Minor in Sustainable Entrepreneurship and Business

Description

Minor in Sustainable Entrepreneurship and Business.

The minor concept

A minor gives you the opportunity of having a second specialization in your degree. The minor is a bundle of three to four electives that can be chosen separately but if chosen together rewards a minor.

Purpose

This Minor looks at various efforts to build more sustainable entrepreneurial and business practices. It explores opportunities for addressing big social and environmental challenges and asks in particular how the private and civil society sectors can contribute to developing more equal and sustainable societies.

Citizen protests have spread around the world, intellectuals denounce the increased neo-liberalization of our economies, political commentators moan about weak democracies, and activists condemn the lack of political and economic imagination to counter inequality, deficient educational systems, unreliable financial institutions, mounting migratory challenges, and apocalyptic environmental destruction. These global challenges require a broad collective effort to re-imagine current capitalism and build more sustainable economies.

As a response to such challenges, many individuals, communities and organisations are both suggesting new socio-economic models and experimenting with new entrepreneurial and business practices. These propose rationalities and practices that go beyond merely attenuating the ills of the world. Instead, they are proposing new sets of values on which to organise our social and economic life; they are putting forward new ways of thinking and doing that have the potential to project us towards a fairer and sustainable future.

This Minor aims to ignite a conversation about how to build more humane community-oriented societies. It looks at past and present efforts to reimagine how we live together and relate to the environment. The Minor is organised in three courses. The first introduces students to distinct logics guiding efforts to build more sustainable entrepreneurial and business practices. Course two focuses on one set of ideas and practices that are currently contributing to re-think and re-make the financial

and monetary systems. The third course helps students put the various logics and tools learnt throughout the previous courses in the Minor at work in their own entrepreneurial projects.

The Minor is part of the series Advanced Studies Electives. It addresses students in their last year of their master who are looking for inspiration for their master theses. The Minor will introduce the most current research in the field of Sustainable Entrepreneurship and Business, including state-of-the-art research debates and questions for potential master theses.

Structure

The below table lists the structure and the ECTS credits of the individual courses. The course descriptions are available in the online course catalogue. Direct links are inserted in the below table.

Course	ECTS
Re-imagining Capitalism	7.5
Re-imagining Money - CANCELLED	7.5
Re-imagining Environmental Entrepreneurship - CANCELLED	7.5

Content

Re-imagining Capitalism

Growing inequality, catastrophic environmental damage, and a general mistrust in capitalism as a system currently hampers the legitimacy of companies and puts pressure on political systems worldwide. This course looks at various attempts to “re-imagine capitalism.” It explores opportunities for addressing big societal problems and asks in particular how the private and the civil society sectors can contribute to developing more just and equal societies.

In the aftermath of one of the worst financial, economic and social crisis in post-war history, the discussion on the form taken by today’s global capitalism has intensified. As a response to big societal problems, many individuals, communities and organizations around the globe are suggesting new business models and experimenting with novel governance structures. This course aims at exploring past and present efforts to re-imagine capitalism.

This course is designed for students who want to explore the idea that some of the “big” societal problems can be effectively addressed by private firms, entrepreneurs and social activists. Students will be exposed to the business realities that come with “re-imagining capitalism” and will discuss obstacles and context factors for their practical implementation. Based on case study discussions of real organizations, students will learn the values, logics, strategies and practices used in current organizational efforts to ameliorate our economies and societies. As the course takes both the industry and socio-political context into account, students will also learn about the practical challenges met and the organizational possibilities opened by these novel businesses models.

The course combines discussions on theoretical perspectives from various disciplines with practical discussion of real-life cases. In this doing, we will discuss notions such as Conscious capitalism, Social entrepreneurship, Gift and Sharing economies, Community economies, or the Circular economy. The course uses a variety of pedagogical methods ranging from traditional lectures to student debates, group work, and teaching cases.

Re-imagining Money

Growing inequality, apocalyptic environmental damage, and the protracted effects of a global financial crisis have resulted in a discussion on the role of our monetary system for the organization of society. At the same time, new technological and financial developments are giving rise to much experimentation on new forms of money. This course looks at various attempts to “re-imagine money.” It explores opportunities for addressing big societal challenges and asks in particular how new forms of money can contribute to developing more just and equal societies.

Imagine you have the possibility to re-imagine our monetary system: Where would you start? How would you build it on the new monetary technologies? How would you work to make it more conducive to just and equal societies?

The global financial crisis of 2008 marked the beginning of an intense discussion on the consequences of our monetary system on the organization of our societies. The concentration of wealth in “the one percent” in parallel to austerity policies, the increase of prices of financial assets parallel to a retrenchment of the welfare state have resulted in a generalised realisation that the monetary system has not been serving the interests of the population as a whole.

The discussion on the organization of our monetary system is however as much driven by frustration towards the financial system as it is by excitement about new monetary developments. New payment systems (such as Swish or Apple Pay), the decline of cash, the emergence of digital currencies (such as Bitcoin and Ethereum) as well as local currencies (such as Time Dollars, Regiogeld or Transition Town currencies) and the development of new financial practices (such as P2P lending or crowdfunding) are opening up our thinking on money and our possibilities to re-imagine, re-organize and re-claim money.

That is, the changing nature of money is giving rise to a wave of experimentation on new forms of money. These experiments see money not as an obstruction but as a vehicle for constructing more sustainable economies, more resilient communities and more fair societies. While these new monetary ideas and real-life efforts may seem contradictory, money scholars, practitioners and activists agree that money needs to be re-organized, that this can be done from the bottom-up, and that we can indeed imaginatively engage with the future of money.

This course is addressed to students who want to explore the idea that money can be re-designed. Students will be exposed to the theoretical and practical realities that come with “re-imagining money”. The course does not require previous knowledge in neither finance nor economics. It however does ask students to be open to actively engage in re-thinking the monetary landscape. We will do this through a monetary workshop at the end of the course, in which student groups will be designing a monetary system for a particular purpose of their choice.

Re-imagining Environmental Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurial projects face two major challenges. One, an ability to mobilize, cohere and motivate teams in a way that is dynamic and creative to build a valued shared future. Two, a conception of environment, people and communities that is not an optional concern but an integral part of the entrepreneurial endeavour. This course takes both these challenges, contributing to re-imagine entrepreneurship.

Imagine you want to create an entrepreneurial project which many people would want to be part of. A project in which team members would be extremely committed and able to create products and services that would care for the environment, people and communities. How would you do it?

The course deals with two fundamental issues:

1. Re-thinking the key elements of Entrepreneurship: entrepreneurs need to be able to mobilize and engage a diverse group of people with specialised knowledges and experiences towards being creative. Yet often, the ability to cohere and motivate teams towards creative development is left to chance. The question is how to develop a system of values which encourages creative development specific to each collective.

2. Re-establishing the environment as us, thus not as a separated optional concern. This has profound implications for the success of our entrepreneurial project.

The course is addressed to all students, not only to those who want to be entrepreneurs, but to anyone that wishes to develop social, organizational and cultural projects. It is addressed to students who want to organize social and cultural movements. Specifically, in this course, we will work on developing dynamic open value structures –systems– which cohere and stimulate collectives towards developing their creativity in creating products and services (understood in the broad sense). This process requires re-imagining new ways of working, and new ways of thinking that do not separate the environment from human concerns.

To ensure that course participants are able to manage the creation and communication of open and dynamic value-systems oriented to creative development, they will have to develop their own entrepreneurial project.

Examinations

The minor consists of the examinations listed below. The learning objectives and the regulations of the individual examinations are prescribed in the online course catalogue. Direct links to the individual examinations are inserted in the table below.

Exam name	Exam form	Gradingscale	Internal/external exam	ECTS
Re-imagining capitalism	Home assignment - written product	7-step scale	Internal exam	7.5
Re-imagining Money	Home assignment - written product	7-step scale	Internal exam	7.5
Re-imagining Environmental Entrepreneurship	Home assignment - written product	7-step scale	Internal exam	7.5

Further information

Minor coordinator

Ester Barinaga & Christina Lubinski, Department of Management, Politics and Philosophy

Study Board

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How to sign up

If you want to sign up for the Minor in Sustainable Entrepreneurship and Business you have to select CSOCM1001U when you sign up for electives. You will subsequently be signed up for all three courses. You do not have to select all three courses individually.