CBS
COPENHAGEN
BUSINESS SCHOOL
HANDELSHØJSKOLEN

Minor in Transforming Business and Organizations to Build Sustainable and Democratic Economics

Description

A minor gives you the opportunity of having a second specialization in your degree. This minor is a bundle of three electives that can be chosen separately but if chosen together reward the student with a minor certificate which implies that the student acquired a specific and coherent set of skills and that she/he is a specialist in that field (see Purpose).

Purpose

This minor allows students to critically interrogate and reimagine the foundations and organizing practices of the global economy. It offers a set of theoretical and practical skills that will help students to understand the ongoing major societal challenges by interpreting them in the broader context of contemporary capitalism; and to explore sustainable and democratic alternatives. This acquired new awareness will help them to become conscious entrepreneurs, innovators, managers and change-makers be it through business, not-forprofit organizations, or the implementation of innovating ideas in the realm of local, national or supranational political and economic institutions. Firstly, the course “Reimagining Capitalism” provides students with foundational knowledge on the contemporary global economy and its relationship with some of the most pressing societal challenges: climate change, growing inequalities, and the growing fragility of democratic political systems all around the world. This is done by providing the students with an historical overview of the development of contemporary capitalism, understood as the dominant socio-economic system. Students will be introduced to both historical and cuttingedge debates concerning capitalism: these include the role of social reproduction in the economy, the relationship between capitalism and climate change in the Anthropocene, the relationship between capitalism and the expansion of colonial powers, but also the role of artificial intelligence for the future of work. These theoretical debates will be complemented by a number of empirical case studies illustrative of contemporary attempts to re-imagine capitalism such eco-villages, food sovereignty movements, and consumer movements. Secondly, the course “Transforming the Corporation” puts a particular focus on assessing the form and role of one of the central and most powerful institutions of contemporary capitalism, namely the corporation. The course offers students the tools to understand and critically assess the role of the corporation in the global economy by focusing on critical theories of the corporation from the vantage points of law, sociology, philosophy, critical political economy and management studies. The course goes into depth with the nature of the corporation and the corporate form as well as different critiques of corporate power and proposals for transforming it,

such as cooperatively- or worker-owned corporations and workplace democracy. 2 Thirdly, the course “Organizing for Change” introduces students to alternative forms of organizing the economy and society by exploring concrete cases from the private, public and civil society sectors. This includes examples from circular and small-scale economic initiatives, sustainable entrepreneurship, alternative finance, and the digital commons. Based on case study discussions of real businesses and organizations, students will explore the values and strategies used in current organizational efforts to change our economies and societies, as well as their limitations. They will further discuss the managerial, operational, entrepreneurial and leadership challenges that arise within such alternative practices or organising. In this minor, students learn to explain, defend and challenge a position on alternative ways of organizing, transforming corporations and reimagining capitalism based on a firm understanding of socio-economic and cultural theories of change and their critiques, as well as their practical challenges. 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 interdisciplinary research in the fields of Sustainable Entrepreneurship, Organization and Business Studies, Political Sociology and Political Economy including stateof-the-art debates and questions for potential master theses.

Structure

The minor consists of three courses which have been constructed to complement each other by providing the students with interlinked debates, points of reflection, and case studies. The course “Reimagining capitalism” offers some broad perspectives and introduces some foundational concepts and debates that link to the topics of the other two courses. The course “Transforming the corporation” focuses specifically on the corporation not only as an economic, but also as a political and social subject. The course “Organizing for change” takes alternative forms of organization and management as its main subject and addresses practical challenges of organizing for change. The content of each course has been developed in order to avoid overlapping topics but to create a coherent and well-structured narrative.

The structure and the ECTS credits of the individual courses are listed below. The course descriptions are available in the online course catalogue.

Course	ECTS
Re-Imagining Capitalism. Towards Just and Sustainable Futures	7.5
Transforming the corporation	7.5
Organizing for Change. Alternative Organizations Tackling Social, Economic and Environmental Challenges	7.5

Content

Reimagining Capitalism:

The course “Re-imagining capitalism” represents the theoretical and empirical grounding for the newly established minor. In fact, in order to critically understand the ongoing multiple crises on the economic, social and environmental level and in order to envision sustainable and just futures, an understanding of the dominant socio-economic system, namely capitalism, is a fundamental and foundational prerequisite. In the last years, and especially after the North-Atlantic financial crisis of 2007-2008, many scholars and observers have underlined the unsustainability of capitalism and the need to re-imagine our economies, their underlying logic, and their functioning mechanisms. As a response to this emerging awareness, many individuals, communities and organizations around the world are experimenting with new governance structures, with alternative ways of producing and consuming goods, and with non-conventional lifestyles. Many of these practices come from 3 local,

self-organized, grassroots societal niches but have the potential to disrupt the status quo by prefiguring in the present a better society for the future. For this reason, it is important to get to know them and interpret them not only as niches of innovation, but as seeds of scalable social and economic change. The underlying “big” question to the course is the following: Can we re-imagine and reform contemporary capitalism “from within” to make it a more just and sustainable system, or do we need to implement a totally new socio-economic system, a system able to sustain the flourishing of human and non-human life throughout the 21st century?

Transforming the Corporation:

The aim of this course is to make the student capable of critically analyzing and assessing the corporation, the corporate form, the role of the corporation in the global economy as well as different critiques of the corporation and proposals for transforming it. The multinational corporation plays a dominant role in the global economy, accounting for a dominant percentage of the world's top economies, wielding massive political power and increasingly becoming agents of social development through CSR, Corporate Citizenship and the UN SDGs. Corporations are both the agents of innovation, growth, development and prosperity, as well as of inequality, poverty, whitewashing, tax evasion, climate crisis and environmental disasters. The course offers the students the tools to understand, analyse and critically assess the corporation, corporate power and its role in the global economy by focusing on critical theories of the corporation from the vantage points of law, sociology, philosophy, critical political economy and management studies. The first part of the course introduces the corporate form, its history, the contemporary dominance of the neoclassical understanding of the corporation in ‘the theory of the firm’, ‘agency theory’ and shareholder-value primacy as well as introducing to a political theory of the corporation. The second part takes a closer look at the corporation and its role in the global economy, and the third part investigates contemporary critiques of the corporation and corporate power as well as a variety of alternatives to and proposals to transform the corporation such as cooperatively- or worker-owned corporations and workplace democracy.

Organizing for Change:

The aim of this course is to explore managerial, entrepreneurial and leadership challenges that alternative organizations face when striving to organize for change. Alternative organizations broadly describe a variety of practices that aim to ‘organize differently’ than the conventional governance forms presented in neoclassical economics, and which have the intention to tackle environmental degradation, social inequalities and democratic instability. By foregrounding values related to sustainability, equality, diversity as well as community, care, and responsibility, these organizations challenge the prevailing dominance of shareholder value, growth and competition. The course introduces business and not-for-profit activities with the explicit intention of bringing about socio-economic change. In case examples, we focus particularly on organizational challenges emerging from tensions between financial growth and sustainability, authority and autonomy, collaboration and competition, inclusiveness and exclusiveness, innovation and disruption, as well as change and co-optation. Our aim is to develop a critical understanding of alternative practices and their practical challenges in light of various socio-economic and cultural theories with regard to 4 individualism/collectivism, the commons, post-growth, diversity, and digitalism. The course links theory and practice by introducing theoretical debates and concrete case studies on circular and local/small-scale economies, ‘non-growing’ companies, digital commons, sustainable entrepreneurship, and alternative finance. Further case studies can be selected by the students themselves. Examinations: The minor consists of the examinations listed b

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. Towards Just and Sustainable Futures	Home assignment - written product	7-point grading scale	Internal exam	7.5
Transforming the corporation	Home assignment - written product	7-point grading scale	Internal exam	7.5
Organizing for Change. Alternative Organizations Tackling Social, Economic and Environmental Challenges	Oral exam based on written product	7-point grading scale	Internal exam	7.5

Further information

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