Course title: Responsibility in Business and the Decision Making Process
Course code: BUSI 2001 PRAG
Programs offering course: Central European Studies, Communication, New Media, and Journalism
Language of instruction: English
U.S. semester credits: 3.00
Contact hours: 45.00
Term: Spring 2021

Course Description
This course examines the role of corporate responsibility and encourages students to reflect on their own personal ethical views as they may apply them in complex business situations in culturally specific contexts. The course introduces fundamentals of ethics and responsible decision-making in business and other social contexts in their future professional careers. Students develop complex analytical skills in evaluating the multifaceted contexts to assist them as future leaders and professionals when coming up with innovative solutions and making individual-level and company-level decisions about the proper courses of action considering ethical behavior, social responsibility and environmental sustainability. Students apply theoretical knowledge of concepts (e.g., culture of organizations, leadership styles, corporate governance) when solving real-world cases in culture-specific contexts.

Learning Objectives
By completing this course, students will:

- analyze current ethical questions/issues through case studies and provide innovative recommendations for solutions supported by well-grounded argumentation;
- understand and critically discuss the complexity of the context of ethical and socially responsible decision making, both individual and corporate in broader global dynamics;
- examine and critique the theoretical concepts and of Corporate Social Responsibility, including transparency, board practices and CSR strategy formulation;
- cultivate their own environmentally responsible decision making and develop communication skills to empower other people;
- reflect on their study abroad experiences in Prague in order to propose interculturally sensitive solutions by developing their own cultural awareness as well as team-work and negotiation skills while completing final team project.

Course Prerequisites
None

Methods of Instruction
In this course, students participate in discussions related to the lectures, video clips, and debates. Students gain knowledge and skills through an active learning approach in the class by working in small group activities, team projects and debating different opinions. To be able to do this, students are required to do the readings before class each week, analyze case studies and be prepared to contribute to class discussions. Specific examples from corporations and case studies will be examined with different sets of evaluation frameworks and students will apply their theoretically grounded knowledge to specific contexts and problems in the real world.

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.

Assessment and Final Grade
1. Individual Case Study Report 20%
2. Small Team Presentation 15%
3. Midterm Exam 20%
4. Final Team Project 25%
5. Class Participation 20%
**Course Requirements**

**Individual Case Study Report**

**Week 4**

This case study report is a combination of a benchmarking analysis (based on the corporate responsibility reports and other data sources) and a thorough evaluation of a specific corporate strategy using a variety of criteria in search of specific conclusions about specific organizations and their social responsibility strategies and initiatives. Students are also expected to recognize the complexity and global interconnections of the corporate social responsibility issue and provide an optimal solution of the issue and propose their own way of handling it. Students are required to submit individual case study reports of 1500-2000 words by Week 4 on Canvas. Delivery of the assignment after the deadline leads to a grade reduction 10% for each 24-hour period that it is late.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Criteria</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use of Benchmarking framework</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of other relevant evaluation criteria</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global interconnection and local context</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity of proposed solutions</td>
<td>20%</td>
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**Small Team Presentation**

**Weeks 5-6**

In small teams of 2-3, students will closely analyze and provide each other with feedback on their individual reports. Subsequently, they will create and deliver a group presentation (PowerPoint) of a particular company case study focusing on comparing their individual corporate evaluations and a team-based proposal of solutions. Presentation in class will take place in Week 5-6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Criteria</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Structure and quality of evaluation</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quality of proposed solutions</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Facilitation of discussion, time management</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Team work</td>
<td>20%</td>
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**Midterm Exam**

**Week 7**

The midterm take-home exam, based on the required readings and class lectures, will include essay-style questions requiring two short essay responses (c. 1,125–2,250 words) to questions arising from the first half of the course. It will take place in the second session of Week 7 of the course. Students will be asked analytical questions arising from the lectures and the seminar topics – Seminars 1-6 – of the first half of the course.

**Final Team Project**

**Weeks 12-13**

Team project focuses on designing innovative solutions to a selected topic (e.g., MNC, complex ethical problem) through structured and well-planned team work. The project evaluation also includes the quality of its presentation to the class. The project will be assessed in subsequent stages according to the following criteria:
### Assessment Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Criteria</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project structure and team roles – Week 9</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of relevant BE data for analysis and solution – Week 10</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accountability and effectiveness of teamwork – Week 11</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quality of presentation – Week 12/13</td>
<td>10%</td>
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### CIEE Prague Class Participation Policy

Assessment of students’ participation in class is an inherent component of the course grade. Participation is valued as **meaningful contribution in the digital and tangible classroom**, utilizing the resources and materials presented to students as part of the course. Students are required to actively, meaningfully and thoughtfully contribute to class discussions and all types of in-class activities throughout the duration of the class. Meaningful contribution requires students to be prepared, as directed, in advance of each class session. This includes valued or informed engagement in, for example, small group discussions, online discussion boards, peer-to-peer feedback (after presentations), interaction with guest speakers, and attentiveness on co-curricular and outside-of-classroom activities.

Students are responsible for following the course content and are expected to ask clarification questions if they cannot follow the instructor's or other students' line of thought or argumentation.

The use of electronic devices is only allowed for computer-based in-class tests, assignments and other tasks specifically assigned by the course instructor. Students are expected to take notes by hand unless the student is entitled to the use of computer due to his/her academic accommodations. In such cases the student is required to submit an official letter issued by his/her home institution specifying the extent of academic accommodations.

Class participation also includes students’ active participation in Canvas discussions and other additional tasks related to the course content as specified by the instructor.

Students will receive a partial participation grade every three weeks.

### Attendance

Regular class attendance is required throughout the program.

If you will miss a class for any reason, notify the Program Coordinator and your instructor beforehand via Canvas. You are responsible for any materials covered in class during your absence, and except in the specific cases listed below, credit will not be granted for missed assessments.

Excessive absences will result in a notification letter, and finally a warning letter, sent to you and your home school, based on the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of course hours missed</th>
<th>Number of CIEE classes</th>
<th>Minimum penalty</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to 10%</td>
<td>One to Three 90-min. classes; or One 180-min. class</td>
<td>No penalty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10% - 20%</td>
<td>Four 90-min. classes</td>
<td>Written notification* to the student, followed by a warning letter to the student and home school; 3% reduction in the final grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Five 90-min. classes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Two 180-min classes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 20%</td>
<td>Six 90-min. classes; or Three 180-min. classes</td>
<td>Automatic course failure, and possible expulsion with notification to the home school</td>
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</tbody>
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* The notification letters are intended to ensure that you are well advised in advance of any potential for failure or dismissal, so that you can take steps to avoid this.

As the table shows, **missing more than 20% of any class (e.g., due to undocumented illness, travel delays, flight cancellations, over-sleeping, etc.) results in automatic failure of the course.**
If you miss an assessment in class due to an absence, you will be able to make it up in the following instances:

- You provide a relevant doctor's note from a local medical professional to your Program Coordinator within 24 hours of your absence (a scan or photograph sent via e-mail are acceptable)
- A CIEE staff member verifies that you were too ill to attend class.
- You provide evidence of a family emergency to your Program Coordinator.
- You have an approved absence related to the observance of a religious holiday from the Academic Director based on a request submitted before you arrived onsite.

Please note: Absences incurred due to documented illness, documented family emergency or the observance of a religious holiday approved before arrival onsite do not count towards the total of absences. Students may self-certify one absence due to illness without providing a doctor's note as long as they notify the Program Coordinator within 24 hours of their absence by e-mail or a text message.

Other attendance-related policies

If you transfer from one CIEE class to another during the Add/Drop period, you will not be considered absent from the first session(s) of the new class provided you were marked present for the first session(s) of the original class.

If you are over 15 minutes late for a class, the instructor is required to mark you absent.

In case of class conflicts (irregularities in the class schedule, including field trips and make-up classes), always contact the Academic Department to decide the appropriate course of action.

Please remember to track your attendance on the Canvas Course Sites and report any errors in the record to the Academic Department within one week of the discrepancy date, as later claims may not be considered.

These attendance rules also apply to any required co-curricular excursion, activity, or event, and to for-credit internships.

CIEE staff does not manage absences at partner institutions providing direct enrolment classes (FAMU, ECES and FSV), but they have similar attendance policies and attendance is monitored there. Grade penalties may result from excessive absences.

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** Class information/Discussion on class expectations

- Introduction to Business Ethics
  - Reasoning why ethical behavior is important in business and society
  - Understanding of legal, ethical and moral perspective of concepts

**Class: 1.2** Introduction to Business Ethics

- Analysis of companies with ethical/non ethical behavior and understanding of differences
- Discussion of consequences for companies with ethical/non ethical behavior

**Week 2**

**Class: 2.1** Theory of ethics/Values as basis for ethical decisions

- Introduction to the theory of ethics
- The importance of values for individuals and companies?

**Class: 2.2** Theory of ethics/Values as basis for ethical decisions
Drivers to corporate responsibility
Reflection own set of values

Required readings:
Mohin, Ch 1-2.

Week 3
Class:  3.1 Corporate Social Responsibility

- Comparison and critique of CSR programs

Class:  3.2 Corporate Social Responsibility

- Understanding of the gap between policy and reality of CSR programs at MNC
- Importance of CSR programs for sustainable business

Required Readings:
Ferrell, Fraedrich and Ferrell, Ch 1-3.

Week 4
Class:  4.1 Business Cases related to responsibility/ethics in business

- Detailed and complex analysis of 2 examples (Bernard Madoff, Nike)
- Understanding the internal controlling system and external context and consequences in failing to recognize the unethical behavior
- Understanding why these business cases failed in ethical and responsible behavior

Class:  4.2 Business Cases related to responsibility/ethics in business

- Proposing countermeasures for future solutions
- Reasoning and prioritizing in own decision making process

Required Reading:
Hřebiček, Jiří et al. Corporate Governance and CSR. Mendel University Papers, 2012
Kolk, online
Due: Case Study Report (2nd class session)

Week 5
Class:  5.1 Role of leadership in business and influence of the leadership style on company

- Introduction to leadership styles

Class:  5.2 Role of leadership in business and influence of the leadership style on company

- Leadership as part of company culture
- Reflection on our own leadership styles

Required readings:
Quigley, online
Due: Small Team Presentations

Week 6
Class:  6.1 Change Management and Ethical Decisions

Midterm Exam Period

- Analysis of the change processes
- Inner understanding of own responsibility in the change process
Class: 6.2 Change Management and Ethical Decisions

- Ethical decision making in a critical phase of a company
- Application of a responsible people management

Required Readings:
Mohin, Ch. 4, 8

Due: Small Team Presentations

Week 7

Class: 7.1 Midterm Exam

Class: 7.2 Group Reflection and Interactive Team Activity

- Project Design

Week 8

Class: 8.1 Managing Ethics Internally

- The role of compliance in a responsible decision making process
- Analysis of real business cases/examples

Class: 8.2 Managing Ethics Internally

- Major HR processes and relationship to the executive management

Required Readings:
Pfeffer.

Week 9

Class: 9.1 Governing Organizations

- Defining corporate governance and its key features
- Aligning national (local) and international (global) aspects of governance
- Finding solutions for intercultural dilemmas and conflicting dimensions
- Reflecting on study abroad experiences in Prague in order to propose interculturally sensitive solutions and developing own cultural awareness

Class: 9.2 Governing Organizations

Guest Speaker: Adriana Dergam, Director of Social Responsibility, Vodafone CZ

Required Reading:
Scherer and Palazzo, 1096–1120.

Due: Project Aim and Structure

Week 10

Class: 10.1 Company culture – Communicating Social Responsibility

- Factors determining company culture
- The influence of company culture on decision making process
- Company culture and HR decisions and empowering people

Class: 10.2 Company culture – Communicating Social Responsibility

- Communicating values
- Failed Corporate Responsibility Initiatives

Required Reading:
Week 11
Class: 11.1 Environmental Responsibility

- Considering the decision making of company in connection to society and environment and framing the relationship between business, environment and consequences of both
- Comparison of 2 companies (responsible / irresponsible) and its outcome on the environment and finding the balance between environmental sustainability, social needs and economic interests
- Finding solutions to existing environmental issues based on research

Class: 11.2 Environmental Responsibility

- Reflecting on individual choices and experiences and cultivating own environmentally responsible decision making
- Understanding global and local environmental issues and their inter-connectivity

Required Reading:

Allen and Craig.

Due: Project – Presentation draft

Week 12
Class: 12.1 Civil society organizations, Giving back to the society

- Understanding the importance of “giving back” in the business context
- Possible ways of “giving back to the society”
- Comparison of rational and activities of NGO/business/government
- Reflecting on individual volunteering experience / “giving back” to the society
- Reflecting on the intercultural differences in “giving back” in home country v. host country (CZ)

Class: 12.2 Civil society organizations, Giving back to the society

Guest Speaker: Šimon Pánek, Director of People in Need Foundation

Week 13
Class: 13.1 Final Exam Week

Final Team Project Presentations

Class: 13.2 Final Exam Week

Final Team Project Presentations

Course Materials

Readings


Pfeffer, Jeffrey. “Assholes are Winning: Money Trumps All.” *Journal of Management Studies* 53. 4 (Jan. 25, 2016)


**Media Resources**

**Films**

The Corporation. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y888wVY5hzw

Michael D. Burroughs: The Significance of Ethics and Ethics Education in Daily Life. TED x PSU; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_8juebyo_Z4

Jeff Bezos: How to Start a Business. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jJeVp73PA4