
Ethics and Sustainability Leadership

Academic year: 2024-2025

Course Type: Elective

Credits: 4ECTS

Term: 3st

Language: English

Professor: Oriol Amat

Office hours: By
appointment

1. COURSE PRESENTATION

Course Description

The course focuses on the corporate social responsibility, corporate governance and ethical issues confronting leaders and managers. Among the topics covered are sustainable leadership, ethical dilemmas, conflicts of interest, Code of Ethics and Standards of Professional Conduct.

It covers also financial and accounting frauds and the techniques to prevent them before. During the course, the most important financial scandals will be analyzed.

Objectives

- To understand the key concepts related to the art of leadership, corporate social responsibility, governance, ethics and fraud.
- To be aware of the need of Codes of Ethics and Standards of Professional Conduct.
- To understand the factors that influence frauds and the techniques to discover a fraud before it's too late.

Competencies/ Learning Objectives

Related SDG

16. Peace, justice and stronger institutions

2. COURSE LEARNING PLAN

Methodology

The course will combine lectures with case discussions, and presentation of reports about cases made by groups of students. During the discussion of some cases, the students will be divided in groups using the role playing approach.

Evaluation criteria

Regular Assessment

Students will pass the course by successfully completing the requirements listed below. No overall grade under 50% (i.e, 5,0 points out of 10,0) will pass.

The Assessment of the course is three-folded:

1. Final project (40%)
2. Short reports on cases (continuous assessment) (40%)
3. Student's performance at the classes (continuous assessment) (20%)

The partial requirements for each of those elements will consist on the following criteria:

Final project

It will be 40% of the final grade. The format of the final project will be explained in advance. Potential content will be restricted to the topics considered along the lectures. Students need to obtain a **minimum of 4,0 (out of 10,0) in the final project** to pass the course. The final course grade of students that do not obtain a minimum of 4 in the final project will be the minimum between 4 and the final grade computed from the different evaluation elements (with the weights set above).

Short reports on cases

They will account for 40% of the final grade. In some sessions the students will be asked to prepare (in groups of four maximum) the answers of the questions to cases.

Particular terms, deadlines and conditions for the submission will be specified in during the sessions, along with the corresponding topic proposals.

Retake

Students that fail the evaluation of the course will have a retake exam opportunity that will be

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programmed in accordance with the academic calendar. If a student has to retake, his **maximal grade for the course will be a 5,0 (out of 10,0).**

General Issues

Students are required to attend 80% of classes to pass the course.

Plagiarism is to use another's work and to present it as one's own without acknowledging the sources in the correct way. All essays, reports or projects handed in by a student must be original work completed by the student. By enrolling at any UPF BSM Master of Science and signing the "Honor Code," students acknowledge that they understand the schools' policy on plagiarism and certify that all course assignments will be their own work, except where indicated by correct referencing. Failing to do so may result in automatic expulsion from the program."

Student workload (including self study): 80 hours

Content and learning activities

- Corporate Social Responsibility
- Corporate governance
- Ethics.
- Ethical issues confronting managers. Ethical dilemmas. Conflicts of interest
- Code of Ethics and Standards of Professional Conduct.
- The art of leadership
- Sustainable leadership
- Financial and accounting frauds
- Financial scandals
- Techniques to prevent frauds.

3. PROFESSOR

Oriol Amat

Professor of Financial Economics and Accounting, UPF and UPF BSM.

He has held several positions at UPF: Rector, Director of the Department of Economics and Business and Dean of the UPF Barcelona School of Management

He has been Dean of the Catalan Economist Association, president of the Catalan Accounting Association, Member of the Board of Directors of the Spanish Stock Exchange Supervisor and President of the Spanish Register of Expert Accountants among other positions.

He has written several books of accounting, finance and management. Editor and member of several academic journals.

Invited professors: Dana Landau (Tel Aviv) and Marcos Eguiguren (UPF BSM).

4. BIBLIOGRAPHY/RESOURCES/ READING MATERIALS

- ACFE (2023): Occupational Fraud 2022: A Report to the Nations. <https://legacy.acfe.com/report-to-the-nations/2022/>
- Amat, O. (2017): Detecting accounting fraud before it's too late, Wiley, New York.
- Carucci, R. 2016. Why Ethical People Make Unethical Choices. HBR. <https://hbr.org/2016/12/why-ethical-people-make-unethical-choices>
- CFA (2014): Code of ethics and standards of professional conduct. <https://www.cfainstitute.org/en/ethics%20standards/ethics/code-of-ethics-standards-of-conduct%20guidance>
- CFA (2014): Standards of Practice Handbook. <https://www.cfainstitute.org>
- Friedman, M. (1990). "The social responsibility of business is to increase its profits." The New York Times, September 13. <https://www.nytimes.com/1970/09/13/>
- Singh, N. and Amat, O. (2020): Detecting accounting fraud using quantitative techniques, Compliance Penal. <https://www.upf.edu/en/web/econ/papers>
- Stiglitz, J. (2019): Is Stakeholder Capitalism Really Back?, Project Syndicate, Aug 27. <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/how-sincere-is-business-roundtable-embrace-of-stakeholder-capitalism-by-joseph-e-stiglitz-2019-08>

Cases:

- Steinhoff, Valeant, Kraft Heinz Co., Elisabeth Homes and Theranos, Wells Fargo, onzi Scheme, Yahoo, Facebook, Enron, FTX, Volkswagen, Gotham versus Grifols, Luckin coffee, Madoff, Ricoh India, Triodos Bank, Unilever, Patagonia, Motors Inside, Wirecard...