**Bachelor - Conscious Organisations**

*Course Syllabus*

**Introduction into Conscious Business Education**

Our purpose is to educate the current and next generation of business leaders and entrepreneurs in Europe to conduct business consciously.​ ‘Consciously’ refers to conducting business in a way that is purpose-driven, ethical, human-centered, sustainable, and inclusive, and where all Business Stakeholders (not only shareholders and managers) benefit. For the last 10 – 15 years, researchers demonstrated that consciously led companies created benefits for all stakeholders and prospered financially at the same time, in many cases above and beyond shareholder-driven companies. ​However, the practices of conscious business – and what might be different from a traditional view of business – is not yet an explicit part of business education in Europe.

The current economic system is under rising pressure because of unsustainable exploitation of resources and increasing pollution of our planet. Climate change and severe biodiversity losses are accelerating at an unprecedented scale while societies face rising inequalities in wealth and access to opportunities. These problems are not separate crises – they can all be rooted in fundamental flaws of the current economic system. A conscious business approach implies a fundamental change towards an economy that is sustainable, circular, prosperous, and inclusive.

Many of the challenges Europe faces require businesses, or support from businesses to create innovative solutions​. Businesses are the dominant drivers for innovation, jobs, and economic wealth, which in turn address real problems of real people. Conscious businesses can do this while making healthy profits and without causing ‘collateral’ damage to nature, employees, health, equality, or local communities.​ Currently, too many businesses are still operating in the old paradigm of material gain while depleting resources, making them (major) contributors to some of our biggest problems such as climate change, inequality, public health, and loss of biodiversity.

We believe businesses can be drivers of good, if they design, organize, and create their business consciously. Therefore, it is of paramount importance to educate current and future business leaders regarding how to manage more consciously so that potential damage is eliminated or minimized, and to increase benefits to society and the planet. We aim to address this challenge by creating and teaching an innovative business syllabus which includes Conscious Business Practices for bachelor-, graduate- and executive-level education.​ Based upon the Syllabus, Conscious Business Education trains current business teachers how to incorporate the Syllabus into their business education courses and/ or programs.​

Goals for the complete syllabus on Conscious Business (21 courses):

1. Describe and teach innovative methodologies to help business students become more conscious leaders.
2. Understand tools and methodologies for conscious business.
3. Apply tools and methodologies to manage businesses better.
4. Embed ethics and ethical dilemmas in every course.
5. Stimulate reflection and development of leaders to become more system-oriented, ethical, inclusive, and conscious.
6. Highlight the superiority of purpose-driven companies.

**Visualization (Infographic)**

A close-up of a chart

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**Overview**

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| --- | --- |
| ***Course Code*** | TBD |
| ***Course Title*** | Conscious Organisations  (Conscious Business Education) |
| ***Degree*** | BA, BS |
| ***Course Length*** | 20 academic hours |
| ***Number of ECTS Credits*** | 2 ECTS – Can be extended to 3 ECTS. |
| ***Total workload*** | 18 hours on-site lectures and instruction  18 hours of private study  24 hours of engagement through assignments |
| ***Prerequisites*** | None |
| ***Teaching and Learning Methods*** | * Interactive lecture/presentation * Journaling and reflection exercises * Team activities * Inspirational videos * Course readings |
| ***Assessments*** | Suggested weighting of assignments, to be adjusted by course instructor:   1. Written research assignment - module 2 (40% of grade) 2. Reflection paper - module 3 (20% of grade) 3. Final team poster presentation - module 4 (40% of grade) |
| ***Course creators from Conscious Business Education*** | Creator: Dr. Dorianne Cotter-Lockard, Saybrook University, [dcotter-lockard@saybrook.edu](mailto:dcotter-lockard@saybrook.edu)  Academic peer: Prof. Dr. Christian Schmidkonz, Munich Business School, [christian.schmidkonz@munich-business-school.de](mailto:christian.schmidkonz@munich-business-school.de)  External peer: Prof. Dr. Mary Kay Chess, Saybrook University, [MChess@saybrook.edu](mailto:MChess@saybrook.edu) |
| ***Course Material Language*** | English |

**Introduction to the Course**

This course invites students to explore key concepts related to conscious organisations and cultures. Students embark on a learning journey by creating a conscious culture within the classroom and beyond with team assignments. Topics covered in this course include qualities of a conscious culture, elements of conscious leadership and management, and building and transforming conscious organisations. An essential aspect of this course is the opportunity for students to experience creating and integrating elements of their group culture as a class. This 2 ECTS course is designed to fit into a regular 3 ECTS course related to Organisations (OB, OD, etc.). We assume that certain concepts related to organisations will be presented by the other existing course content, such as organisational behaviour, organisation development and change, social psychology, and positive psychology.

**Learning Outcomes / Objectives**

1. Articulate the four tenets of conscious business. The tenets include higher purpose, stakeholder integration (orientation), conscious leadership, and conscious culture.
2. Understand and articulate the concepts of conscious culture as presented in the lectures, readings, and team activities. The concepts include the qualities of a conscious culture, elements of conscious leadership and management, and building and transforming conscious organisations.
3. Understand and articulate concepts which impact organisations, such as sustainability, organisational learning, and systems thinking.
4. Apply the concepts of conscious culture through experiential activities of creating a team purpose and values, and individual reflections.

**Course Content**

The modules for this course follow a progression by first introducing the tenets of conscious business and exploring the definition of *conscious organisation*. The introduction is followed by modules which go deeper into the qualities of conscious culture, conscious leadership and management, and organisations as living systems.

Textbook:

Mackey, J., & Sisodia, R. (2014). *Conscious capitalism: Liberating the heroic spirit of business*. Harvard Business Review Press.

**Module 1 – Introduction to Conscious Organisations**

This module provides a foundation of concepts on which later modules build to deepen understanding of conscious organisations. The module consists of short videos, a reading assignment, and a 3-hour class session which includes student discussion and a workshop to create a shared purpose for the class.

Module 1 includes the following:

1. Set collective ground rules for class participation during the course.
2. Present the four tenets of conscious business: higher purpose, stakeholder integration (orientation), conscious leadership, and conscious culture.
3. Students explore the concept of consciousness and conscious culture. Through discussions, students investigate the linkages and interdependence between conscious culture and the other three tenets of conscious business.
4. Participate in a workshop to create a shared purpose for the class.

*Required Reading, Video, and Online Resources*

Conscious Capitalism, Inc. (2022). *Introduction to Conscious Culture.* [Video]. <https://youtu.be/txE-sMsjq1w> (5 minutes)

Henry, T. (n.d.). What is Conscious Capitalism? [Video]. <https://www.arete-mgt.com/?wix-vod-video-id=290d96e6e7f744acb86cefb09d2af4c2&wix-vod-comp-id=comp-jtff6odi> (2 minutes)

Mackey, J., & Sisodia, R. (2014). *Conscious capitalism: Liberating the heroic spirit of business*. Harvard Business Review Press. Chapter 2 (pp. 25-40)

*Suggested Reading, Video, and Online Resources*

Van Gulick, R. (Winter 2022 Edition). "Consciousness", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* E. N. Zalta & U. Nodelman (Eds.). <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/consciousness/>

*Group Activities*

* Group Discussion: explore the concept of consciousness, conscious culture, and linkages between the four tenets of conscious business.
* Workshop: Develop a purpose statement for the class (see separate instructor guidelines for workshop details)

**Module 2 – Qualities and Values of Conscious Cultures**

This module builds on the concept of conscious organisations by exploring the qualities and values of conscious culture. The module consists of one short video, a reading assignment, two 3-hour class sessions which include a workshop on developing shared values, and a writing assignment.

Module 2 includes the following:

1. Deepen understanding of the concept of group and organisational culture.
2. Introduce and discuss the TACTILE qualities of conscious culture: trust, accountability, caring, transparency, integrity, loyalty, and egalitarianism.
3. Introduce the concepts of VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous) environments and self-managing teams.
4. Workshop: Developing shared values within self-managing teams.
5. Writing assignment related to purpose and values.

*Required Reading, Video, and Online Resources*

Bennett, N., & Lemoine, J. (2014). What VUCA really means for you. *Harvard Business Review, 92*(1/2).

Bourrelle, J. (2015). *How Culture Drives* *Behaviors.* TEDx Trondheim. [Video]. <https://youtu.be/l-Yy6poJ2zs> (12 minutes)

Mackey, J., & Sisodia, R. (2014). *Conscious capitalism: Liberating the heroic spirit of business*. Harvard Business Review Press. Part IV – Chapter 15 (pp. 215-234).

Barrett, R. (2016). *Building a winning organisational culture*. Barrett Values Centre. <https://www.valuescentre.com/wp-content/uploads/PDF_Resources/Front_facing_articles/Article_Building_a_Winning_Organisational_Culture.pdf>

*Suggested Reading, Video, and Online Resources*

Barrett, R. (n.d.). *Personal Values Assessment*. Barrett Values Centre. <https://www.valuescentre.com/tools-assessments/pva/> (Note: there is a fee to take this assessment, though 50% of the fee is donated to charity)

Eisenhardt, K. M., Kahwajy, J. L., & Bourgeois III, L. J. (1997). How Management Teams Can Have a Good Fight. *Harvard Business Review, 75*(4), 77–85.

Schein, E. H. (2017). *Organizational culture and leadership* (5th ed.). Wiley.

*Group Activities*

Discussion in small groups to explore the qualities of conscious culture.

Workshop: Developing shared values – students in self-managing teams

*Assignment*

Read the mission statement and values outlined in Scribe Media’s “culture bible”: <https://scribemedia.com/culture-bible/> . Alternatively, you can use Zappos as an example. Links to Zappos: <https://www.zappos.com/about/> and <https://www.zappos.com/about/what-we-live-by>. Answer the following questions:

* What do you notice about the mission (purpose) statement and how it is expressed?
* What do you find compelling about the mission statement?
* How does the next line, “How do we do that?” help you better understand the purpose?
* How does each explanation help you to understand the organisation’s values? What are the key components of each explanation?
* What interrelationships so you observe between the various values?
* Which values resonate the most with you (pick 3)? Explain why they resonate with you.

**Module 3 – Conscious Leadership & Management**

In this module, students explore the elements of conscious leadership and management. The module consists of short videos, a reading assignment, two 3-hour class sessions which include a workshop on “seeing through cultural lenses” and a team activity to practice the tool of mind-mapping, and a short reflection.

Module 3 includes the following:

1. Participate in a workshop in which students examine how they see the world through their individual cultural lenses. Write a reflection paper as a follow-up to the workshop.
2. Engage in a mind-mapping exercise to begin work on a team project related to the SDGs.
3. Present the following concepts of conscious leadership and management: the role of leadership and management, extrinsic vs. intrinsic motivation, centralisation vs. decentralisation, empowerment, autonomy, innovation, and collaboration.
4. Engage in an experiential activity, the World Café, to deepen understanding of these concepts.

*Required Reading, Video, and Online Resources*

Mackey, J., & Sisodia, R. (2014). *Conscious capitalism: Liberating the heroic spirit of business*. Harvard Business Review Press. Chapter 16 (pp. 235-250).

Ebeling, M. & Tyagarajan, T. (2021). *Why Collaboration is Key to Innovation.* Fast Company. [Video]. <https://youtu.be/Ki0VtGw73WQ> (4 minutes)

Pink, D. (2009). *The Puzzle of Motivation.* TED. [Video]. <https://youtu.be/rrkrvAUbU9Y> (18 minutes)

*Suggested Reading, Video, and Online Resources*

Passuello, L. (n.d.). *What is Mindmapping*. [Blog]. LiteMind. <https://litemind.com/what-is-mind-mapping/>

United Nations (2018). *Sustainable Development Goals*. [Video]. <https://youtu.be/0XTBYMfZyrM>

United Nations (n.d.). Sustainable Development Goals [Website]. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

*Group Activities*

Workshop: Seeing through our cultural lenses

Activity: Exploring one of the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) using mind-mapping

Small group discussion of conscious leadership and management concepts using World Café format.

*Assignments*

1. Write a reflection paper on what you learned about your worldview (3 – 5 pages). What are some of the key aspects of your life experiences, historical context, and identity that influence the lens through which you see the world? Draw a picture of the lens. What colour(s) is the lens? What colours do you see through the lens? How does the lens modify what you see in the world? Be prepared to share what you learned about your cultural lens with your self-managing team in the next class.
2. Begin working with your team to explore an initiative to address your chosen SDG: Identify an inspirational organization that has an initiative to address your chosen SDG. See assignment in module 4 for further instructions.

**Module 4 – Organisations as Living Systems**

This module deepens students’ understanding of conscious organisations as living systems. The topic of building and transforming conscious organisations is explored. The module consists of short videos, a reading assignment, a 3-hour class session which includes student discussion and a final team project presentation.

Module 4 includes the following:

1. Present the concept of organisations as living systems.
2. Present and discus the following concepts: systems, the learning organisation and systems thinking.
3. Explore the challenges and actions inherent in transforming to a conscious culture.
4. Students develop and present their final team poster projects.

*Required Reading, Video, and Online Resources*

Cabrera Research (2015). *Systems thinking: A little film about a big idea.* [Video]. <https://youtu.be/-sfiReUu3o0> (12 minutes)

Mackey, J., & Sisodia, R. (2014). *Conscious capitalism: Liberating the heroic spirit of business*. Harvard Business Review Press. Chapter 17 (pp. 251-262).

MacFarlane, M. (2016). *The Fifth Discipline in 3 minutes.* [video]. <https://youtu.be/MQMRMAmT2gg> (3 minutes)

Monbiot, G. (2022a). *How wolves change rivers [remastered HD].* [Video]. Sustainable Human. <https://sustainablehuman.org/stories/how-wolves-change-rivers/> (4 minutes)

Sprouts (2017). *The Learning Organization.* [Video]. [https://youtu.be/40meQNZl3KU](https://youtu.be/40meQNZl3KU%20(4)  (4 minutes)

*Suggested Reading, Video, and Online Resources*

Brown, T. (2019). *Change by design, revised and updated: How design thinking transforms organizations and inspires innovation.* HarperCollins.

Meadows, D. H. (2008). *Thinking in systems: A primer*. Chelsea Green publishing.

Monbiot, G. (2022b). *How whales change climate [remastered HD].* [Video]. Sustainable Human. <https://youtu.be/AKiqHQT48-I> (4 minutes)

Voulvoulis, N., Giakoumis, T., Hunt, C., Kioupi, V., Petrou, N., Souliotis, I., & Vaghela, C. J. G. E. C. (2022). Systems thinking as a paradigm shift for sustainability transformation. *Global Environmental Change, 75*, 102544.

*Group Activities*

Class discussion: Organisations as systems.

Team Project Presentations

*Assignment*

Students are assigned to self-managing teams of 4-5 people. Each team choses an SDG as a focus for this project. Teams explore an initiative to address the selected SDG.

Each self-managing team creates a hand-made, paper poster to present to the class about their chosen SDG:

* Create a visual representation of the SDG on the poster, manually on flip chart sized paper.
* Find 1 inspirational organisation that has an initiative to address the SDG – learn about the organisation and the initiative.
* Create a visual representation of the organisation and the initiative on the poster.
* Be able to provide background about the organisation, describe their initiative, and express why this organisation and initiative are inspiring.
* Prepare a list of information sources/ references to accompany the poster (in an MS Word document)
* Present the poster to the class, taking no more than 10 minutes for the presentation. Each person on the team presents a portion.

**Expectations toward students**

Students are expected to be open to experiential activities and able to reflect on their inner thoughts and emotions. The content of the course is more holistic than classic business administration courses. It is the nature of holistic approaches that they often cannot be grasped solely from a rational, analytical mindset. Holistic approaches to learning contain emotional and experiential components. The course includes various activities that help students to get to know themselves better and to experience resonance with purposeful business practices.

The course requires a high degree of curiosity about how to do business in a responsible, sustainable way. Since "unusual" but at the same time very successful business approaches are introduced, openness is necessary for breaking with traditional business concepts.

Students are expected to attend class regularly in the classroom (whether online or on site). It is not possible to completely experience and achieve the course objectives from literature sources only.

Active discussion in class is encouraged.

Completing homework is essential for learning success.

Personal experiences shared by participants in the course room remain in the course room and are not shared with the outside world.

Tablets with a pen can be used for notes. Other electronic devices are not permitted as they inevitably distract and do not allow for an inner journey.

**Teaching and Learning Methods used**

* Interactive lecture/presentation
* Reflection exercises
* Team activities
* Inspirational videos
* Course readings
* Paper assignment
* Poster presentation of team project

**Prerequisites**

None

**Special Features of this Course**

* Learning and greater self-awareness through self-reflection for all students.
* Creation of an emotional connection with the topic.
* Students embark on a learning journey by creating and embedding a conscious culture within the classroom and self-managing teams.
* Experiential activities, including mind-mapping, world café, and poster presentations.
* Strong impact on future business practices by students/graduates.

**Course Length**

20 academic hours

**Number of ECTS Credits**

2 ECTS

**Total Workload**

This is a 2 ECTS course. This means a 2 \* 30 = 60 hrs. workload for students.

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| Attending sessions | 6 \* 3 hour-sessions | 18 hrs. |
| Private study | 69 pages reading  67 minutes of videos | 18 hrs. |
| Assignments | 3 assignments | 24 hrs. |
| **TOTAL** |  | 60 hrs. |

**Assessments**

Suggested weighting of assignments, to be adjusted by course instructor:

1. Written research assignment - Module 2 (40% of grade): Research Scribe Media or Zappos. Include answers to the questions posed for the assignment.
2. Reflection paper - Module 3 (20% of grade): Reflection which explores the student’s worldview and cultural lens.
3. Final team poster presentation - Module 4 (40% of grade)

Assignment # 1 will be assessed upon the following criteria:

1. Framing (the extent to which the introduction introduces, frames, and identifies a relevant topic related to the course).
2. Theory (the extent to which students master theoretical concepts, literature, and theories).
3. Results (the extent to which appropriate academic sources are used that are linked and relevant to the subject. The student should also demonstrate an understanding of the subject, critical thinking, and analytical insights. Originality is also assessed).
4. Argumentation (entails the persuasiveness of the essay, e.g., argumentation, support, illustrative statements).
5. Structure (the extent to which the paper meets the structure appropriate for an essay).
6. Academic writing, including reference requirements and writing mechanics (grammar, spelling, punctuation).
7. Adherence to the page range limit.

Assignment # 2, which is reflective in nature, will be assessed upon the following criteria:

1. ​Framing (the extent to which the introduction introduces, frames, and identifies the reflection).
2. ​Results (the extent to which the student demonstrates an understanding of the subject, critical thinking, and analytical insights. Originality is also assessed).
3. ​Authenticity (the extent to which the student examines their thoughts, feelings, and views).
4. ​Structure (the extent to which the paper meets the structure appropriate for a reflection).
5. ​Writing: coherence, correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
6. ​Adherence to the page range limit.

Assignment #3 - Criteria for grading the team poster presentations are:

1. ​Content: All objectives are identified, evaluated, and completed. A sophisticated synthesis and application of the course content is included. The application of methodologies is demonstrated. All critical points are covered with the appropriate depth.
2. ​Design: format, visual appeal, structure, and images included in the poster.
3. ​Oral Presentation: clearly communicates ideas, concepts, analysis, and conclusions within designated timeframe and in a manner that is engaging and understandable. Maintains eye contact with the audience.
4. ​Q & A: Provides answers to questions that are clear and relevant, adding to the content provided in the presentation. Answers are neither too long nor too short.

Criteria#3 is the most individual grading criteria which is usually necessary for grading since group gradings are not allowed.

**Required Literature**

Mackey, J., & Sisodia, R. (2014). *Conscious capitalism: Liberating the heroic spirit of business*. Harvard Business Review Press.

**Suggested Literature**

Brown, J. (2010). *The world café: Shaping our futures through conversations that matter*. <https://ReadHowYouWant.com> .

Brown, T. (2019). *Change by design, revised and updated: How design thinking transforms organizations and inspires innovation.* HarperCollins.

Laloux, F. (2014). *Reinventing Organizations: A guide to creating organizations inspired by the next stage of human consciousness*. Nelson Parker.

Meadows, D. H. (2008). *Thinking in systems: A primer*. Chelsea Green publishing.

Schein, E. H. (2017). *Organizational culture and leadership* (5th ed.). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Senge, P. M. (2006). *The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization*. Broadway Business.

**Communication**

*The lecturer of the course should fill in her/his individual, preferred way of communication.*

**Classroom rules**

*The lecturer of the course should fill in her/his individual, preferred set of classroom rules.*

**Course creators from *Conscious Business Education***

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