

## COURSE GENERAL OVERVIEW

Course details	
Title	Business and Sustainability
Programme	MBA
Year	1
Timing	1 / 2
ECTS	3 ECTS
Core/elective	Core
Department	Management
Area	Business Strategy and Organisation

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

General aim	
<p>The general aim of the course is to help students develop essential skills for sustainability business management considering the systemic complexity and uncertainty involved in eco-social problems.</p> <p>Thus, students will have the opportunity to reflect and raise awareness on the role of business in this challenging environment, so that they are better equipped to understand, to apply and to evaluate main business approaches and tools that are being developed in response to sustainability challenges. In addition, they will experience with social innovations through the work on proposal of transformative business models for sustainability.</p>	
Instructors	
Lecturer:	
Name	AMPARO MERINO DE DIEGO (Ms)
Department	Management
Area	Business Strategy and Organisation
Office	OD-408 (Alberto Aguilera 23 building)
e-mail	<a href="mailto:amerino@icade.comillas.edu">amerino@icade.comillas.edu</a>
Phone	+34915422800 ext. 2297
Contact	By appointment (via email)
Lecturer:	
Name	ADELA CONCHADO RODRÍGUEZ (Ms)
Department	Management
Area	Business Strategy and Organisation
e-mail	<a href="mailto:adela.conchado@comillas.edu">adela.conchado@comillas.edu</a>
Contact	By appointment (via email)

## Context of the course

### The course in the professional context

Sustainability has become a social paradigm that companies cannot ignore, since they are dominant institutions that shape our societies. Consumers, citizens, NGOs, and public administrators demand from business organizations social innovations and business models aligned with principles of environmental sustainability and social justice.

However, sustainability challenges involve systemic complexities, risks and uncertainties, what makes such demands difficult to address, together with inertia, resistance to change, prevailing beliefs about economic and business issues. Hence, understanding sustainability dilemmas and experiencing with a diversity of frameworks and tools for sustainability management is of special interest for business managers, whatever their specific area of expertise.

With that purpose, “Business and Sustainability” course enables students: 1) to critically reflect on business institution and its role in current eco-social challenges; 2) to apply tools and develop business management skills aimed at addressing such challenges; and 3) to build socially transformative business models from the principles of environmental sustainability and the common good.

### Pre-requisites

None, but the multidisciplinary approach of the course implies connections with the other MBA courses. Specifically, the centrality of the paradigm of sustainability in “Business and Sustainability” course, involves strong relationships with subjects related to ethics and CSR, corporate governance and strategic management, along with the management track of MBA curriculum. In addition, “Global Environment” and “Intercultural Management” courses help students to understand the macro dimensions that explain the eco-social challenges that companies are facing. Finally, the “Leadership and Change” course provides the basis for developing an attitude as a change agent, key in leadership for sustainability.

## COMPETENCIES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

### Generic competencies and learning outcomes

GC 1. Analysis and synthesis cognitive abilities applied to the business management world  
LO1 GC1. Students can analyse data, cases and scenarios regarding business purpose and practice

GC 6. Ethical commitment to the moral values and to the corporate social responsibility  
LO1 GC6. Students develop awareness on the ethical dimension of eco-social problems

GC 8. Critical thinking and debating skills  
LO1 GC8. Students develop critical and reflective thinking

GC 9. Autonomous learning skills  
LO1 GC6. Students can carry out thoughtful research work autonomously

### Course specific competencies an learning outcomes

EC 1. Understanding the influence that the global sustainability paradigm can exert on the role of business institutions and how they are managed

LO 1 EC1. Students develop critical awareness and arguments concerning sustainability dilemmas associated with business purpose and practice from different economic rationales

LO 2 EC1. Students understand and evaluate approaches and frameworks to manage sustainability in a diversity of contexts

LO 3 EC1. Students develop entrepreneurial skills from sustainability lenses

## COURSE CONTENTS

### Contents

MODULE 1. The business institution and the sustainability challenges

MODULE 2. Changing practices: Business management for sustainability

MODULE 3: Redefining business: Business models for sustainability

## TEACHING METHODOLOGIES

### Course teaching activities

The teaching methods of the course are based on experiential and collective learning approaches. They place emphasis on cultivating a critical and reflexive spirit, together with proactivity and action. The learning activities are designed to help students to develop all the skills specified above.

#### Lectures

Instructors will promote debate during theoretical lectures.

Students must come to lectures with all the pre-reading done. Attendance and participation are essential requirements for the effectiveness of the lecturing sessions.

#### Case analysis, discussion and debate

Students will work individually on sustainability dilemmas for business and on corresponding case analysis based on companies from different industries. These activities will allow students use, apply and discuss all theoretical frameworks and management tools into real business cases and situations.

Students must come to the group work sessions with all the pre-reading done. Attendance and participation are essential requirements for the effectiveness of the group work sessions.

#### Sustainability business models proposal

Students will present their projects on sustainability business models to the whole group.

Attendance and participation are essential requirements for the effectiveness of the presentation sessions.

### Teaching and learning outside the classroom

#### Teamwork on the sustainability business model proposal

Students will work in teams/pairs to identify an environmentally/socially relevant problem and to propose sustainability business models to address such challenges from a business format.

Assignments will be fixed so that each group of students will make periodical deliverances of their pieces of work.

#### Individual research and reading

Each student will need to organise their time outside the class in order to do all the pre-readings of each session, and in order to profoundly study the subject: they will have to understand, elaborate, retain and assess all concepts, theories and tools presented and worked in class. The course instructors will recommend essential readings.

#### Tutorials

Students will have a chance to meet with the course instructor individually. These tutorial sessions will help students solve problems and uncertainties faced regarding the course contents, activities and assessment.

SUMMARY OF STUDENT'S WORKING HOURS			
CONTACT HOURS			
Lectures	Case analysis and debates	Teamwork in business model project and oral presentations	Debates
8	10	10	2
WORKING HOURS OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM			
Case research and analysis	Work in business model project	Individual study	
10	20	15	
Total: 3 ECTS:			75 working hours

## COURSE EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Students **must pass each assessment activity** shown in the table below.

Assignments must be delivered **in the time and date specified by the course instructor**, otherwise students will get a grade of "0" in the missed assignment.

**Course final grade weights:**

Activities to be assessed	Evaluation criteria	Weight
Final exam	Global case analysis, discussion and reflection to work individually	20%
Team project on a social/sustainability business model	Follow-up of the different pieces of work delivered	30%
	Presentation and defence of the social business model proposal	20%
Attendance and proactive class participation	Questions, arguments and examples brought into class sessions	10%
Case analysis and discussion	Oral contributions to case analysis and discussion	20%

#### Re-sits

In case of failure, students can re-sit each failed activity. The final grade weighting will be applied again.

#### Students with an attendance waiver

Absent students will be assessed only through an individual exam plus a research work related to a social/sustainability business model. Their final grade will be formed by these activities, each weighting 50%.

## REFERENCES AND OTHER BIBLIOGRAPHIC RESOURCES

References
<b>Books</b>
<p>Cavagnaro, E.; Curiel, G. (2012): The three levels of sustainability. Sheffield: Greenleaf Publishing.</p> <p>Erhenfeld, J.R.; Hoffman, A.J. (2013): Flourishing. A frank conversation about sustainability. Sheffield:Greenleaf Publishing.</p> <p>Waddock, S.; McIntosh, M. (2011): See change. Making the transition to a sustainable enterprise economy, Sheffield: Greenleaf Publishing.</p> <p>Weybrecht, G. (2014): The sustainable MBA. A business guide to sustainability, 2nd edition, Chichester:Wiley.</p>
<b>Articles and other bibliographic resources</b>
<p>Instructors will provide students with a series of academic and non-academic readings related with each of the topics.</p>