UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Business Administration 1: Business Administration and Accounting - 1

2627-1-E3305M002-T1

Learning objectives

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Describe the concept of a firm, its different forms (profit-oriented, impact, public, cooperative) and the value creation logics that characterise each.
2. Apply the fundamental tools of accounting and financial reporting to record, classify and represent business transactions, and to build signals of value creation.
3. Construct and interpret the main balance sheet reclassifications and calculate economic-financial ratios to assess the health of a firm.
4. Critically analyse the value chain and propose alternative approaches in terms of sustainability and social impact, within the logic of impact accounting.
5. Use the fundamentals of management, strategy and governance to interpret competitive and collaborative dynamics between the firm and its stakeholders.
6. Address complex business problems through processes of problem analysing and problem solving, integrating diverse sources — including artificial intelligence tools — with critical thinking and original contribution.

Contents

13:00????Claude ha risposto: The course is divided into three thematic parts.The course is divided into three thematic parts. The detailed lecture schedule and classrooms are published on the University website.
Part I — The Firm and Value Creation

Foundations of business economics: what a firm is and why it exists. Diversity of organisational forms (profit-oriented, impact, public, cooperative). The concept of value and its evolution: from economic-financial value to social, environmental and public value. The value chain: critical analysis and new approaches. The firm, territory and community: co-evolution as a strategic challenge.

Part II — Measuring Value: Accounting and Financial Reporting

The main accounting transactions and an introduction to bookkeeping entries. The financial statements: purpose, forms and structure. The most relevant reclassifications of the balance sheet and income statement. Economic-financial analysis through indicators and ratios. Case studies and discussion workshops.

Part III — Management, Strategy and Governance

Management activities: the foundations of management. The firm between environment and stakeholders: competitive and collaborative dynamics. Foundations of business strategy. Introduction to the concept of governance. Focus on the cooperative firm. Sustainability and impact: the challenge ahead.

Detailed program

Part I — The Firm and Value CreationThe first part introduces the foundations of business economics and the interpretive frameworks that will run throughout the entire course. It starts from a basic question — what is a firm and why does it exist — and builds towards a plural and contemporary understanding of the firm as an institution.Topics covered include:

- The origins and evolution of the concept of the firm; the conditions for its existence and long-term survival
- The diversity of organisational forms: profit-oriented firms, impact firms, public organisations and cooperatives; purposes, structures and operating logics compared
- The concept of value and its historical evolution: from economic-financial value to social, environmental and public value; introduction to the concept of public value
- The value chain as an analytical tool: critical reading of the classic model and new approaches linked to sustainability and impact
- The relationship between the firm, territory and community: the co-evolution of organisations with their places as both a strategic challenge and an opportunity.

Part II — Measuring Value: Accounting and Financial Reporting
The second part moves into the technical core of the course: the tools of accounting and financial reporting as a language for reading, measuring and communicating value creation. The approach is not merely technical — every tool is contextualised around the question: "what are we measuring, and why?"
Topics covered include:

- The main business transactions and their accounting recognition; introduction to bookkeeping entries
- The financial statements: purpose, users and structure; balance sheet, income statement and notes to the accounts
- The most relevant reclassifications of the balance sheet (financial criterion, functional criterion) and the income statement (value-added format, cost-of-goods-sold format)
- The calculation and interpretation of economic-financial ratios: liquidity, capital structure, profitability and turnover indicators
- Financial statements as signals of value creation: integrated reading of accounting data from a critical analytical perspective
- Business case studies and in-class discussion workshops.

Part III — Management, Strategy and Governance
The third part broadens the perspective from the financial statements to the firm as a system in motion: how it is managed, how it positions itself in the competitive environment, how it is governed and how it responds to the

challenges ahead.
Topics covered include:

- Management activities: planning, organising, leading and controlling; the foundations of management
- The firm and its environment: stakeholders, interest groups and competitive and collaborative dynamics
- Foundations of business strategy: environmental analysis, competitive positioning and strategic choices
- Introduction to the concept of governance: structures, bodies and control mechanisms
- Focus on the cooperative firm: principles, governance model and distinctive managerial features
- Sustainability and impact as a strategic challenge: future scenarios, impact accounting and the role of the firm in the transition

Prerequisites

Not needed

Teaching methods

Teaching Methods
The course adopts a blended teaching approach, alternating structured content delivery with active and participatory learning.
Part of the teaching will be delivered remotely (up to a maximum of 30% of the course), and this will be communicated with adequate advance notice.
Lectures provide the framework for each session: they introduce concepts, contextualise them and trace their connections across the programme as a whole. Lectures are systematically paired with plenary discussion, which invites students to reason aloud, compare perspectives and collectively construct meaning from the topics at hand.
Business case analysis is one of the central tools of the course. Cases — drawn from profit-oriented, impact, public and cooperative organisations — are discussed in class to develop students' ability to read complex situations, identify value creation processes and propose well-grounded solutions. Attending students may submit a written analysis of the cases to receive feedback from the lecturer.
Facilitated group work gives students the opportunity to apply course concepts collaboratively, with the active support of the lecturer. Participation in group work is neither compulsory nor formally assessed, but represents a valuable learning experience for those wishing to deepen their analytical and interpersonal skills.
Throughout the course, interactive teaching tools — including Mentimeter and Padlet — are used to encourage participation, gather opinions and stimulate collective reflection in real time.
The course also features contributions from external guests: professionals, managers and organisational representatives are invited to bring direct testimony into the classroom, offering students a concrete perspective on the topics covered and on the challenges of the real world.

Assessment methods

The examination has an original character: students are called upon to activate a process of problem analysing and problem solving, drawing on the knowledge acquired during the course to address a real or simulated business case. To this end, the use of digital devices, the internet, artificial intelligence tools or printed sources is not prohibited.
This choice reflects a vision of the examination not merely as a moment of verification, but as a moment of personal responsibility — restoring a more balanced relationship between examiner and examined.

Structure of the written examination
The written examination is divided into two sections:

1)Case analysis — presentation of a business case on which to apply the tools and concepts of the course (problem analysing and problem solving).
2) AI LOG — a dedicated section in which students describe whether and how they used artificial intelligence tools during the examination, highlighting the supporting role of AI and their own original contribution. This section does not penalise: it rewards awareness and transparency in the use of tools.

Oral examination
The oral examination is optional and may be requested by the student. It consists of:

- Discussion and in-depth exploration of the written examination;
- A conversation on the topics covered during the course.

Assessment criteria
The written examination is assessed against five criteria, applied to both the case analysis and the AI LOG section.

- Accuracy and completeness. This criterion assesses the correct use of concepts, accounting tools and indicators, as well as adequate coverage of the problem presented. Students are expected to demonstrate command of the course's language and tools, and to apply them in a way that is relevant to the case at hand.
- Critical analytical ability. Description alone is not sufficient: this criterion assesses the ability to go beyond the surface — identifying causes, connections, implications and alternative perspectives. Critical analysis is at the heart of business reasoning and is considered a central indicator of a student's intellectual maturity.
- Original problem solving. This criterion assesses the quality of the proposed solution: its creativity, internal coherence and argumentative rigour. There is no single correct answer — there are answers that are more or less well-grounded, more or less original, more or less capable of generating value.
- Awareness in the use of artificial intelligence. The AI LOG section is assessed in terms of transparency and reflexivity: students must clearly distinguish between the contribution of AI tools and their own original input. This section does not penalise those who used AI — it rewards those who did so with awareness and critical thinking.
- Communication skills. This criterion assesses clarity of expression, the logical structure of the work and linguistic correctness. Communicating well is not an ornament: it is an integral part of professional competence.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

The textbook will be announced at the kick off of the course.

Semester

First Semester

Teaching language

Italian

Sustainable Development Goals

DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH | INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE