CIEE Barcelona, Spain

Course title: Business Ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility
Course code: BUSI 3003 BASP
Programs offering course: Business and Culture, Economics and Culture, Language and Culture
Language of instruction: English
U.S. semester credits: 3
Contact hours: 45
Term: Spring 2020

Course Description

The current crisis is hitting Western economies hard and is evident in the breakdown of the present economic model, in which economy and ethics take diverging routes. Society is demanding a new business and economic model based on ethics, transparency, and solidarity. Therefore, one of the main challenges organizations are now facing is how to ensure that employees act ethically and work with integrity. Management of organizations requires a certain ethical behavior in order to generate the trust needed for economic activities. In this post-crisis scenario, in which business values are being redefined, being “socially responsible” has become increasingly urgent. Therefore, CSR policies would be an effective way to implement a culture of ethical organization that would ultimately render mandatory regulations unnecessary. This course will prepare students to recognize ethical issues, demonstrate familiarity with alternative frameworks for ethical reasoning, and discern trade-offs and implications of employing different ethical frames of reference when making business decisions.

Learning Objectives

By completing this course, students will:

- Display an understanding of the role of business in society, corporate social responsibility, ethical issues and the role of personal values.
- Identify the ethical issues inherent in each business scenario
- Articulate and evaluate their own and others’ ethical reasoning
- Develop abilities to interpret the information; discuss and explain a position; and formulate and defend a cogent and considered position in this field
- Understand and cope with the challenges of balancing the Triple Bottom Line (“people, planet and profit”) approach of profit, ecological accountability and social responsibility.
- Familiarize themselves with the role played by Good Governance Codes in the development of an ethic culture in organizations listing on the Spanish Capital Market.

Course Prerequisites

3 semesters of college-level micro- or macroeconomics, accounting, finance, management, or statistics.

Methods of Instruction

The classes will be led by the professor addressing the themes and utilizing computer presentations. When permitting, the professor will also utilize videos relating to the materials and analyze case studies, referring to Spanish businesses. There will be a visit to a company that will explain and show
their business ethics practices. We will also have the visit of a guest speaker expert on business ethics and corporate responsibility. There will be a term-project. Students will choose a company and analyze their business ethics policies and actions.

**Assessment and Final Grade**

1. Midterm Exam 25%
2. Final Exam 25%
3. Term Project 20%
4. Case Studies 20%
5. Class Participation 10%
   TOTAL 100%

**Course Requirements**

**Midterm Exam**

- The exams are designed to assess student comprehension and ability to articulate core concepts related to International Marketing. In each exam students will answer a part composed of 25 multiple-choice questions and a second part composed of four short-answer questions related to topics covered in class.

**Final Exam**

- There will be a group term project that will be presented during the last week of classes before the final exam. Each group of three or four students will select one American company and analyze their business ethics policies and actions. There will be partial submittals throughout the semester.

**Case Studies**

- The case method is one of the most effective pedagogical tools to sharpen your analytical and decision-making skills, as it requires you to be an active participant in Marketing decisions. Cases intend to give you practice in assembling data, supporting and discussing decisions. Moreover, the case method provides a vehicle by which to apply theories, concepts, and frameworks that we discuss in class or which you find in the assigned readings. Finally, the discussion constitutes an opportunity to defend your position and to learn from others, by listening to their comments and criticisms. Everything on a “safe environment”, where there are low risks when mistakes are made. Classrooms are our training environments to prepare you for business challenges.

- Students must participate in the discussions that will take place in class. Throughout the course there will be several case studies, a few of them in film format. It is extremely important that students prepare and analyze these cases prior to the class debate.

**Class Participation**

- Participation is valued as meaningful contribution in the classroom, utilizing the resources and materials presented to students as part of the course. Meaningful contribution requires students to be prepared in advance of each class session and to have regular attendance. Students must clearly demonstrate they have engaged with the materials as directed, for example, through classroom
discussions, online discussion boards, peer-to-peer feedback (after presentations), and attentiveness on co-curricular and outside-of-classroom activities.

The quality of what is said and the quality of one’s listening and responsiveness to others are important components for the evaluation of class participation. Some of the criteria for evaluating effective class participation include:

Is the participant prepared? Do comments show evidence of analysis of the case? Do comments add to our understanding of the situation? Does the participant go beyond simple repetition of case facts without analysis and conclusions? Do comments show an understanding of theories, concepts, and analytical devices presented in class lectures or reading materials?

Is the participant a good listener? Are the points made relevant to the discussion? Are they linked to the comments of others? Is the participant willing to interact with other class members?

Is the participant an effective communicator? Are concepts presented in a concise and convincing way?

**Attendance**

Students are expected to attend all scheduled class sessions on time and be prepared for the day’s class activities. CIEE does not distinguish between justified or unjustified absences, whether due to sickness, personal emergency, inevitable transportation delay and/or other impediments. You are considered responsible of managing your own absences. Please keep in mind that exams, paper submission dates, presentations and any other course work deadlines cannot be changed.

No academic penalty will be applied if students miss up to 3 class sessions. If students miss up to 5 class sessions, students’ final course grade will drop 5 points out of 100 on the CIEE grade scale for each additional absence beyond 3 (for example a 95 will become a 90 if they reach the 4th absence, and an 85 if they reach the 5th absence). Students will automatically fail the course if they miss more than 20% of total class hours (i.e. if they exceed 5 absences).

For students who miss up to 20% of the total course hours due to extenuating circumstances, the Academic Director may allow for exceptions to the local attendance policy based on documentation such as proof of bereavement, religious observances, hospitalization etc.

Students arriving more than 10 minutes late to the class will be considered absent for a day.

*N.B. Course schedule is subject to change due to study tours, excursions, or local holidays. Final schedules will be included in the final syllabus provided to students on site.*

**Weekly Schedule**

**Week 1**

Class 1.1   Presentation of the Course: Program, Methodology and Grading

Introducing Business ethics

What is Business Ethics? Why is business ethics important?

Definition. Basic Principles. Moral standards and values

Do we consider ourselves ethical people?
Discussion based on an ethics quiz


Class 1.2

Globalization and sustainability: a key context and a key goal for a business ethics case study: McEthics in Europe and Asia.

Week 2
Class 2.1 Framing Business Ethics

Corporate responsibility: the main implications to the society. Analysis of corporate social responsibility in different countries context.

Research exercise: select one of the following companies and investigate the company’s website according their social corporate responsibility policies


Class 2.2

Case study: American Apparel: a new fashion for CSR?

Raising questions about cases related to the theories studied in class.

Week 3
Class 3.1 Evaluating Business Ethics

Normative ethical theories: North American and European origins and differences.

Alternative perspectives on ethical theory

Global discussion: ISO 26000 standard as an application of discourse ethics.


Class 3.2

Day 06 Case study: Canada’s oil sands: ‘most destructive project on Earths’ or ‘ethical oil’?

Raising questions about cases related to the theories studied in class.

Week 4
Class 4.1 Making Decisions in Business Ethics

What an ethical decision is?

Individual influences on ethical decision making


Class 4.2

8Case study: News Corporation's phone hacking scandal: no news is good news?

Raising questions about cases related to the theories studied in class.

Week 5

Class 5.1 Managing Business Ethics

Tools and techniques of business ethics management


Class 5.2

Documentary: Wal-Mart: the high cost of low price

Discussion about Wal-Mart documentary

Week 6

Class 6.1

Social Corporate Responsibility example: Top manager guest explain a company case

Class 6.2 Shareholders and Business Ethics

The importance of shareholders and stakeholders

Shareholding and sustainability

Case study: Corporate governance of professional football clubs: for profit or for glory?


Week 7

Class 7.1 Midterm Exam
Class 7.2 Employees and Business Ethics

Employees as a stakeholder

The corporate citizen and employee relations.

Global discussion: labor market in the South East Asian countries


Week 8
Class 8.1

Case study: The expendables: migrant labor in the global workforce.

Class 8.2 Consumers and Business Ethics

Consumers as stakeholders

Ethical issues, marketing and the consumer

Discussion class: Are marketing strategies ethical?


Week 9
Class 9.1 Sustainable Consumption

New consumption trends: product sharing, recycling, etc.


Class 9.2

Social Corporate Responsibility example: Top manager guest explain a company case (TBC)

Week 10
Class 10.1 Suppliers, Competitors and Business Ethics

Suppliers and competitors as stakeholders

Ethical issues about suppliers and competitors

Globalization: suppliers and competitors

Case study: Uzbek cotton: a new spin on responsible sourcing.

Class 10.2 Civil Society and Business Ethics

What is civil society?

Civil society organizations as stakeholders.

Civil society, business and sustainability.


Week 11

Class 11.1 Government, Regulation and Business Ethics

Government as stakeholder

Ethical issues in the relation between business and government

Government, business and sustainability

Corruption about governmental actors by business

Case study: Managing the ethics of censorship and surveillance: where next for the Global Network Initiative?


Class 11.2 Field Trip (TBA)

Week 12

Class 12.1 Government, Business and Sustainability

Corruption about governmental actors by business

Discussion about United Nation Conference on Climate Change (Paris 2015)


Class 12.2 Preparation of Project Presentations
Work in class

Submittal of complete final term-project's document

**Week 13**

Class 13.1 Final Exam

**Course Materials**

**Readings**

All the readings and cases in paper format come from the following textbook. You need a copy of this textbook to follow this course.


**Media Resources**