

Syllabus for MSMGT 780 Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability

Course Description

This course seeks to understand the goals and purpose of the for-profit firm. In particular, we will explore how the firm creates value, broadly defined, by investigating the concept of strategic corporate social responsibility (Strategic CSR). Strategic CSR draws on what we know about economic exchange and human psychology to explain how markets work (or don't) and how value is added (or subtracted) across the range of the firm's stakeholders. Understanding these processes allows managers to build a strategic competitive advantage for the firm. Thus, Strategic CSR is at the center of business success in the 21st century.

Course Outcomes

The main objective of this course is to introduce and understand the concept of strategic CSR.

Strategic CSR is related to, but is fundamentally different from, concepts such as sustainability and business ethics. While sustainability focuses on resource utilization and ecological preservation, and business ethics seeks to construct normative prescriptions of right and wrong, strategic CSR is a comprehensive, pragmatic philosophy grounded in the day-to-day operations of the firm. As such, strategic CSR is central to the firm's value-creating activities.

That is, in a dynamic environment that is defined by the actions and decisions of the firm's broad set of stakeholders, value is optimized when stakeholders convey and enforce their evolving needs, while the firm responds to those needs. Thus, these economic and social exchanges are essentially interactions formed around the collective set of values prevalent in society at any given point in time. These values determine the decisions we all make and, as a direct result, the success or failure of for-profit firms.

Strategic CSR draws on what we know about economic exchange and human psychology to explain how markets work and how value is created. Understanding these processes allows managers to build a strategic competitive advantage for the firm. In short, understanding, adopting, and implementing strategic CSR is the source of sustainable value creation in today's business environment.

Course Requirements

Quizzes

The quizzes cover the chapters from the Chandler textbook and consist of multiple-choice questions.

Discussions

The **Introductions** discussion is a graded assignment.

In addition, there are **four topic discussion assignments**. They follow the same format. A question will be posed by your instructor, typically a question meant to generate varying views and responses. The intention is for you to use the new concepts you are studying this semester and make a case regarding a particular issue or question.

The discussions require you to make one initial post and respond to two of your classmates. A rubric will be provided in the course.

Group Assignments

The two group assignments ask you to discuss key course concepts from the readings and other materials with a small group of peers and illustrate what you have learned in a short video clip about a corporation of your choice. A rubric will be provided in the course.

Written Assignments

There will be three written assignments that each require a video clip in which you summarize your findings. A rubric will be provided in the course.

Case Study Assignments

There will be two case study analysis assignments. For the first part of each case study, you will summarize the key points of the case study, building an argument that the issue at stake is important. Then you will research a firm from a *strategic CSR* perspective with respect to this issue and summarize your findings in a short video. A rubric will be provided in the course.

Term Paper and Video Presentation

The term paper assignment will consist of three parts: an outline, a written paper, and a video assignment.

Acting in the role of sustainability consultant of a Fortune 500 company of your choosing, you will write a report to the Board of Directors that critically evaluates existing CSR practices and makes recommendation(s) on how to improve them.

You are responsible for a substantive paper of 6 to 7 pages that demonstrates your ability to apply the ideas and concepts learned throughout in course. Your paper should clearly demonstrate your firm understanding of each of the drivers of CSR behavior of the company based around its existing strategy and identify which of the drivers are most important for the company. Your analysis should include how the company is addressing its stakeholders and how they could do a better job. Your list of provided recommendations **must be** realistic for the company to pursue. An optional task (if this

information is available to you) is for you to identify any discrepancies between the company's *stated* and *actual* CSR practices.

In your video presentation, you are expected to talk for about 8-10 minutes about your findings from your written term paper.

In your role as the company's sustainability consultant, your video clip should be prepared for a *target audience* of the key stakeholders (including the shareholders) and the Board of Directors of your Fortune 500 company.

Rubrics will be provided in the course.

Grading Policy

Apply caution and sound judgement when using artificial intelligence (AI) tools and applications (including, but not limited to, ChatGPT, DALL-E, and others) in course assignments. Using them without appropriate citation and documentation is akin to plagiarism and a violation of academic misconduct policy.

Assignment	Percentage	Total Points
Introduction with video	0.5	50
Quizzes (1 percent each, top ten of twelve scores)	10	200
Discussion Assignments (4 total; 2.5 percent each)	10	400
Group Assignments (2 total; 7.5 percent each)	15	200
Written Assignments 3 total; 3.5 percent each)	10.5	300
Case Study Analysis Assignments (2 total; 7.5 percent each)	14	200
Term Paper	40	200

Total	100%	1550
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Grading Scale

Percentage Range	Letter Grade
92.5 to 100.0	A
90.0 to 92.49	A-
87.5 to 89.9	B+
82.5 to 87.49	B
80.0 to 82.49	B-
77.5 to 79.9	C+
72.5 to 77.49	C
70.0 to 72.49	C-
67.5 to 69.9	D+
62.5 to 67.49	D
60.0 to 62.49	D-
Below 60.00	F