Minor in Sustainable Business

Description

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

Sustainability is receiving increasing attention as a societal issue and a rapidly growing number of companies now recognize it as a major driver of competitiveness. Yet sustainability is not a simple concept, nor is it straightforward to translate sustainable business practice into attractive business models. At the root of the issue is the fact that sustainability is a systemic phenomenon – to assess whether a particular product, service, or business practice is “sustainable” requires consideration of how it fits into a larger system of production of raw materials and components, manufacturing, distribution, usage, and, ultimately, disposal. Moreover, sustainability involves not only environmental issues but also social and economic sustainability.

To turn sustainability into an effective business driver, companies must development of a clear business case for it and it must become part of the core business functions. Moreover, since the issues transcend internal and external company borders, the firm must develop effective means of communicating with and involving multiple stakeholders. The purpose of this minor is to equip you with theories, concepts, and methods to develop effective sustainable business strategies.

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
Creating markets for sustainable products	7.5
Corporate Sustainability in Global Supply Chains	7.5
Corporate Political Responsibility in Theory and Practice	7.5

Content

Corporate Sustainability in Global Supply Chains

An increasing number of companies in the Western world outsource parts of their production to low-wage countries with poor social and environmental standards. Such long-distance outsourcing makes it difficult for companies to ensure that their products are being produced under socially and environmentally sound conditions. The course attempts to make the students capable of understanding and managing the opportunities and barriers facing companies, which wish to exercise social and environmental responsibility in their supply chains.

The course will use a mixture of learning styles, including lectures, case-study discussions, and company presentations. The course will in particular deal with the following topics:

- Introduction to the concept of CSR.
- The rise of global supply chains.
- The costs and benefits of CSR.
- Non-governmental organizations and their influence on corporate behavior.
- Theoretical and practical approaches to understanding the integration of social and environmental issues into supplier relations.
- Social and environmental audits, standards and labels.
- Responses by Third World suppliers.
- Consumer attitudes and behavior.
- Multinational companies and labour issues.

Creating Markets for Sustainable Products

Entrepreneurship and markets are increasingly seen as plausible sources for solutions to reduce carbon (or other) polluting emissions and economize on the use of limited natural resources. The question is how, and under what conditions, this may be the case? What does it take to make markets shift to new and environmentally more viable products? With the help of analytical concepts from recent material market studies and the new economic sociology, this course provides the students with concepts and methods to understand markets (products, consumers and whole new market arrangements) for sustainable products as practical achievements. Students will learn to understand and analyze how sustainable products and processes are facilitated or hindered by the existing technical infrastructure, the regulative arrangement, the construction of value, and networks between corporations, regulators, consumers, social movements, claims to legitimacy, and the frames of knowledge used to construct and evaluate a particular market regime. In the context of bringing new sustainable goods/technologies to the market, innovation is not only about heroic entrepreneurs, but depends on transforming the lock-in of existing technologies and enrolling a long list of unglamorous characters including calculative tools, new practices of valuation, standards, trials and tests, and the human and non-human participants in chains of production and commercialization.

Corporate Political Responsibility in Theory and Practice

The course will ask what responsibilities does the concept of 'citizienship' bring to corporations?

The first half of the Course will critically review the Corporate Citizenship (CC) and Political Responsibility theoretical literatures, particularly to consider the ways in which Corporate Citizenship relates to / differs from the corporate social responsibility theory. It will also include reference to Politial Science literature on the corporate citizenship.

The underlying assumption is that CC brings responsibilties of corporations to the polity - not just to society. It will critically assess the sort of arguments -strengths and weaknesses - that can be deployed for CC.

The second half of the Course will focus on particular issue areas which questions or CC do or potentially apply: e.g. lobbying, taxation, provision of critical infrastructure, and governance responsibility in developing and non-democratic countries.

The Course will enable students to distinguish long-standing arguments for CC from more recent contributions, such as 'Political CSR'.

It will also enable students to consider questions about the application of CC in national and international contexts, and in democratic and non-democratic contexts.

Examples of topics:

- The Origins of Corporate Citizenship theory
- Citizenship and Business Relationships
- Developments in the Corporate Citizenship / Political CSR theory
- Corporate Citizenship at the National Level (i) Lobbying
- Corporate Citizenship at the National Level (ii) Taxation
- Corporate Citisenship at the National Level (iii) Critical Infrastructure
- Corporate Citizenship at the International Level (i) Partnerships for labour rights
- Corporate Citizenship at the International Level (ii) Equality and diversity
- Corporations as citizenship: current issues (e.g. Citizens United case

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
Creating Markets for Sustainable Products	Oral exam based on written product	7-point grading scale	Internal exam	7.5
Corporate Sustainability in Global Supply Chains	Home assignment - written product	7-point grading scale	Internal exam	7.5
Corporate Political Responsibility in Theory and Practice	Home assignment - written product	7-point grading scale	Internal exam	7.5

Further information

Minor coordinator

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Study Board

The minor in Sustainable Business is offered by the Study Board for the Master of Science Programme in Economics and Business Administration.

How to sign up

If you want to sign up for the minor in Sustainable Business, you have to select CCMVV1002U Minor in Sustainable Business when you sign up for electives. You will then subsequently be signed up for all three courses. You do not have to select all three courses individually.