

## Module II Addressing Sustainability Challenges in Modern Organizations (3 Credits)

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

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Responding to today's complex and volatile world, Switzerland was the first country to enshrine the principles of a "green economy" in its constitution in 2016. Since then, local NGOs, corporations and companies have been striving to meet the stringent goals set for 2050 in the Swiss constitution with innovative business and management models, and ethical management practices that focus on the implementation of Swiss sustainability goals. This module studies these various efforts to reduce the country's ecological footprint, paying particular attention to three distinct areas in business and management: the legal groundwork, key environmental and social risks and opportunities, and models of social and environmental sustainability in business leadership. You will study the UN Global Compact, visit businesses, universities, NGOs and government organizations dedicated to implementing sustainability goals throughout Switzerland, speak to CEOs of companies and corporations committed to socially and environmentally sustainable business models, and engage with NGOs that promote innovative business models in areas ranging from food security and food waste, to textiles, design and technology. We will ultimately consider to what degree business practices in Switzerland might be applicable to other business cultures around the world.

**Course research emphases:** integration of sustainability and ethics into core business and management strategies, legal basis for sustainable businesses and companies. **Suggested credits:** Business, Corporate Responsibility, Management, electives.

### ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

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Assessment for this course will be based on written exams, oral presentations, one research paper, participation and the creation of an original business plan. The final grade composition is based on these assessments.

### RATIONALE

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As the first country to put into law the principles of a green economy, Switzerland has produced companies with innovative business plans and promoted management practices that successfully incorporate principles of environmental and social sustainability into their companies' DNA. This module allows students to visit businesses, universities and NGOs across Switzerland to study how they have developed their business models, what sorts of risks and

opportunities they identify in sustainability, what ethical considerations flow into their business models and how they assess the social and environmental impact of their work.

## **COURSE GOALS**

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The goals of this course include

- understanding the constitutional basis for a "green economy" in Switzerland
- understanding the ethics that drive a green economy
- examining the ten principles and sustainable development goals of the UN Global Compact
- understanding key environmental and social risk factors and opportunities
- analyzing how sustainability can fit into the core strategy of a business and become part of a management strategy
- analyzing an array of responses in business design, ethics and management to the constitutional stipulations
- creating a business case that takes into account the constitutional stipulations and the UN Global Compact

## **STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

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Upon completion of this class students should

- grasp the legal basis for the green market in Switzerland
- understand the key points of environmental and social sustainability
- be aware of the ethical background to the sustainability discourse
- be able to distinguish between the different models of corporate responsibility and sustainability presented to them
- understand the environmental and social impact of the different models we study
- be able to integrate principles of social and environmental sustainability in a business plan of their own devising
- take into account the social and environmental impact of their decisions in their business plan and management strategy
- be aware of how the principles of sustainability in Swiss business design and marketing can be transferred to other business cultures

## **CONTACT HOURS AND MODULE STRUCTURE**

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Each module consists of four weeks of concentrated in-depth study in a particular topic area and offers a number of problem-based, disciplinary approaches. Depending on the research emphasis a student chooses in each module, credits will be awarded for business, management, art history, history, environmental studies, cultural studies, comparative literature, urban studies or media studies. The research seminar will award credits in the discipline in which students write their final research projects. The research seminar ends in a research symposium at Franklin University Switzerland in Lugano. Students may earn an

additional credit if they successfully turn their research project into a publication in our online undergraduate research journal.

While the overall curriculum is set for fall 2019 and is designed to offer 15 credits, there is a bit of flexibility built in. Students may opt out of the language classes to drop the load to 12 credits for the semester, or they may replace one of the three modules with a second language course in order to study both French and German. Students that publish their research papers can obtain up to 16 credits for the semester.

Each course, modules and seminar will offer the equivalent of 42 contact hours. Students will participate not only in more traditional lectures held in the seminar space in Zurich, but also in excursions, fieldwork, hands-on encounters and programmed trips to the rest of Switzerland.