Full attendance and participation in the assignment is required. | | | | |
| Course contents | | | | |
| Module | Topic | L | T | P |
| 1 | Day-1 Sustainable development – evolution, approaches, interpretations The students are requested to prepare and conduct two debate on the importance of environmental/social aspects of SD and on probabilities of various world scenarios | 3 | 1 | 0 |
| 2 | Day 2 What drives business – issues and trends | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 3 | Is the business of business is business? Through the group discussion and presentation, the students are requested to explore various forms of “corporations of the future”. They will also work with analysis of a case of sustainable enterprise. | 4 | 1 | 0 |
| 4 | Day 3 Business (corporate) sustainability The students are introduced to analyze a case relevant for understanding of stakeholder engagement and communication (Disney case) | 3 | 1 | 0 |
| 5 | Day 3 & 4 Sustainable Production and Consumption In addition to the discussion, the students will work with the study case of Rio Tinto focusing on the company’s strategy in biodiversity and ecosystem servi | 4 | 2 | 0 |
| 6 | Day 5 Corporate Social Responsibility The students will be requested to organise a debate on the role of CSR in the progress towards SD | 2 | 1 | 0 |

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| 7 | Pro-poor development the students will work with developing principles of business engagement with poor communities | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| | Total | 20 | 8 | 0 |

IV Module description

Module One. Sustainable development – evolution, approaches, interpretations

Allocated class time – 2 h seminar and 2 h debates

This module will serve a goal of introducing students to basic concepts of sustainable development (SD) and different perspectives emphasizing various aspects of SD. The module will provide an opportunity to critically analyze how competing definitions could justify actions driven by different interests, e.g. economic development or environmental protection. The students will discuss visions, strategies and tools as integral elements of SD.

The module will address the following **issues**:

History of the concept – UN perspective

Interpretations of sustainable development, „strong“ and „weak“ sustainability, local and global

Scenarios of the future

Module-associated assignment: The students are requested to prepare and conduct two debates – on the importance of environmental/social aspects of SD and on probabilities of various world scenarios

Module Two. What drives business – issues and trends

Allocated class time – 2 h seminar

The module explores which urgent and complex issues – that fall in the domain of SD - are faced by businesses in a modern world. Climate change, resource deficiency and quality, supply chain relations, child and forced labour, work conditions, human rights and corruptions are among questions discussed during this module. More specifically, the module will address the following **issues**:

Issues covered by the UN Global Compact – human rights, labor, environment (including climate) and anti-corruption

Relations along the supply chain

Relations with the local communities

Module Three. Is the business of business is business?

Allocated class time – 3 h seminar and 2 hours group discussion

The goal of this module is to critically examine the purpose of global businesses looking at their history and current position. It will deal with the question of whether the question of profit-making as a supreme governing principle or social role of corporations (could) become more important. Exploring new emerging forms of business, the module links the questions of business, sustainability and development.

The module will address the following **issues**:

History and foundations of modern corporations

What is the purpose of the corporation?

What are the emerging forms of business?

Module-associated assignment: Through the group discussion and presentation, the students are requested to explore various forms of “corporations of the future”. They will also work with analysis of a case of sustainable enterprise.

Module Four. Business (corporate) sustainability

Allocated class time – 3 h seminar and discussion

This module will focus on business strategies and tools employed by the businesses to secure long-term shareholders values and benefits for various stakeholders of environment and society. Among other **issues** the module focuses on the questions of:

Evolution of business approaches to SD

Management systems

Business communication and reporting

Stakeholders relations

Production and product-related strategies

Module-associated assignment: The students are introduced to analyze a case relevant for understanding of stakeholder engagement and communication (Disney case)

Module Five. Sustainable Production and Consumption

Allocated class time – 3 h seminar and 3 h case discussion

This module will focus on sustainable production and consumption (SCP) concept, systems and practices. The role of businesses, consumers and other stakeholders in the SCP are explored. The module focuses on the following **issues:**

SCP concept and its development

Preventative approaches, cleaner production, eco-efficiency

Eco-system services and business practices

Sustainable consumption

Module-associated assignment: In addition to the discussion, the students will work with the study case of Rio Tinto focusing on the company's strategy in biodiversity and ecosystem services

Module Six. Corporate Social Responsibility

Allocated class time – 1 h seminar and 1 h debate

The goal of the module is to familiarise students with concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and contrast it to other approaches, e.g. philanthropy. In particular, the module will address these questions:

CSR – concept and principles

Example of CSR practices

CSR standards

Module-associated assignment: The students will be requested to organise a debate on the role of CSR in the progress towards SD

Module Seven. Pro-poor development

Allocated class time – 1 h seminar and 2 h group work

The module will focus on the ways modern businesses are (and/or could) deal with questions of poverty. Examples of corporations and small companies are brought forward to analyse potential of business development in influencing one of the most critical issues of humanity. The questions addressed by the module are:

Understanding poverty – reasons, facts, figures, trends

Base of the pyramid

Development and business perspectives

Module-associated assignment: the students

Evaluation criteria

Course grading

The grading will be based on the students' participation in the debates, case discussion and in-class exercises. All of the seven activities will be performed in groups with composition of the groups constantly changing.

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| • To prepare and conduct a debate –importance of environmental/social aspects of SD | 10% |
| • To prepare and conduct a debates – probabilities of various world scenarios | 10% |
| • To explore various forms of “corporations of the future”. Analysis of a case of sustainable enterprise | 20% |
| • Disney case - stakeholder engagement and communication | 10% |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case of Rio Tinto focusing on the company's strategy in biodiversity and ecosystem services • To prepare and conduct a debate on the role of CSR in the progress towards SD • Developing principles of business engagement with poor communities | <p>20%</p> <p>10%</p> <p>20%</p> |
| References: | |
| Additional information (if any) | |
| Student responsibilities | |