

esade

RAMON LLULL UNIVERSITY

# Barcelona & Spain - Global Environmental Challenges

Rafael Sardà



## *Table of contents*

- 1 Course description / Introduction to the course
- 2 Learning objective and competencies
- 3 Course format and methodological approach
- 4 Course contents

## 1. Course description / Introduction to the course

The course has been designed to provide skills and competencies for future leaders to address the necessities of today's business in balancing economic development with environmental protection, a priority for mankind and, decoupling economic growth from environmental impact, its mandatory requirement. The course does not need a previous basic knowledge.

## 2. Learning objectives and competencies

The main aim of this course is to provide students with up-to-date knowledge, skills, and capabilities to understand the new concept of Corporate Sustainability and its present tendency in a world in which humanity is facing huge Global Environmental Challenges. The course will show how Businesses are responding these days to strategically address these major issues by creating sustainable value. Different specific objectives would be:

Facilitating knowledge development in a topic which is becoming highly strategically today for firms, the interdependence between business and the environment and the development of the Corporate Sustainability concept of the course contributed to the student's education by:

- Introducing the students into the Corporate Sustainability concept of the 21st Century,
- Framing the development of a new language in a business linked to the environmental variable and the used business tools
- Showing students to address major global environmental challenges,
- Developing sustainable and responsible social-ecological values in your career formation,
- Promoting teamwork.

### 3. Course format and methodological approach

The course follows a recent Routledge book (Taylor & Francis Publ.) "Corporate Sustainability in the 21st Century: increasing the resilience of social-ecological systems" (Sardá & Pogutz, 2019). In this book, we are introducing and discussing a new conceptual framework for Corporate Sustainability "Business In Nature", a concept that should guide the business towards an extended rethinking of the corporate value chain with the ultimate goals to have a positive impact on business and society and to increase the resilience of social-ecological systems and of organizations. The Global Environmental Challenges and the Business Response course is comprised of ten teaching sessions that prepare participants to address the most critical issues in the relationship between business and the environment. These sessions will drive through the competitive aspects of the corporate response to the green variable of sustainability as a response to the global environmental challenges.

The course consists of a combination of interactive lectures, case discussions, and other materials. You are asked to read the material prepared for every class before attending (reading material and case studies); reflect on these readings and proactively look for additional material. During each session, the case studies and lectures will serve as the basis for the discussion of the main topics outlined in the file handout each week. In addition, for some of the case studies, students will be asked to develop small (less than a page) essays that will respond to assigned questions. A final individual essay will be asked at the end of the course for its conclusion.

### 4. Course Contents

In our globalization era, balancing economic development and social prosperity with environmental protection is a priority and, decoupling economic growth from environmental impact is a mandatory requirement.

Sustainable Development and the recent social-ecological paradigm has made its way from the public and political agendas to the business agenda and today, environmental challenges such as climate change, water shortages, the biodiversity crisis ... are pressuring us for action obliging business to respond. This course introduces and applies the idea of a new Corporate Sustainability concept for the 21st Century where firms can create Sustainable Value using different Sustainable Strategic options companies may have these days. We will illustrate how companies engage in Corporate Sustainability and how they can create sustainable added value. The objective is to build the theoretical

foundations introducing innovative conceptual frameworks that provide guidance for managing what is needed in this new Century.

Transferring new concepts and jargon into the above perspective, the course evolves on two conceptual frameworks. The course redefines a set of corporate sustainable strategies that companies can develop to manage environmental issues in practice and create sustainable added value. On the other side, the course acknowledges the notion of corporate extended responsibilities and the transformation of organizational and operational boundaries framing four basic approaches that can guide managers in rethinking the corporate value change: increasing the eco-efficiency and eco-effectiveness of productive units; making supply chains more sustainable; designing new sustainable product and services and; moving into sustainable business models and collaborative schemes.

Corporate sustainability becomes a key factor in the top agenda of business leaders and multinational companies. Sustainability is having -and will continue to have- a material impact on how companies think and act. The evidence grows stronger every day.

In a recent report, 93% of 766 CEO's from more than 100 countries believe that Sustainability issues will be critical to the future success of their business. Many of them state that how they respond to the challenge of sustainability will profoundly affect the competitiveness, and perhaps even the survival, of their organizations.

Sustainability can be considered a new business megatrend; global corporations develop sustainability strategies, redefine operations, processes and products, develop new ways of environmental reporting and appoint chief sustainability executives who promote sustainability as part of their core mission. Nevertheless, the present pace of change is still not addressing enough the intensifying global challenges, a transformational change is required and only the seeds of this new approach are starting to be seen today. Companies should go ahead, but how can we approach this need?

### *Session 1: Welcome to the Anthropocene*

- 1.1. Six general messages
- 1.2. Warnings from Science
- 1.3. Calls from United Nations
- 1.4. The Social-ecological paradigm

## *Session 2: The Business Case of Sustainability*

- 2.1. Corporate Sustainability (CS): the evolution of the concept
- 2.2. CS 3.0. "Business In Nature"
- 2.3. The Business Case of Sustainability
- Case Study: Kimpton Hotels

## *Session 3: The Business Case of Sustainability*

- 3.1. The basic concepts on Environmental Risk Management
- 3.2. Global Risk Reports
- 3.3. The Risk Analysis/Management frameworks for Business
- 3.4. Risk communication
- Case Study: British Petroleum and the Deepwater Platform

## *Session 4: The Climate Emergency and the 450ppm boundary*

- 4.1.- The Paris agreement and its implications
- 4.2.- The Adaptation and Mitigation Strategies
- 4.3.- The Business Response
- 4.4.- Decarbonizing the economy
- Case Study: Total and CCS

## *Session 5: Driving Production Systems Sustainable*

- 5.1.- From Clean Production to Clean Technologies
- 5.2.- From Efficiency to Effectiveness
- 5.3.- Environmental Management Systems
- 5.4.- CleanTech Innovation
- 5.5.- Corporate Reporting
- Case Study: L'OREAL

## *Session 6: Managing Sustainable Supply Chains*

- 6.1.- Supply Chain management
- 6.2.- Green Supply Chain in Sustainable Operation Management
- 6.3.- Interdependences with the concept of  $\zeta$ ecosystem services $\zeta$
- 6.4.- Stakeholder platforms and/or Green Clubs.
- Case Study: IKEA

## *Session 7: Making Sustainable Products and Services*

- 7.1. Sustainable Consumption
  - 7.2. Life Cycle Thinking (LCA's, KPI's, EPD's)
  - 7.3. Designing Sustainable Products and Services
  - 7.4. Sustainability as the key driver of Innovation
  - 7.5. Green products and their associated tools: the role of Eco-labelling
- Case Study: PATAGONIA

## *Session 8: Innovating Business Models for Sustainability*

- 8.1. The Transformational Strategy
  - 8.2. Business Models for Sustainability
  - 8.3. The Circular economy and its circular business models
  - 8.4. Transforming Businesses
- Case Study: ENEL

## *Session 9: Designing and Implementing a Sustainable Plan*

- 9.1. Introduction to the Sustainability Plan.
  - 9.2. The Process owner
  - 9.3. Designing and preparing the Sustainability Plan
- Case Study: UNILEVER

**This course is strictly ruled by ESADE's Honour Code**

*"I will not lie, cheat or steal to gain an academic advantage. I will respect all ESADE students, faculty and staff with my words and deeds."*

The violations of the ESADE MBA Honor Code include the following:

**Lying:** Lying includes knowingly communicating an untruth in order to gain an unfair academic or employment advantage.

**Cheating:** Cheating includes, but is not limited to, using unauthorized materials to complete an assignment; copying the work of another person; unauthorized providing of materials or information (e.g. proprietary course information) to another person; plagiarism; unauthorized providing of materials or information to another person during an exam. All communications, written, oral or otherwise, among students during examinations, are forbidden, as is the use of notes, books, computers, calculators or other written material except when approved by the instructor.

**Stealing:** Stealing includes, but is not limited to, taking the property of another member of the ESADE community without permission, defacing or vandalizing the property of the ESADE Business School, or the misuse of ESADE resources.

**Respect for others and professional conduct:** Respect for others includes treating all ESADE students, staff, faculty and external contacts connected to the school with politeness and cordiality, refraining from using abusive language or physical violence.

Upon witnessing a violation of the Honour Code, a student has a **moral obligation** to inform the student whose conduct is believed to be in violation of the Code that the Code has been violated. Each member of the ESADE MBA community, as a person of integrity, has a personal obligation to adhere to this requirement, both on campus and when representing ESADE off campus.

Failure to comply with the more explicit guidelines set forth by the Programme's Rules and Regulations can also be considered as breach of the Honour Code.

**Violations of this agreement and will be governed by MBA Programme Management which has the right to exercise any disciplinary action necessary in order to uphold the standards set forth herewith and in the Programme's Rules and Regulations.**