Business, Purpose & Society
Syllabus

Academic Year 2026-2027

Course: Business, Purpose & Society
ECTS: 3
Diploma: Business in Spain
Semester offered: 1st and 2nd
Language of teaching: English
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> *"We're already seeing that in the top innovations coming out of finance, education, healthcare, retail, all the top innovations are all around this need for purpose," says Aaron Hurst Imperative CEO. "As you look at the workplace all the changes we're trying to make in the workplace, the things Google's doing, the things top companies are doing, they're all because, especially the millennial generation is demanding purpose in their work at a level never seen before. And that's why I believe we're in the early days of our fourth economy, a purpose economy."*

The modern economy is going through a period of transition between the traditional business models of the twentieth century, still in force, and the new challenges posed by a still emerging 21st century. We remain dominated by short-termism and the pursuit of economic benefit over the effects that economic activities have on the climate and people; but we are increasingly aware of the need to incorporate an integrated approach that takes into account the externalities of companies and reflects the real - social and environmental - cost of our production and consumption model. Addressing the challenges of the 21st century requires a change in the way we generate and understand the economy of such magnitude that it cannot remain solely in the sum of individual, local and decentralized actions. We need to seek partnerships, work in community, with a *glocal* approach, because when we act together we can effectively address big challenges.

The Course

This course will be divided into two different groups of students with different requirements and interests:

(1) BP&S (service-Learning program): Students will engage in a Service-Learning experience, collaborating directly with community partners outside the university. This group emphasizes real interaction with social entities and communities.

(2) BP&S (business design program): Students will develop an individual project consisting in the design of the different components of a purpose-led business (values, system and problem, strategy, brand, community).

Objectives and Skills

At the end of the course, students should have:

1. Exercised self-awareness, critical thinking, empathy, creative thinking and other key skills.

2. Explored and solved real social challenges.
3. Had knowledge of other realities, understanding real problems that affect vulnerable people and provide a service to society.
4. Know how to apply their knowledge and skills in a qualified way.
5. Had the ability to gather and interpret relevant data to make judgments that include a reflection on relevant social, scientific or ethical issues.
6. Encouraged their consideration of the values of creativity, freedom, empathy, diversity or sustainability.
7. Been responsible for their learning, working actively, learning to learn and becoming the protagonist of their learning.
8. Oriented their work to quality and excellence.
9. Acquired a business design toolkit to generate solutions in the areas of leadership, strategy and branding.

Teaching Methods

- **LECTURES / ACTIVITIES.** Approximately 30% - 40% of the course time will consist of lectures and actitivities on specific topics as listed below.
- **PROJECT - SERVICE-LEARNING GROUP.** Approximately 40% - 50% of the course time will consist of developing a service - learning experience with a community partner.
- **PROJECT - BUSINESS DESIGN GROUP:** Approximately 40% - 50% of the course time will consist of business design activities applying tools in the areas of leadership and self-motivation, strategy, systems thinking, branding, communities and communication.
- **COMPLEMENTARY ACTIVITIES.** Approximately 10%-20% of the course will consist of video or reading forums, keynote speakers, team building or skill training activities.

Contents

General lecture topics

1. Social challenges, systemic thinking and business opportunities.
2. Purpose as a business Innovation driver.
3. Branding and purpose: creating businesses to engage society in social change.
4. Ethical leadership: impact entrepreneurs, impact intrapreneurs and responsible consumption.
5. Vulnerability, social exclusion and business.
6. New economies for the Common Good (circular, green, impact, sharing).
7. Impact investing, venture philanthropy, microfinance, crowdfunding and other alternative financial sectors.
8. Sustainable Development Goals, ESG and other frameworks for purpose and impact management and measurement.

Assessment & Grades

BP&S (service-Learning program):

1. 40% of the final grade will be awarded by a group self-administered rubric. Assessment criteria will consider professional skills and teamwork, as well as the quality of the solution provided to the community partner or the project created.

2. 20 % of the final grade will be awarded considering the technical quality of the solution provided / project developed.

3. 40% of the final grade will be awarded individually, based on a Learning Reflection Diary (free format) in which the student presents their thoughts and reflections on their learning process. The dairy should be comprehensive, including opinions on video forums contents, readings, field visits, and relevant personal experiences.

BP&S (business design program):

1. 50% of the final grade will be awarded individually considering the technical quality of the solution provided / project developed.

2. 50% of the final grade will be awarded individually, based on a Learning Reflection Diary (free format) in which the student presents their thoughts and reflections on their learning process. The dairy should be comprehensive, including opinions on video forums contents, readings, field visits, and relevant personal experiences.

Bibliography

- Bea Boccalandro “Do Good At Work: How Simple Acts of Social Purpose Drive Success and Wellbeing”, Morgan James Publishing, 2021
- Aaron Hurst “The Purpose Economy, Expanded and Updated: How Your Desire for Impact, Personal Growth and Community Is Changing the World”, Elevate, 2016
- Christian Felber “Change Everything: Creating an Economy for the Common Good”, ZED Books 2015,
- John Mackey, Rajendra Sisodia “Conscious Capitalism” Harvard University Press, 2014

Tentative calendar

Attendance in this course is compulsory. The course load is 3 ECTS. It is important to note that at our University 1 ECTS= 10 contact hours + 10 hors of independent work.

The nature of this course necessarily involves homework and some teamwork slots*, which you may complete at your own pace.

Week 1	Course presentation
Week 2	Lecture / complementary activity
Week 3	Lecture / complementary activity
Week 4	In-class session /Project Work Session
Week 5	Lecture / complementary activity / Project Work Session
Week 6	Lecture / complementary activity */ Public Holyday (no class for Monday's group)*
Week 7	Reading Week (no class)
Week 8	Lecture / Mid-project presentation (presentation of progress in class)
Week 9	Lecture / complementary activity */ Public Holyday (no class for Monday's group)*
Week 10	Lecture / complementary activity */ Public Holyday (no class for Monday's group)*
Week 11	Guest speaker / In-class session /Project Work Session
Week 12	In-class session /Project Work Session
Week 13	Final presentation

(*) Teamwork for the learning service group should include intermediate meetings with the client in non-scheduled hours.