

Course: Graduate – Conscious Organisations & Transformation

Philosophy of the program

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.



This course is unique, because:

- Students embark on an individual and collective learning journey by creating a conscious culture within the classroom and within self-managing teams.
- Students apply the concepts of conscious culture through experiential activities of creating a purpose for the class and values within self-managing teams.
- Experiential activities, including mind-mapping, World Café, and Pecha Kucha presentations.
- Students deepen their conscious awareness through workshops and personal and team reflections.
- Students experience a “merger” and transformation of group culture through Appreciative Inquiry in a workshop experience with small groups.

Suggested tools from the toolbox

Developing a Shared Purpose for the Class

Facilitator Guide - Understanding Worldviews

Shared Core Values Guidelines

Team Climate Assessment

World Café-to-go (English & Spanish)

Included as additional course Instructor Materials (not in general Toolbox): Appreciative Inquiry Handout

Instructor/Facilitator Profile

The philosophy of conscious education is for teachers to see themselves as *facilitators* of learning, rather than instructors. Therefore, it is recommended that the facilitator profile includes the following:

- Facilitation skills to lead workshops and experiential activities, such as World Café, Appreciative Inquiry, and mind-mapping.
- A regular mindfulness, meditation, or contemplative practice. Ability to facilitate a few minutes of simple centering or breathing at the beginning of each class session.
- Thorough understanding of the concepts presented in the course: consciousness, conscious organisations, developing core values, self-managing teams, VUCA, the learning organisation, systems thinking, triple-loop learning, organisational change, and mindfulness.



Workshop Facilitator Guidelines

Module 1, Seminar 1 Workshop: Developing a Shared Purpose

Detailed facilitation guidelines are included in “Developing a Shared Purpose for the Class” in the Toolbox.

Once the class’ shared purpose statement is finalised, include it in the placeholder slide at the beginning of every seminar. Represecnt the shared purpose each time, asking students to contemplate it for 30 seconds before continuing with the seminar.

At the end of the course, facilitate a discussion with students on how they have fulfilled the purpose of the class and examine shifts and expanded purpose.

Module 2, Seminar 1 Workshop: Developing Shared Values

- Pre-define self-managing teams of 4 people each. These self-managing teams will stay together during the course and continue to work together on the final project.
- In this workshop, each self-managing team will develop a set of shared values which align with the shared purpose of this class.
- Refer to the speaker’s notes in the slides.
- Give students the handout from the Toolbox: Shared Core Values Guidelines
- Walk through the slides that explain the process. Walk through the example. Ask if there are questions regarding the process.
- Teams have 45 minutes to define their shared core values.
- Teams return to plenary to report their values and definitions only, 3 minutes per group.
- Teams break out to reflect on their process.
- Teams return to plenary to provide a short summary of their reflection, 2 minutes per group.

Module 3, Seminar 1: World Café Facilitation guidelines

Use the World Café-to-go (English & Spanish) guidelines in the toolbox for facilitating the World Café process.

Module 3, Seminar 2: Exploring an SDG using Mind-mapping

1. Demonstrate how to create a mindmap. You can play the first 1.5 minutes of this video for students: <https://youtu.be/FMkK8g3UQN8> . Choose a topic such as plan my vacation, class outing, etc. to co-create a simple map with the class.
2. Explain the UN’s sustainable development goals (Notes are in the slide). You can go to <https://sdgs.un.org/> - scroll down to the 17 SDGs on the home page and hover the mouse over selected SDGs to provide examples of each SDG.
3. ACTIVITY – In self-managing teams – 25 minutes to complete the activity.



- a. Start with re-presenting your team values. Each person on the team shares one value that is important to them as you work together today.
- b. Choose one of the SDGs to work on for your final group project. Mind-map answers to these questions:
 - i. Why did you choose this SDG? Why is it important to you?
 - ii. What are some ideas to address this SDG?
 - iii. What organizations are currently doing something to address this SDG?
4. Bring everyone back to plenary. Each group takes 2 minutes to share their mind-map.
5. Groups return to reflect on their process – 10 minutes.
6. As groups return to plenary, show them the group assignment related to the SDG. Each group assignment builds on the next until the final poster presentation.

Module 4, Seminar 3: Creating a Stakeholder Map & Team Reflections

Instructor guidance to students:

Students return to their self-managing teams.

The form of the stakeholder map is up to you. You can use mind-mapping technique, or you can draw something similar to these examples, or make up your own format.

Groups have 25 – 30 minutes to create the map, depending on time available.

- Identify all stakeholders.
- Draw a map which shows the relationships between stakeholders.
- Identify flows between stakeholders. Are the flows in one direction, or bi-directional?
- Identify competing needs and priorities among the stakeholders.

After self-managing teams have completed their maps, they engage in a self-reflection activity – questions are included in the slide.

Module 5, Seminar 1: Pecha Kucha Presentations (Introduced as homework at end of Module 4, Seminar 3)

Student self-managing teams present the stakeholder values, behaviors, and assumptions that stakeholders must have to implement their SDG initiative, using the Pecha Kucha format. Students document their initiative in a PowerPoint to present to the class, using the Japanese format called Pecha Kucha. Pecha Kucha: Automated display of 20 slides for 20 seconds each. Speak to the slides in the designated timeframe.

When introducing the concept of Pecha Kucha to the class at the end of Module 4, you can play the following short video:



Weaver-Hightower, M. (2014). *How to Make a Pecha Kucha*. [Video]. <https://youtu.be/32WEzM3LFhw> (6 minutes)

Also visit <https://www.pechakucha.com/> for examples of presentations in this format.

Module 5, Seminar 1 and Module 6, Seminar 1: Team Climate Assessment

Review the intention of using the Team Climate Assessment, using the “Team Climate Assessment” form from the Toolbox. The purpose is to “take the temperature” of the team, to explore the productivity and openness of the team. The objective of this assessment is to open a dialogue about how the team is working together and determine steps for improvement.

Review the rating scale and steps in working through the assessment and the process of reviewing ratings as a group (provided in the form).

Allow 15 – 20 minutes for this reflection activity.

Module 6, Seminar 1: Appreciative Inquiry Workshop

A handout with questions related to each step in the workshop is included as a separate document: Appreciative Inquiry Handout.

Prior to the seminar, decide which self-managing teams to combine (2 teams now become one new team). Consider matching teams that have disparate personalities, values, and ways of working together.

At the beginning of the workshop, announce the newly merged teams and invite them to sit together in the classroom, preferably arranged around 1 table per group. If possible, have available a white-board or flip chart for each group.

Step 1 Discovery – 20 minutes – review the slide and the detailed questions on the handout, then invite students to begin.

Step 2 Discovery – 20 minutes – review the slide and the detailed questions on the handout, then invite students to begin.

Step 3 Discovery – 20 minutes – review the slide and the detailed questions on the handout, then invite students to begin.

Explain that due to time limitations, the class will not get to experience the final step of the AI process, Destiny.

15 minutes - Invite students to engage in a final team reflection, using the Team Climate Checklist from the Toolbox.

Final Plenary Debrief – 15 minutes:

Invite students to respond to these questions for a general discussion.

- What did you learn about using Appreciative Inquiry to experience this merger simulation?

- How did the AI process impact your new team's formation?
- How does Appreciative Inquiry support transformation to a conscious organisation?

Sources that were used to create this course

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Suggestion for assessment

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

1. Individual Assignment 1 (20% of grade) – Module 2: Research a benefit corporation. Include answers to the questions posed in the assignment in the paper.
2. Team Assignments 2A & 2B (40% of grade)
 - A. Module 3: Self-managing teams present the values the team developed during Module 2, their chosen SDG initiative and related mission and goals.
 - B. Module 4: Self-managing teams present a stakeholder map and analysis of their SDG initiative, using the Pecha Kucha format.
3. Individual Assignment 3 (40% of grade) – Module 6: Write a paper which explores one of the listed topics in-depth, using scholarly literature as sources for the paper.

Suggested assessment criteria (e.g., rubric)

The individual research papers (Assessments # 1 and #3) 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. Formulation of the research question and its relevance).



2. Theory (the extent to which students master theoretical concepts, literature, and theories).
3. Results (the extent to which a wide range of 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 and the ability to make contributions to the field is also assessed).
4. Argumentation (entails the persuasiveness of the essay, e.g., argumentation, support, illustrative statements).
5. Structure (the extent to which the research paper meets the structure appropriate for a theoretical essay).
6. Academic writing, including reference requirements and writing mechanics (grammar, spelling, punctuation).
7. Adherence to the page range limit.

Detailed Rubric found in the following file: Grad Conscious Orgs - Assignments 1 & 3 Rubric Research Paper.xlsx

Criteria for grading the team presentations (Assignments #2A & #2B) are:

1. Content (All objectives were identified, evaluated, and completed. A sophisticated synthesis and application of the course content was included. The application of methodologies was demonstrated. All critical points were covered with the appropriate depth)
2. Design (format, visual appeal, structure, and images included in the presentation)
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)

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

Detailed Rubric found in the following file: Grad Conscious Orgs - Assignments 2A & 2B Rubric Team Presentation.xlsx

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